(RE)MAKING THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE PAST IN AMERICA

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ABSTRACT. This article views Vietnamese anticommunism as a historical institution designed to bolster the legitimacy of the Republic of Vietnam, and argues that political and violent aspects of South Vietnamese nation-building continue to shape and influence contemporary Vietnamese American politics. It explores the rise and decline of the underresearched Homeland Restoration (Phục Quốc) movement, which dominated Vietnamese American politics during the 1980s. It demonstrates how this movement shaped the contours of Vietnamese American politics and aided the consolidation of anticommunism as the dominant form of community politics. By binding cultural politics of Vietnamese Americans to concrete historical processes, this article illustrates the need for the scholarship on Vietnamese Americans to integrate issues of power, politics, and conflict into the analysis of diasporic and refugee collective memories.

On August 24, 1982, Nguyễn Đạm Phong, a journalist who published the Vietnamese American weekly *Tự Do* (Freedom), was shot dead in the driveway of his home. The murder was attributed to a mysterious group called the "Vietnamese Organization to Exterminate Communists and Restore the Nation" (VOECRN). Prior to his death, Phong had published numerous articles denouncing a rising Vietnamese exile anticommunist organization: the National United Front for the Liberation of Vietnam.[1] The organization claimed to be sending guerrillas back to Indochina with the intent of overthrowing the Vietnamese communist regime. While the Vietnamese American community, at large, supported the activities of the organization, Phong characterized the Front's operations as scams "carried out in the name of Vietnamese nationalism."[2] Reports noted that it was because of these accusations that the VOECRN retaliated, and

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had previously sent a communiqué to the Vietnamese press in Houston, Texas, and Santa Ana, California, denouncing Phong as a traitor.[3] Katherine Tang-Wilcox, former FBI agent, stated: "the way the murder was conducted [suggests it] … was someone who was highly trained. … It was an assassination."[4]

The case above exemplifies a key dimension of Vietnamese American anticommunism often unaccounted for in the recent scholarship. It demonstrates that the remaking of anticommunist memories and beliefs in Vietnamese America was entwined with the process of remaking anticommunist politics and violence. During its formative period, the Vietnamese American community was politically dominated by a movement that sought to send guerrilla cadres back to Indochina in an attempt to violently overthrow a despised communist regime. This movement was led by former South Vietnamese military and political elites who drew legitimacy from their service to the South Vietnamese state during the war. As this movement gained momentum, the political hierarchies, political violence, and forms of political legitimacy derived from the South Vietnamese Republic were reproduced in the United States and shaped how Vietnamese American anticommunism was understood and practiced.

Although focusing on collective memory and the importance of the South Vietnamese past, recent scholarship has too often emphasized the subjective nature of Vietnamese anticommunism rather than grounding these collective memories and discourses in concrete historical processes of power and politics, particularly within the Vietnamese American community itself. C. N. Le defines Vietnamese American anticommunism as "the deep-seated and extreme revulsion that many Vietnamese Americans have against the Communist government."[5] Yet, he epitomizes the recent scholarship by arguing that Vietnamese anticommunism stemmed from "decades of conflict and chaos, deprivation, and physical suffering directly inflicted at the hands of Communist officials" and the pain that emerged out of having "their families permanently broken apart and their relatives and friends psychologically destroyed, brutally tortured, and murdered."[6] For Le, and other scholars of Vietnamese American anticommunism, the collective and individualized experiences of loss, trauma, tragedy, and pain are essential to understanding how anticommunism is believed and practiced.

The scholarship shows a diverse corpus that centers on the persistent salience of anticommunism and the ways in which anticommunism informs activities in Vietnamese American life. Aguilar-San Juan, for example, speaks of diverse "strategic memory projects" and "place-making"[7] meant to create community, instill anticommunist "exile identity" into the next

generation, and "accompany, to challenge, and sometimes to replace the dominant collective discourse on the war."[8] Similarly, Lieu illustrates how the pageantry and Vietnamese American theatrical productions aid to perpetuate "an idealized, utopian nationalist vision of a community advancing under capitalism,"[9] and "assert feelings of cultural nationalism as well as anticommunism."[10] More comprehensively, Vo-Dang conceptualizes Vietnamese anticommunism as "cultural praxis":[11] a shorthand for a diverse variety of cultural activities that include community participation in the larger political-cultural arena to "paying respect to one's family and elders to educating the community and society at large about South Vietnam to maintaining a Vietnamese culture in diaspora."[12] The above scholars offer a conceptualization of Vietnamese anticommunism as not simply a Cold War ideology but rather a practical rubric that shapes everyday activities within the community.

However, if anticommunism remains a salient aspect of Vietnamese American culture and memory, the answers given to why anticommunism persists as a dominant framework of interpretation are inadequate. The scholarship has thus far demonstrated that anticommunism remains salient because the shared experiences and memories of communist victimization, trauma, and loss of homeland are foundational references that Vietnamese Americans draw upon to engage in a host of activities and politics. However, memories of the past are socially and politically mediated. Lived experiences are interpreted through shared discourses that provide the frames and vocabularies for individuals to articulate and make meaning of tumultuous experiences. Yet, what comes to be that shared discourse is neither spontaneous nor automatic. Discourses are shared, but they are also dominant social and political constructs that have been institutionalized and conventionalized through processes of conflict, debates, and power struggles between competing groups of actors. Consequently, certain actors come to dominate the politics over what is remembered and how to remember; that is, certain actors control the terms of discursive engagement.[13] These actors have vested interests in maintaining their position of power, rely on mechanisms of social control to maintain that position, and, in doing so, serve to perpetuate the discourse that legitimizes their power. Indeed, if the scholarship on Vietnamese Americans has thus far adequately examined the various manifestations of anticommunist memory, it has yet to fully interrogate the politico-historical process that shapes those manifestations and makes those manifestations possible.

This article seeks to begin the interrogation of this largely absent,[14] yet crucial, dimension of the Vietnamese American story by adopting a more historically grounded approach that treats Vietnamese anticommunism as

a dynamic, but persistent, discourse that became institutionalized through the political conflicts, violence, and ideological contests located in South Vietnamese and Vietnamese American history. Thus, in juxtaposition to the recent scholarship, which understands Vietnamese American anticommunism as a reactive or cultural-political manifestation of the loss, pain, misery, and trauma at the hands of communists, this article understands Vietnamese American anticommunism as a legacy of conscious and deliberate policies of the South Vietnamese regime to instill values and beliefs of anticommunism into its citizenry within the context of nation-building and war. However, because memories and the cultural are always situated in specific historical contexts, the approach offered in this article should not be seen as oppositional to the culturalist emphasis of the previous scholarship, but rather one that complements and expands on prior achievements.

This article argues that the *remaking* of South Vietnamese anticommunism in the United States took place within an institutional structure of power asymmetry: a structure derivative of the war era. This process of *remaking* involved a form of anticommunist "praxis" that went beyond simply culture, "strategic memory projects," and popular and theatrical productions. In the 1980s, anticommunism survived and flourished in Vietnamese America as a product of intense community policing and a belief that the destabilizing violence in Indochina during that period offered the opportunity for former South Vietnamese military operatives to violently overthrow the communist regime. What emerged out of that period was the Homeland Restoration movement that was controlled by Vietnamese anticommunist elites, but was supported by exile communities worldwide. These elites may have been stripped of their formal ranks in the wake of Saigon's collapse, but they reacquired their status through American migration policies that privileged those with ties to the former South Vietnamese state.[15] The fact that these elites continued to wield legitimacy and power allowed them to perpetuate a specific vision of anticommunist politics within the Vietnamese American community.

Defining Vietnamese anticommunism is difficult.[16] Coalitions change overtime, and what constitutes anticommunism in any given period is contextual. During the early 1980s, for example, anticommunist Homeland Restoration organizations sought collaboration with Cambodian insurgent forces, among them the nominally communist Khmer Rouge.[17] For the purposes of this article, I borrow from previous scholarship in defining anticommunism as a dynamic combination of three interrelated characteristics: (1) the moral, ideological, and intellectual rejection of communism, (2) the rejection of the legitimacy of the Vietnamese communist government, and (3) a commitment to a vision of a nominally free, independent, and

democratic Vietnamese nation, rid of communist influence and often in reference to the Republic of Vietnam (RVN).[18] The most consistent attribute of Vietnamese anticommunism is the rejection of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV) as the legitimate representative of the Vietnamese people, though this rejection is often intertwined, to differing degrees, with the other two characteristics: rejection of communism in its entirety and a commitment to the RVN.

In seeking to historicize Vietnamese American anticommunism, this article will explore the origins and the functions of anticommunist violence and anticommunist political capital in Vietnamese American communities during the 1980s.[19] The article begins by detailing the emergence of mechanisms of political capital and political violence that aided the institutionalization of anticommunism as the state policy of the RVN. This article then turns to Vietnamese America. The first of these three sections details the reconstitution of anticommunist political capital in the United States through the Homeland Restoration movement. The second details how forms of political violence derived from South Vietnam were redeployed to consolidate anticommunism in Vietnamese America and ensure compliance to Homeland Restoration politics. The last section details the transformation of Vietnamese American anticommunist politics by demonstrating that while Homeland Restoration politics consolidated anticommunism as *the* politics of the exile community, the movement also ironically laid the foundations for political change in Vietnamese America. The article concludes by illustrating the persistence of anticommunism in contemporary Vietnamese American politics and highlighting the importance of politics and power in the study of diasporic communities.

Legacy of South Vietnam

The following section details the causal foundations that allowed for the centralization and consolidation of anticommunism in South Vietnam and illuminates how South Vietnamese anticommunism came to be transported, along with South Vietnamese bodies, to the United States. The literature on the Vietnam War has been dominated by a preoccupation with the role of the United States in shaping nation-building in South Vietnam,[20] often at the cost of ignoring the role of Vietnamese anticommunist actors.[21] To aid in rectifying some of this discrepancy, this section emphasizes the role of South Vietnamese political actors rather than the United States in the development of Vietnamese anticommunism, and refers to U.S. foreign policy only when necessary. It is my contention that Vietnamese anticommunism is less an imitation or replica of U.S. Cold War politics, and more

an endogenous manifestation, fashioned and developed by the activities of Vietnamese political actors who had grounded and practical stakes in actualization and perpetuation of a localized anticommunism.[22]

This section demonstrates that formation of "anticommunist subjects"[23] and their exile to the countries of the west—particularly the United States—evolved through nation-building and war in South Vietnam from 1954 to 1975. During this period, an anticommunist South Vietnamese regime consolidated and perpetuated its power through mechanisms of political violence and political rewards. With the Fall of Saigon and the initiation of mass migration from Vietnam, the United States instituted resettlement policies that actively selected those who were tied to the South Vietnamese state and could demonstrate fear of and victimization from communist persecution. This process, thus, laid the foundations for the formation of anticommunist Vietnamese America.

In 1954, the United States sponsored the formation of an anticommunist Vietnamese government under the tutelage of Ngô *Đình* Diệm, which received enormous American diplomatic, economic, and military support. Building on the existing, but politically fragmented, opposition to communism in Vietnamese society,[24] the Diệm administration instituted anticommunism as a nationalist and state doctrine,[25] which legitimized the massive persecution, surveillance, torture, and execution of those deemed communists by the South Vietnamese state.[26] Early policies such as the "Communist Denunciation" (Tố Cộng) Campaign,[27] the highly repressive Law 10/59, and the later Strategic Hamlet Program and Phoenix Program were designed to not only isolate the citizenry from communist influences, but also to weed out and exterminate communist activities.[28] Roving death squads, dossiers on suspected communists, and interrogation centers were utilized under the Phoenix Program to eliminate real and imagined threats to the South Vietnamese regime,[29] and the program was often deployed by agents to enact personal revenge and who had "scores to settle with the communists."[30]

However, the institutionalization of anticommunism as a state policy was not simply enforced through coercive means. As with any other institution, anticommunism enabled the emergence of a form of political capital tied to the RVN.[31] Beginning with the Diem Era, assertive denunciation of communism and claims to communist victimhood became political resources. Publications detailing the ideological poverty and atrocities of communism, particularly those committed by Vietnamese communists, were actively supported by the South Vietnamese state. Those connected to the anticommunist state's civil and military organs dominated South Vietnamese electoral politics, and when these military officers and gov-

ernmental bureaucrats turned old, they had state-sponsored education as an occupational refuge.[32] To be anticommunist or to be part of the anticommunist state in the Republican era meant opportunities for social mobility and access to occupational privilege,[33] state support, and politically legitimate voice. Anticommunism subsisted, in part, because elites had a stake in the continuation of an anticommunist South Vietnamese state.[34]

The northern émigrés who fled from the communist north in 1954, for example, found ample opportunities in the new regime as authors and professors, and as functionaries in political and military apparatuses. These northern émigrés dominated anticommunist literary works and propaganda (much of which was significantly supported by the anticommunist Diệm regime)[35] and were prioritized in the recruitment for elite military units like the Navy commandos.[36] Furthermore, the refugees' distaste for communist politics,[37] as evidenced by their flight to the south, provided political ammunition for the administration to justify its political ideology, as well as a secure base of support for the state's anticommunist agenda.[38] Displaying anticommunist credentials was also a means through which individuals acquired resources from the state. Having an "anticommunist spirit," for example, was a prerequisite for Open Arms ralliers—those areas under communist control during the war to "return to the nation"—to receive subsidies for resettlement and occupation in the South.[39]

South Vietnamese anticommunism thus was perpetuated by the dual mechanisms of political violence and political reward. Diệm would be overthrown in 1963, but his successors built upon the preexisting anticommunist institution to reinforce their own control, justify this control to anticommunist elites, and secure aid from the American government.[40] Consequently anticommunist politics pervaded virtually all aspects of social and political life in South Vietnam. School textbooks imparted South Vietnamese nationalism and anticommunism to youths.[41] Television and radio programs were used for anticommunist propaganda,[42] military and civil affairs were conflated into a single administrative structure,[43] and social and economic mobility was predicated on ties to these South Vietnamese administrative and military organs.[44] Next to mechanisms of political rewards and political violence, anticommunism also became a socially shared discourse that allowed citizens of the South Vietnamese state to interpret the conditions of warfare and violence that surround their lives.

After the Fall of Saigon in 1975, life under anticommunism did not end. Refugees who fled Vietnam faced resettlement policies that privileged those with anticommunist rapport. As Yen Le Espiritu notes: "During the Cold War, admission to the United States was determined almost exclusively on the refugees' ability to produce a documented history of fear of

and flight from communist repression or persecution."[45] The first wave of Vietnamese refugees, coming immediately after the Fall, were primarily composed of former military and political elites who lived in the areas surrounding Saigon. Boat people soon began arriving in droves. By 1982, priorities of asylum were given to "former South Vietnamese government officials and members of the military; persons formerly closely affiliated with the U.S. or Western institutions; those sent to re-education camps, or to New Economic Zones because they were considered politically or socially undesirable; members of certain ethnic or religious groups; and family members of the above."[46] The final waves of Vietnamese refugees came with the passage of joint statements by the United States and the SRV to allow the immigration of political prisoners, who once served under the former South Vietnamese state, and their families.[47]

Thus, the incorporation of Vietnamese refugees into the United States was predicated on them being "anticommunist subjects."[48] Vietnamese America was created through a process that privileged those with ties and connections to the South Vietnamese state, and this process allowed for the reproduction of anticommunist political capital. The conditions that allowed for anticommunist reproduction are critical for understanding the development of the Vietnamese American community. Indeed, they are essential ingredients for analyzing both the Homeland Restoration movement that dominated Vietnamese American politics during the 1980s and the political violence against "communist sympathizers" that manifested during the same period.

Remaking South Vietnamese Anticommunism

Upon arriving on American shores, the Vietnamese did not rid themselves of their loyalties to an already collapsed state, but rather sought to reconstruct that state and implement its ideals and politics in the formation of their new community. During the early period of community formation, Vietnamese exiles *remade* anticommunist political ideas and practices and institutionalized these ideas and practices into the cultural, political, and social fabric of their community. However, the remaking of South Vietnam in America was a process that entailed not only the remaking of anticommunist ideas, sentiments, and memories, but also the remaking of anticommunist power asymmetries and violence of the fallen regime.

This section details the process that allowed for the reconstituting of anticommunist political capital in America. This process allowed former elites to regain their positions of political dominance and control the direc-

tion of Vietnamese exile politics. Their continued dominance was at least partly enabled by the outbreak of a new war in Indochina that initiated a movement that sought the restoration of South Vietnamese glory by sending anticommunist guerrillas back to Indochina to overthrow the newly formed SRV. It was within the context of this movement that a powerful anticommunist organization comprising former military and political elites seized control of Vietnamese American politics and, in the process, served to perpetuate anticommunism as *the* politics of the community.

The Homeland Restoration Movement

In 1976, anticommunist organizations began mobilizing support for a supposed anticommunist insurgency against the SRV.[49] News of the existence of the insurgency reached the exile community during the summer of 1975,[50] and the insurgency was depicted as being led by former South Vietnamese military officers who valiantly refused to flee the country during the communist takeover.[51] Phục Quốc, or Homeland Restoration (henceforth HR), came to be defined as a legitimate and patriotic effort on the part of former military elites to "liberate" Vietnam from communist rule, "restor[e] the spirit, responsibilities, and honor of the army of [the RVN] and continue the task of struggle to the end [in order] to build true freedom for our compatriots."[52] The early HR movement saw the emergence of a plethora of organizations throughout Vietnamese exiles communities. Though the movement's early phase was led primarily by efforts in France,[53] by 1977, at least some organizations in the United States began to emerge in conjunction with the European movement.[54]

Early mobilization efforts primarily focused on supporting the insurgency already under way in Vietnam rather than attempting to send cadres back to Indochina to wage guerrilla war, yet they laid the political foundations that later anticommunist organizations would build upon. Although the idea for sending anticommunist cadres back to Indochina for infiltration and guerrilla war emerged as early as 1977,[55] by 1979 the ideal still had not been actualized.[56] It was not until the 1980s that reports of these overseas cadres actually making their way to Indochina began to appear. Early efforts for HR never reached the level of mobilization seen in the 1980s. The early movement faced disorganization, reluctance to support the guerrilla effort because many feared reprisals for family members still in Vietnam,[57] and substantial disbelief that there was indeed an insurgency in Vietnam.[58] Developments at the turn of the decade, however, encouraged a vision of impending communist collapse in Vietnam and allowed for the massive mobilization that would characterize Vietnamese America.

Beginning in 1979, the Vietnamese exile press became preoccupied with the guerrilla insurgency against the SRV occupation of Cambodia.[59] These reports on the war characterized the conflict as decisive in determining the future politics of Indochina,[60] and created an "international situation" that was "opportune for liberation."[61] For the Vietnamese exiles, communist Vietnam was perceived as being attacked on multiple fronts due to its border conflicts with China, guerrilla opposition to its occupation of neighboring Indochinese countries, and the internal insurgency of guerrilla forces resisting communist rule.[62] "Resistance," or *kháng chiến*, during this period, came to mean a collective struggle that brought together Cambodian and Laotian "national liberation" forces,[63] guerrilla groups within Vietnam, and the various Vietnamese American political organizations. This expansive definition of "resistance" captured the imaginations of the Vietnamese American community during the 1980s and tied Vietnamese anticommunist history under South Vietnam to the conditions of the present.

The Indochinese political situation aided in legitimizing the violent endeavors of the HR Movement to Vietnamese refugees. In a 1981 article in *Người Việt Daily News* (henceforth *NV*), the exile organization Người Việt Tự Do (Free Vietnamese) published a call for a "unified front" that could "represent the entirety of the people" and "liberat[e] the nation from the shackles of communism."[64] The task of restoring the homeland was seen as a duty, a necessity: one that required not only the cooperation of the various anticommunist organizations abroad, but also collaboration with the insurgency in the homeland. Political organizations seeking legitimacy would thus need to be associated with the HR movement.[65]

Emergence and Legitimation of the Front

It was in this context of HR politics that the National United Front for the Liberation of Vietnam (Mặt Trận Quốc Gia Thống Nhất Giải Phóng Việt Nam), led by a former vice-admiral named Hoàng Cơ Minh, emerged. The Front rose to prominence by presenting itself as capable of waging an anticommunist revolution, and rooting its membership and goals to the South Vietnamese military past. Since 1979, various exile political organizations began meeting to strategize the overthrow of communist Vietnam, culminating in major meetings across California cities in August and September 1981.[66] These organizations included the Free Vietnamese Front, Democratic Alliance, Committee for National Salvation, and Armed Forces.[67] Attending these meetings were former political and military Vietnamese elites who resolved to form a united political-military coalition

and develop "resistance" bases at the Thai-Lao border from which guerrilla operations could be conducted.[68]

As a product of these meetings, the Front was formed through the disbanding of Armed Forces (the organization of which Minh was a part) and was propped up by the political capital of leading figureheads in anti-communist politics. It drew upon the preliminary endeavors by those like former lieutenant general Nguyễn Chánh Thi, who, according to *NV*, had "continuously since 1975 been working with former military personnel, [and who had also been] in contact with the various refugee communities and brethren in Vietnam to prepare for the fight against Communism."[69]

Yet, despite the fact that the Front garnered early praise from the Vietnamese exile press, it was not immediately well received by its political competitors. A number of competing political organizations, such as the Democratic Alliance and the Free Vietnamese Front, rejected the Front's proposal to disband and reorganize.[70] As late as November 1981, a faction within Armed Forces, headed by former Lieutenant Colonel Lục Phương Ninh, remained independent from Front activities.[71] Blatant political opposition to the Front finally came in March 1982. Claiming that the Front was simply "a special commando unit that is relied on by the Americans to enter the vicinity of Indochina to find missing Americans [from the war]," Lục Phương Ninh sought to undermine the Front's viability and legitimacy.[72] The brunt of Luc's attack was laid on the Free Vietnamese, which, despite its early resistance, merged with the United Front in early 1982.[73] The Ninh faction accused Free Vietnamese of "using lies and tricks to steal the work of seven years of resistance … dismantling the individuals and organizations who were in competition and who used deception to singularly hoard the leadership of anticommunism."[74]

As competition to secure legitimacy rose within the HR movement, the United Front's announcement of the leadership of Hoàng Cơ Minh can be seen as a political strategy to present the organization as *the* viable military vehicle for infiltrating and toppling communist Vietnam. Prior to the announcement was a report by *NV* of a pathbreaking group of unnamed exiles who returned to Indochina.[75] Within the context of ambiguity over the group member's identities and the controversy over integrating anticommunist organizations into the Front, Hoàng Cơ Minh claimed responsibility for the revolutionary journey; the front page for *NV* on October 14, 1981, read: "Vice Admiral Hoàng Cơ Minh Leads a Group Back to the Country."[76] The claim, unchallenged, propelled Minh's political ascendancy.

Minh was described as a "bright star" since the days of the war with extensive military knowledge of revolutionary warfare, and was tightly connected to former politicians and military personnel.[77] He was praised as

a person with revolutionary ideals, the *cây đinh* (nail; read cornerstone) of the Vietnamese exile community,[78] a charismatic and competent individual who has the potential for "glorious success," a person who embodied the patriotic ideals of South Vietnam as well as the hopes and dreams of those who were in exile, and his journey "gave hope to a variety of individuals … united people … [and] enabled a new force to emerge."[79]

Support flowed toward the Front, and its membership grew tremendously during the first half of the 1980s. Despite allegations and condemnations of the Front's rivals, those like Lục Phương Ninh never received the media coverage and community support provided to the Front, and their members could not make claims to revolutionary activities in Indochina. Minh's military credentials and his revolutionary image were virtually insurmountable by political rivals who sought control over anticommunist politics.

Illustrative of this asymmetry of power and the importance of anticommunist political capital is the case of Trương Như Tảng and Đoàn Văn Toại, who were leaders of a HR organization called the Committee for National Salvation.[80] They were the first to appeal to the U.S. Congress for support of anticommunist guerrillas in Vietnam.[81] Despite their ideals coalescing with organizations like the Front, Tảng was a former guerrilla who fought against the South Vietnamese state and the two leaders lacked the political background necessary for widespread legitimacy. Their organization was denounced due to Tảng's communist-affiliated past,[82] allegations that they allied themselves with Chinese communists,[83] and failure to mobilize American support.[84] Tảng and Toại lacked the ideological correctness and political rapport needed for ascension within the context of HR politics.

Support for and Internationalization of the Front

The Front received widespread support not only from within the Vietnamese American community but also from abroad, allowing the internationalization of the HR movement. The Minh enterprise served to reanimate former South Vietnamese soldiers living in exile,[85] and sparked major mobilization among the youths of the exile communities as the movement expanded across the United States, as well as Western Europe, Australia, and Japan.[86] Vietnamese students across the exile communities, from Brussels to USC, held conferences reaffirming the ideals of HR and addressing the need for military and revolutionary action.[87] Vietnamese veterans, politicians, leaders, students, and activists throughout the United States and abroad came together for conferences and meetings, reaffirming their commitment to the liberation of Vietnam and support for their brethren resisting communist rule in Indochina.

As the movement became internationalized, it received growing coverage. A five-minute segment by Dan Rather on the CBS Evening News on the United Front in 1982 received incredible praise by Vietnamese American organs, not only in *NV*,[88] but also in the Canadian Vietnamese news.[89] In April 1984 the Front's leadership attended a press conference at the Foreign Correspondents Club of Japan. The Front published this reception in a pamphlet that included key photographs of Minh interacting with the leadership of the Vietnamese community in Japan, meeting with notable international figures, and being received by crowds of supporters within the Japanese Vietnamese community.[90] Minh was also privileged with the opportunity to promote the revolutionary activities of the Front at a Senate hearing in May 1983.[91]

These events illustrated the Front's international reputation and widespread legitimacy, and allowed the Front to receive political and financial support from the Vietnamese exile community. The Associated Press reported that "Vietnamese refugees in Orange County are donating funds and in some cases actually enlisting in guerrilla effort to overthrow the communist government of Vietnam."[92] Although the scale of its support and funding was unclear, the thousands that the Front drew to its rallies,[93] and the claims that the Front had sufficient "contributions … to open a chain of Vietnamese restaurants and buy a fishing boat"[94] implied that it was substantial.[95]

Utilizing Political and Military Rapport

Such massive support for the Front's agenda stemmed partly from the ability of the Front to paint itself as prepared to address the unique political and military challenges of the Third Indochina War. The Front portrayed its organization as an anticommunist force that not only was dedicated to the overthrow of Vietnamese communism, but also specialized in guerrilla tactics. Indeed, among those participating in the movement were former elite forces of the South Vietnamese military that specialized in methods of infiltration and jungle warfare.[96] These methods were seen as essential due to the nature of the conflict then brewing in Indochina, which militarily required not "a more powerful army, but … an armed force that is derived from the people."[97] This force would depend on the local population for "physical and material" support by politically capturing their hearts and minds,[98] and would conduct guerrilla war (du kích chiến) to "destroy the defensive infrastructure of the enemy … [and] bring confusion within the enemy ranks."[99] To help legitimize itself for such a task, the Front highlighted the specialized membership of its ranks, such as former paratrooper lieu-

tenant colonel Lê Hồng who is described as "ha[ving] great experience and ability in guerrilla warfare and politics."[100]

The depictions of Minh and his organization by *NV* exemplify the importance of former military experience in legitimizing the Front as an organization capable of waging revolution. As *NV* writes: "The reputation and past of General Minh are factors that ensure the legitimacy of this magnanimous and exciting resistance."[101] His close associates claimed that he headed the riverine Amphibious Force 211 during the war,[102] and was stationed at a variety of outposts in the Mekong River Delta.[103] With not only military status at his command, Minh also took on an image of a seasoned guerrilla fighter, and the guerrilla fatigues that he and his fighters wore contributed to that image.[104] The Front and Hoàng Cơ Minh thus derived their legitimacy as HR leaders from the political context of Indochina of the period, as well as the political and military status their members had developed in South Vietnam.

Utilizing the Anticommunist Past

Alongside attempts to depict itself as capable of overthrowing the Vietnamese Communist government through the use of low-intensity warfare, the Front also drew on the Vietnamese anticommunist past in order to legitimize its leadership of the HR movement. The Front understood its revolutionary endeavors as derivative of South Vietnamese anticommunist ambitions. For the Front, the Vietnam War was not "a thing of the past … [but was rather] still continuing and currently entering a new period."[105] The Front casted itself as continuing a long and historic struggle for liberation.[106] The founding of the Front inaugurated a "new period" that necessitated HR cadres to draw upon past "bloody experiences … [from the] eras of opposing France and resisting communism to this period."[107] This meant not only the reproduction of strategies of anticommunist resistance, but also ideals of destroying a "dictatorial" communist regime, and proving to the world that "the people of Vietnam are a people that love peace, freedom, and justice."[108]

The Front soon developed its own Vietnamese-language circular titled *Kháng Chiến* (Resistance) and the English-language periodical *Vietnam Insight*. Both of these newspapers served to be a forum upon which the Front relayed the call for support in its fight against communism. Publications became a means through which the Front propagated an image of itself as following in a historical legacy of anticommunist and nationalist resistance. The Front drew upon existing sources of cultural and political legitimacy to consolidate its influence in Vietnamese exile politics.[109]

The quintessential case of memory work produced by the Front came in a book titled *Anh Hùng Nước Tôi* (Heroes of My Nation), published in 1986. In the book, the Front traces its lineage back to the heroes and heroines of the Vietnamese dynastic past, like Lê Lợi and the Trung sisters, early Vietnamese nationalists like Phan Bội Châu, figures from the Republican era like Ngo Đình Diệm (the first president of the Vietnamese Republic), and deceased soldiers like Trần Văn Hai and Lê Nguyễn Vỹ—both of whom refused to give up arms after the Fall of Saigon in 1975. The purpose of the book, as its introduction claims, was to "discover, learn and praise the glowing models of our history" in order to "profess the just cause of the Vietnamese against the ill-gotten cause of the việt cộng."[110] According to the authors, the stories of these heroic figures demonstrate the "struggles, push, creativity, and cunning of the ancestors … [and] illuminates … the experiences of struggle in the past in order to apply [them] to the resistance work of today."[111] Heroes and heroines of the Vietnamese past were utilized to not only demarcate the political and cultural correctness of the movement, but also perpetuate patriotic and anticommunist sentiment among those who read the work. Indeed, whether or not the resistance truly drew upon these "experiences of struggle in the past" was less important than the fact that the Front presented itself as doing so.

In summary, the rise of the Front rested on its ability to mobilize the preexisting political and military status of its members and its ability to ground its legitimacy in the ideals of South Vietnam's anticommunist past. Within Vietnamese exile politics, the military challenges of the Third Indochina War made former military experiences a valuable political resource, particularly those experiences relating to guerrilla war. The Front successfully mobilized this resource and, as the Front rose in prominence, popularized the HR movement, returned former elites to positions of power, and perpetuated the memory and practice of South Vietnamese anticommunism. This perpetuation, however, transformed Vietnamese anticommunism from an ideal that sought to defend a state from communist incursion to one that sought to restore that state through force of arms.

Enforcement in Vietnamese America

As the Front gained popularity and expanded the HR movement, the violence in Indochina coalesced with violence deployed in Vietnamese America. This violence was not an exact replica of that in South Vietnam, but was very much a reutilization of the generalized knowledge of how to detect and suppress communism, a knowledge derived from the war.

As Robert Savitt, then Los Angeles deputy district attorney, succinctly stated: "Many of the former soldiers were trained assassins … trained … to kill North Vietnamese Communists and Viet Cong … [and] to 'get rid of anyone who was against the government.'"[112] The "ridding" of communist presence and opposition came to be reproduced in the United States. The rise of the Front, the emergence of a particular engagement with the memory of South Vietnam, and the reproduction of anticommunist political capital were entwined with the reproduction of anticommunist violence and enforcement. What follows is an expose detailing the various cases of political violence against "communist sympathizers" (thân cộng) or "Vietnamese traitors" (Việt gian)[113] in the Vietnamese communities across the United States; a violence reminiscent of anticommunist state policies like Diệm's Law 10/59 and the infamous Phoenix Program. This violence not simply served to silence those who were disenchanted with HR politics or disagreed with the Front but also created an atmosphere of fear and persecution in which a person who displayed the slightest sympathy for communism could be met with death threats, violence, and hostility.

Vietnamese Anticommunist Violence

During the 1980s, at least fourteen cases were recorded that depict anticommunist political violence across various Vietnamese American communities. Those targeted were, for the most part, journalists who displayed leniency toward Hanoi or spoke negatively about the United Front. Those who were attacked were deemed communist sympathizers, or alleged to have some form of connection to the Vietnamese communist party. Some were outright assassinated, some mutilated, others barely escaped with their lives, and still others faced threats of physical harm.

On July 21, 1981, Dương Trộng Lâm walked out of his apartment in the San Francisco Tenderloin neighborhood when he was shot dead by a gunman who quickly fled. A previously unknown group who called themselves the Vietnamese Organization to Exterminate the Communists and Restore the Nation (VOECRN) claimed the murder. This was not the first time that Lâm had been attacked, according to an *NV* report in August 1981. In 1980, he was confronted by angry members of the San Francisco community at a federal building during a meeting called by Sharen Fujii, director of the refugee program in the region. He was also attacked by three youths from the Vietnamese refugee community at a local San Francisco market prior to the incident as well.

Lâm had published a newspaper titled *Cái* Đình *Làng* (The Village Temple), which was seen as sympathetic to Hanoi and even reprinted

articles from the communist media. According to the *NV* newspaper, Lâm was in league with the "cộng sản nằm vùng" (communist sleeper agent)[114] in the United States, and the Committee to Fight for Human Rights—a Vietnamese organization in San Francisco—released a statement which condemned Dương as a "Việt gian" (Vietnamese traitor).[115]

As part of those who studied abroad in the United States during the war years, Dương had participated in the antiwar movement,[116] and the VOERCN justified his murder by labeling these activities "anti-war propaganda work."[117] Furthermore, Lâm had "belittled and criticized the National Restoration fighters who [were] fighting night and day to exterminate the Communists in out [*sic*] homeland." A character like Lâm, who not only was known to be sympathetic to the hated Vietnamese communists, but also was criticizing a legitimate anticommunist movement, was the perfect target for assassination. Thus, "on behalf of the entire Vietnamese people, [the VOECRN] decided to EXECUTE this Duong Trong Lam."[118]

Criticism of the HR movement, which the Front came to represent, was paramount to being communist, which entailed the need for violent reprisal, and Lâm was only one of the many cases of political assassination and violence that occurred during this period. Nguyễn Đạm Phong had published numerous articles denouncing the Front in the Vietnamese weekly *Tự Do* (Freedom), was deemed a "traitor" by the VOECRN, and was assassinated in 1982, likely due to directives from the Front.[119] Đoàn Văn Toại criticized the Front as pocketing contributions and was a competitor for HR legitimacy through the Committee for National Salvation. He supported dialogue between the United States and Vietnam when he was shot in the back of the head on August 21, 1989.[120] In the investigation of his attempted murder, the Fresno Vietnamese community refused to cooperate, considering Toại a "communist dupe."[121] Triết Lê's name was placed on a hit list by the VOECRN found in Nguyễn Đạm Phong's home on the day of his assassination. He criticized the Front's leadership and corruption through a column he wrote in the Vietnamese newsletter *Văn Nghệ Tiền Phong* (Vanguard Arts). In September 1990, Triết and his wife, Tuyết Thị Đangtrần, were shot and killed as they parked their car in front of their home in Bailey's Crossroads, Virginia.[122]

The violence that was enacted against journalists who condemned the Front existed within a larger context of anticommunist political violence. The reprisal against those who criticized the Front made up only one aspect of the anticommunist sanctions in 1980s Vietnamese America. Those who interacted with Hanoi or engaged in any activities that might bolster Communist's Vietnam economy or legitimacy faced the possibility of violent reprisal. Tập Van Phạm was killed in 1987 (credit for the killing

also claimed by the VOECRN) because his newspaper *Mai* published ads for cash and package transfers to Vietnam. In 1981, Ngô Vĩnh Long, then a graduate student at Harvard, faced an attempted assassination by a former South Vietnamese naval officer who went by Ngô Nghĩa.[123] During a panel discussion at Harvard, Long blamed the economic disaster in Vietnam after the war on U.S. imperialism and defended SRV reeducation camps.[124] Nguyễn Văn Lũy was shot and wounded in an attack that killed his wife, Phạm Thị Lưu, in May 1984. He was the "honorary president of a pro-Hanoi group, the Association of Vietnamese in the United States," was a former antiwar activist, and published the pro-Hanoi tabloid *Thái Bình*,[125] but his death did not immediately link to the Front.[126] The violence was not simply a manifestation of the Front; it was borne out of the anticommunist institution during that time period. However, HR politics allowed the Front to channel the existing practice of anticommunist violence for its own purposes. The turmoil in Indochina, which produced the hope of restoring the nation, allowed the Front to emerge as the most legitimate anticommunist organization among Vietnamese exiles. From that legitimacy, the Front drew upon anticommunist beliefs to justify violent activities not only in Indochina, but also in Vietnamese America. The defense of the Front became equated with the defense of anticommunism, and the community support needed to wage an insurgent operation required that dissident voices be silenced.

Moreover, the victims were rarely looked upon favorably by the Vietnamese community of which they were a part. Next to being seen as communist sympathizers, they were also seen as being anti-Front, which legitimated their extermination. While Vietnamese refugees came out in droves in support of the Front at its rallies, they also came in defense of violent perpetrators. The quintessential case of Trần Khánh Vân is illustrative of this support.

An attempt was made on Vân's life on March 18, 1986, outside a shopping center in Westminster, California. He was struck on the shoulder and waist, and was rushed to Fountain Valley hospital. He was fortunate to survive. The VOECRN, too, took claim for this attack, denounced Vân as a traitor, and placed him in a group of individuals they deemed to be communist "agents in the Vietnamese exile community."[127] In an attempt to defend himself, Vân presented himself as an anticommunist,[128] and gave an interview to the *Orange County Register* in which he stated: "Those people who I truly sympathize with are the political prisoners and others who are still being held in Vietnam."[129]

Vân also collaborated with Cal State Fullerton physics professor Edward Cooperman who supported dialogue between the United States and

Vietnam, providing further evidence of his alleged communist sympathies. Cooperman was shot to death by one of his students, Lâm Văn Minh, in October 13, 1984.[130] Although the court ruled the death to be manslaughter (the defendant claimed that Cooperman was showing him how to use a gun when it accidentally discharged), his wife and family claimed that it was a political assassination due to his linkages with Hanoi.[131] Klaaske Cooperman, the widow, stated that "Van had met frequently with her husband to discuss their shared interest in 'stabilizing' relations between Vietnam and the United States and delivering humanitarian aid and technology to the Communist country."[132] According to Trần Văn Hữu in an *NV* editorial, this was "enough testimony … [that] Vân was a communist," thus justifying the attempted assassination.[133]

The perpetrator was Bé Tư [Little Tu] Văn Trần, who then was thirty, and confessed to the attempted murder. Bé Tư admitted that he attacked Vân "because he believed the man supported the Hanoi government."[134] Bé Tư was a member of the United Front, though he denied that the Front was involved in the shooting. In 2015 Bé Tư claimed that he "had broke [*sic*] with the Front before the shooting."[135] When Bé Tư confessed, *NV* reported that he was a former teacher in Vietnam, and his family were victims of communism. The report sympathetically writes: "Partly because Bé Tư wanted to take personal responsibility [for his actions] and partly because he was moved to, thus had cooperated with the police." Furthermore, according to *NV*, Bé Tư turned himself in rather than being arrested, though police reports cite a witness who gave a description of the car that led to the arrest of Bé Tư.[136]

What ensued was an outpouring of support by the Vietnamese community in defense of Bé Tư. In an editorial published in *NV*, written by "the family and loved ones" of Bé Tư, he was once again held up as a former educator, while Vân was depicted as "a person who associated with and conducted activities for the Vietnamese Communists" and was completely at odds with the ideals of Bé Tư, "as well as with the entirety of the anticommunist Vietnamese exile community." After describing Bé Tư as generous and a benefit to the community, the editorial stated Bé Tư was a "youth who embraced the ideals of serving the nation [and] the people through the most progressive and sacrificial way," and that his family "are immediate and continuous victims of the inhumane, repressive communist regime." The piece stated that any donations would be welcomed, and should be directed toward a legal fund established for his defense. As a final illustrative point, the editorial concluded: "Your contributions will be expressions of the spirit of cooperation, unity, and anticommunism."[137] The next piece on March 29 offered two editorial pieces from members

within the community. The piece by Trần Văn Hửu came in defense of the actions of "Thày giáo Tư" (Teacher Tu), describing the assailant as among those "young intellectuals who want to save the country" and encourage staunch opposition to communism "in every action, small and large," including actions that entailed violence.[138] The second, by Phạm Nghi, stated: "If one convicts Trần Văn Bé Tư, then one cannot ignore the sins of Trần Khánh Vân."[139]

The first hearing on Bé Tư led to a mistrial, with a vote of nine to three in favor of acquittal. Indeed, there was much pressure surrounding the trial. The *Los Angeles Times* reported: "Prosecutors, defense attorneys and Vietnamese community leaders agree that the Tran [Bé Tư] trial and its surrounding issues of nationalistic pride [read anticommunism] make the case significant for thousands of Southeast Asians living in Southern California."[140] As reported, in a blatant display of anticommunism, during the first trial, "Tran, his then-co-defendant in the shooting, a defense investigator and their former attorney all [sported] emblems on their coats that read 'Viet Cong Hunting Club.'"[141] The second trial in 1989 resulted in a seven-year conviction for the attempted murder of Trần Khánh Vân. In response to this conviction, an organization calling themselves Task Force U7 sent a circular to Orange County Vietnamese newspapers stating that they "will resolutely take revenge for Be Tu."[142]

The case of Vân and Bé Tư illustrates a deep support within the Vietnamese American community for those who are seen as acting on the behalf of anticommunism. Undoubtedly, the ties that Bé Tư had developed with the United Front aided in this support, and allowed him to be presented as an anticommunist hero. Anticommunism was even deployed by the victim who sought to distance himself from activities that can be seen as aiding the Vietnamese communists.

However, anticommunist violence played another role in the Vietnamese American community. On the one hand, anticommunist victimizers physically silenced dissenting voices and deployed reprisals based on a set of norms, values, and beliefs widely held within the community. On the other hand, the violence created an atmosphere of fear that pervaded those with alternative beliefs. Indeed, these cases of political violence did more than simply eliminate a "communist sympathizer" or a "communist sleeper." They set a precedent that forced individuals within the community to self-censor, lest they face a similar fate.[143]

The prevalence of anticommunism, a product of the South Vietnamese violent anticommunist past, generated a strict code against any and all things remotely tied to the Vietnamese communist government. Furthermore, the enforcement of what was and what was not allowed in

Vietnamese American communities ensured that anticommunism persists as a part of Vietnamese American life. What is astonishing is the extent to which anticommunism was able to pervade everyday life. Indeed, even where dead victims of anticommunist violence were allowed to be buried was enforced. According to *Mother Jones Magazine*, "Seventeen days after Duong Trong Lam was buried, his father requested the body be exhumed because of protests by San Jose's Vietnamese, who didn't want a 'Communist' buried near their relatives. His family had Lam cremated and his ashes cast to the winds off Half Moon Bay, over the Pacific, in the direction of Vietnam."[144]

The Shift

By the late 1980s, the political tides were turning against the Front. The secrecy of the Front, as well as its failure to produce any concrete evidence of progress in destabilizing the SRV led to disillusionment with the HR movement. Its decline began in 1984 when one of its founders, Phạm Văn Liệu, came out and denounced the Front for opening a chain of restaurants and buying a fishing boat with contributions. A "prominent member of San Jose's Vietnamese community" stated: "After Lieu left, most of my friends finally opened their eyes and turned their backs on the organization."[145] In contrast to the Vietnamese American journalists who criticized the Front along similar lines, Liệu had an entire repertoire of anticommunist activities that made him virtually untouchable. He was the former head of National Police during the war and a well-known anticommunist leader within the community, and his activism did not end when he reached the States. As Liệu related in a *New York Times* interview, "We don't have to overthrow the Communists by killing."[146] Other anticommunist leaders, like Nguyễn Cao Kỳ and Lê Thị Anh, also distanced themselves from the Front.[147]

The shift away from violent overthrow was reflective in a growing younger generation of Vietnamese Americans who were turned off by the Front's "lack of openness," and the fact that "nobody likes wars, guerrillas, jungle units. In the 21st century, people won't buy into those things anymore."[148] Members within the community began to conceive of the Front as a farce, and allegations of corruption only worsened its image among Vietnamese Americans.

However, developments in Indochina and the international climate surrounding the late 1980s were more significant in pushing Vietnamese American politics away from the dream of homeland restoration. In 1984, twenty-one members of a France-based Vietnamese resistance organization were captured by the SRV, with sentences ranging from death and

life imprisonment to eight years in prison.[149] Three years later, Minh led a group of exile resistance fighters across the Lao-Vietnam border that was ambushed by SRV units. Minh was killed during the battle, his forces suffered heavy casualties, and a number of his units were captured.[150] Eighteen of those captured were displayed on a show trial and were imprisoned with lengthy sentences.[151]

Next to these military setbacks, news about the shadowy and questionable operations of the Front and the death of Hoàng Cơ Minh led to tremendous disillusionment with the movement. While the Front itself did not recognize the death of their leader until 2001,[152] others picked up the story and shed doubt on the Front.[153] According to a report in 1990, "Many … think Minh is dead and that the Front is lying to keep the organization alive—and the donations flowing in."[154]

Military setbacks, the death of Minh, and the subsequent delegitimization of the Front coalesce with the larger process of normalization that was under way during the late 1980s. Indeed, the Third Indochina War was winding down. The impending collapse of the Soviet Union starting in 1987 shifted Vietnamese American thoughts toward possible normalization. Sensing diplomatic resettlement nearing, the SRV began to pull troops from Cambodia en masse, and the last occupying troop left Cambodia in September 1989.[155]

As the Front and the HR movement weakened, a different form of anticommunist politics emerged on the scene. The 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union spurred a new movement within the Vietnamese American community. Rather than advocating for violent overthrow, the anticommunist leadership met and announced a new political project: demanding free elections and "toppling communism in Vietnam through public pressure and internal dissent."[156] Demand for democracy and political reform also allowed for the formation of new organizations like the Federation of Overseas Free Vietnamese Communities (FOFVIC). The FOFVIC, in particular, laid out a program of "citizenship drive, election registering, [and] providing the guidance to participate [in] democratic activities" in order to gain political influence for the Vietnamese exiles and to continue the goal of "eras[ing] … Communism in Vietnam."[157]

In the months leading up to normalization, even staunch anticommunists were expressing a different attitude. "Maybe we can introduce ideas of democracy and human rights to Vietnam," said Loann Nguyen, who previously opposed the idea of establishing ties. The shift to a market economy in Vietnam led entrepreneurs to view the SRV in a fundamentally different light. Normalization seemed inevitable, and many saw opportunities for businesses in Vietnam.[158] In Vietnam, attitudes toward normalization were

similar. Even those former guerrillas who once fought against the Americans and sacrificed for the communist cause saw opportunities for peace.[159]

Conclusion

In 2012, Viet Thanh Nguyen wrote of the need to not simply "[speak] of, for, or about" Southeast Asian communities, but also the need to "speak against those communities."[160] The Vietnamese Americans, he continues, are not simply "victims" of communism, but are also anticommunist "victimizers."[161] This article makes clear how Vietnamese anticommunism grew out of the violence of South Vietnam, and how this violence was reproduced in the United States. The interrogation and acknowledgment of this past is not meant to condemn Vietnamese Americans, or even anticommunism. Vietnamese refugees faced real loss and tragedy in the collapse of South Vietnam in 1975, and this undoubtedly fueled their politics in the United States. However, memories of loss, trauma, and pain can tell only one aspect of the story. The scholarship on Vietnamese Americans must also interrogate how anticommunism was forged through a history of warfare and nation-building, and how the practices and beliefs derived from this history were remade in Vietnamese America.

By emphasizing this history, the scholar can understand Vietnamese anticommunism as something that is not stagnant or unchanging, but dynamic and contextual. Indeed, anticommunism in today's Vietnamese America differs sharply from how Vietnamese Americans perceived and practiced anticommunism during the 1980s. Recent protests against visitors from Vietnam who are perceived as being tied to the communist party, a transnational movement pushing for democracy and human rights in the homeland, and the presence of uniformed South Vietnamese servicemen in the recent April 30 Commemorations speak to the continuing salience of anticommunist memory in Vietnamese American politics. Aspects of South Vietnamese anticommunism have been instituted into law, such as the "Freedom and Heritage Flag"[162] and the "no-communist zone" in cities in California.[163] In juxtaposition to the 1980s, this anticommunism is practiced in a non-transgressive form.

As the international political climate shifted after the collapse of the Soviet Union and normalization between the United States and Vietnam, the anticommunist violence that characterized the 1980s is being reinterpreted in the anticommunist discourse. Lý Tống—a popular anticommunist activist—was arrested for pepper-spraying a visiting Vietnamese musician. Although a great number of Vietnamese Americans came to his defense, others condemned his violent actions as "a form of revenge and does

not correlate with the righteous anticommunist policy of the Vietnamese exiles."[164] Former HR fighters are remembered not as anticommunist victimizers, but rather as democratic activists or victims of communist oppression.[165] Most indicative, the Front changed its name to Viet Tan (Reform Party) and its goals to "establish[ing] democracy and reform[ing] the country through peaceful means."[166]

However, paralleling the continuation of anticommunist memory work is the continuation of the anticommunist authoritarianism instituted during early Vietnamese America. In 2002, Tony Lâm declined another term to the Westminster City Council after being labeled a "communist sympathizer" for refusing to support an anticommunist protest. Quyên Di, a lecturer at UCLA, was condemned as "an intellectual who has collaborated with the Viet Cong"[167] after his recent visit to Vietnam. Indeed, if political violence is no longer deployed to reinforce anticommunist politics in the community, social ostracization and political condemnation are.

The image of Vietnamese America that this article presents may be seen as homogenizing complex Vietnamese American reality, and an argument can be made that anticommunism is not representative of the entire Vietnamese American community. As Linda Vo notes: "homeland politics is still of primary importance and adopting fervent anti-communism ideologies is mandatory" but does not "necessarily represent the needs or voice of this extensive community."[168] The dissident voices of journalists critical of the HR movement are evidence of this diversity. The violence deployed against them, however, speaks to something more important. Important as these efforts to illustrate the "limits of absolutist diasporic ideologies" are,[169] the scholarship must not restrict itself to simply detailing and accounting for the diversity of Vietnamese American political perspectives. It must also interrogate why and how this form of politics came to dominate and hegemonize Vietnamese American collective discourse and interpretations of the past.

At a general level, when one brings the issue of ideological domination to the fore, the importance of power and politics in shaping the diasporic cultural politics is illuminated. It points to mechanisms that reproduce and sustain certain forms of diasporic politics, and can provide insights on how such a hegemonizing force can be disrupted. By illuminating this history of power *within* the diasporic community, one can reconceptualize the current political and cultural conflicts in the diaspora as not simply something that is accounted for by generational differences or a conflict of ideals, but something that is rooted in contesting sources of legitimacy, political capital, and power. Exploring power struggles, their historical origins, and their continuing legacies allows the scholarship to build nuance

and complexity to the study of diasporic refugee communities. It avoids painting refugees as mere "victims of larger, more powerful forces"[170] but rather as historically located actors who had real personal and collective interests, acted strategically on those interests, and ultimately influenced the course of history.

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Notes

1. I refer to the Vietnamese individuals throughout my article by their personal name rather than their surname, primarily because this is how they are referred to in the Vietnamese-language newspaper accounts, memoirs, and other published sources I've come across.
2. Ana Arana, "Targeted by Terrorists," in *Silenced: The Unsolved Murders of Immigrant Journalists in the United States*, ed. Juan Gonzalez et al. (New York: Committee to Protect Journalists, 1994), 15.
3. Report 6/27/1994 in A. C. Thompson, "Terror in Little Saigon: An Old War Comes to a New Country," *ProPublica*, November 3, 2015, https://www.propublica.org/article/terror-in-little-saigon-vietnam-american-journalists-murdered (accessed December 3, 2015).
4. Thompson, "Terror in Little Saigon."
5. C. N Le, "Better Dead Than Red: Anti-communist Politics among Vietnamese Americans," in *Anti-communist Minorities in the U.S.: Political Activism of Ethnic Refugees*, ed. Ieva Zake (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 193.
6. Ibid., 193.
7. Karin Aguilar-San Juan, *Little Saigons: Staying Vietnamese in America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 65.
8. Ibid., 64.
9. Nhi T. Lieu, *The American Dream in Vietnamese* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), xxiv.
10. Ibid., 62.
11. Thuy Thanh Vo-Dang, "Anticommunism as Cultural Praxis: South Vietnam, War, and Refugee Memories in the Vietnamese American Community" (PhD diss., University of California, San Diego, 2008), xii.

12. Ibid., 2.
13. Memory often involves "power struggles over what to remember, whom to recognize, and how to represent the past" (Viet Thanh Nguyen, "Just Memory: War and the Ethics of Remembrance," *American Literary History* 25, no. 1 [2013]: 144–63).
14. Kieu-Linh Caroline Valverde, *Transnationalizing Viet Nam: Community, Culture, and Politics in the Diaspora* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2012), 113–44, is a bit of an exception. Although she notes the role of power and politics in the contestations between Madison Nguyen and "staunch anticommunists," she, like other scholars, does not adequately explain what makes these "staunch anticommunists" so politically dominant and instead points to "residual sentiments surrounding the war—including anticommunist ideology, loss, and sorrow" (114) as a key source of the antagonism by "staunch anticommunists" against Madison Nguyen's election. Lieu's *American Dream in Vietnamese* is also insightful, but the focus on reproduction is not on anticommunist power structures and political practices, but rather on cultural/political themes and constructs derived from South Vietnam. Lieu's work is remarkable for its attention to the vested economic interests of those who seek to perpetuate certain cultural, nationalistic, and anticommunist discourse.
15. Lieu, *American Dream in Vietnamese*, 18.
16. "In many ways … it is unclear what anticommunism means for these individuals and groups" in the Vietnamese American community: Valverde, *Transnationalizing Viet Nam*, 12.
17. A speaker, after a meeting of Homeland Restoration groups in September 1981, stated: "Although the conditions of Vietnam is not the same as Cambodia, there necessitates collaboration in political matters, especially during the current international situation that is opportune for liberation" ("Hộp Họp Liên Miên Về VN Bàn Bạc Việc Liên Kết," *Người Việt*, September 19, 1981).
18. The first and second parts of the definition are borrowed from C. N. Le. The third part is drawn from Hiroko Furuya and Christian Collet, "Contested Nation: Vietnam and the Emergence of Saigon Nationalism in the United States," in *The Transnational Politics of Asian Americans*, ed. Christian Collet and Pei-Te Lien (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2009), 56–73 which incorporates what the authors calls "Saigon nationalism." Valverde, *Transnationalizing Viet Nam*, also includes "preserving the culture that existed before 1975 and symbols that represented South Viet Nam" (12) in her definition.
19. For this terminology, I draw from Bourdieu and the literature on institutionalism. By "political capital," I mean a type of "symbolic capital," which is a resource that "is accorded positive recognition, esteem or honor by relevant actors within the field," and for this article, it refers to the "field" of politics, specifically Vietnamese anticommunist politics (Mustafa Emir-

bayer and Victoria Johnson, "Bourdieu and Organizational Analysis," *Theory and Society* 37, no. 1 [2008]: 1–44). Political capital operates as a source of legitimacy, or "a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions" (Mark C. Suchman, "Managing Legitimacy: Strategic and Institutional Approaches," 20, no. 3 [1995]: 571–610).

20. The scholarship on the Vietnam War is predominantly framed around the questions "Why did the communists win?" or "Why did the US lose in Vietnam?" The answers provided emphasize (1) the imperialist (Marilyn B. Young, *The Vietnam Wars, 1945–1990* [New York: HarperCollins, 1991]), ill-advised (Mark Atwood Lawrence, *The Vietnam War: A Concise International History* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008]), and/or incompetent (Cincinnatus, *Self-Destruction: The Disintegration and Decay of the United States Army during the Vietnam War Era* [New York: Norton, 1981]) role of the United States in Vietnam and (2) the organizational and political superiority of the Vietnamese Communists (William Duiker, *The Communist Road to Power in Vietnam* [Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1981]; William Duiker, *Sacred War: Nationalism and Revolution in a Divided Vietnam* [New York: McGraw-Hill, 1995]). See also Fredrik Logevall, *Embers of War: The Fall of an Empire and the Making of America's Vietnam* (New York: Random House, 2012). See also George Kahin, *Intervention: How America Became Involved in Vietnam* (New York: Knopf, 1986). These works omit South Vietnamese anticommunists as historical actors, and depict the RVN as either American puppets or too politically and militarily incompetent, factionalized, and corrupt to be historically effective.
21. Extended critique of the lack of a history of the Republic of Vietnam in both Vietnamese studies and Vietnam War literature is found in Nu-Anh Tran, "Contested Identities: Nationalism in the Republic of Vietnam (1954–1963)" (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2013), 3–9; see also Heonik Kwon, *The Other Cold War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).
22. On anticommunism as a distinct form of Vietnamese nationalism or Vietnamese modernity, predating American involvement, see note 24. For South Vietnamese political distinctiveness, see Nu-Anh Tran, "South Vietnamese Identity, American Intervention, and the Newspaper *Chính Luận* [Political Discussion], 1965–1969," *Journal of Vietnamese Studies* 1, nos. 1–2 [2006]: 169–209 and Olga Dror, "Raising Vietnamese: War and Youth in the South in the Early 1970s," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 44, no. 1 [2013]: 74–99.
23. Yen Le Espiritu, *Body Counts: The Vietnam War and Militarized Refuge(es)* (Oakland: University of California, 2014), 55.
24. Although differences between communism and noncommunist ideals of Vietnamese nationalism began as intellectual, often friendly, debates, real disaffection with, and grievances against, communism arose during the

late 1930s as a result of political competition between noncommunists and the Vietnamese communists (Duiker, *Communist Road to Power*, 55). This political rivalry eventually broke out into political violence between rivaling forces after the Vietminh seized power during August Revolution of 1945 (Duiker, *Communist Road to Power*, 110–17; Logevall, *Embers of War*, 151; Tuan Hoang, "Ideology in Urban South Vietnam, 1950–1975" [PhD diss., University of Notre Dame, 2013], 77). Vietnamese anticommunism is seen as an "alternative nationalism" (Vo-Dang, "Anticommunism as Cultural Praxis," 10) or one of "two competing models for building a modern nation" (Neil Jameson, *Understanding Vietnam* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993], 176).

25. Nu-Anh Tran, "Contested Nationalism: Ethnic Identity and State Power in the Republic of Vietnam, 1954–1963" (ISSI Fellows Working Papers, January 3, 2012), http://escholarship.org/uc/item/1kb7z2vh.
26. List of some South Vietnamese anticommunist coercive policies: On paramilitary forces, see Harvey H. Smith et al., *Area Handbook for South Vietnam* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1967), 427). On Rural Reconstruction, see John C. Donnel, "Pacification Reassessed," *Asian Survey* 7, no. 8 (1967): 567–76. On COORDS and the phoenix program, see Jeremy Patrick White, *Civil Affairs in Vietnam* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2009). These policies paralleled covert counterinsurgent operations by American and South Vietnamese military to destabilize the communist hold in the north. See OPLAN 34A in Hieu Vu, *Republic of Vietnam Commandos* (CreateSpace, 2011).
27. The Communist Denunciation Campaign began in mid-1955; for casualty counts, see "Origins of the Insurgency in South Vietnam, 1954–1960," in *Pentagon Papers*, vol. 1, chap. 5 (Boston: Beacon, 1971), 283–314. For the social and political impact, see Duiker, *Communist Road to Power*, 174, 183; Geoffrey C. Stewart, "Hearts, Minds and Công Dân Vụ The Special Commissariat for Civic Action and Nation-Building in Ngô Đình Diệm Vietnam, 1955–1957," *Journal of Vietnamese Studies* 6, no. 3 (2011): 44–100; Kahin, *Intervention*, 97; and William Henderson, "South Viet Nam Finds Itself," *Foreign Affairs* 35, no. 2 (1957): 283–94.
28. On agrovilles and the Strategic Hamlet Program, see Duiker, *Sacred War*, 117–18, 152–53. On repression and violence, see Duiker, *Communist Road to Power*, 182–93. On Law 10/59, see Duiker, *Sacred War*, 124; Marvin E. Gettleman, Jane Franklin, Marilyn B. Young, and Bruce Franklin, *Vietnam and America: The Most Comprehensive Documented History of the Vietnam War* (New York: Grove Press, 1995), 156–60; Logevall, *Embers of War*, 692.
29. For the Torture in Phoenix Program, see Young, *Vietnam Wars*, 213, and White, *Civil Affairs in Vietnam*.
30. William Rosenau and Austin Long, *The Phoenix Program and Contemporary Counterinsurgency* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 2009), 12.

31. "Systems of social control typically employ both rewards and punishment—both carrot and sticks—to influence behavior." Robert C. Ellickson, *Order without Law: How Neighbors Settle Disputes* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991), 124.
32. Alexander Woodside, *Community and Revolution in Modern Vietnam* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1976), 295.
33. Recruits for the CIA's Provisional Reconnaissance Units (PRU) mostly "had previous military experience" and were "often in elite South military units," such as the Special Forces, Navy Commandos, Airborne, Rangers, etc. These PRU operatives received "generous pay, specialized training from the CIA, and relatively low casualties" (Rosenau and Long, *Phoenix Program*, 12). These individuals were also predisposed to anticommunism and recruited from their own family and social networks informants who would spy and report on communist activities.
34. Elites had a practical stake in perpetuating the anticommunist state because they benefited from state-assigned positions. For example, members of the Cần Lao Party—a powerful anticommunist political party created and led by Ngô Đình Nhu (the brother of Diệm)—"occup[ied] important positions in the Government, the National Assembly, the administration, the army, and the police, as well as being prominent in commercial circles" and that orders must be "unquestionably" carried out "because, if doubts should be cast on their loyalty, *they would risk losing the positions which they hold primarily by virtue of their party membership*." P. J. H., "Progress in the Republic of Vietnam," *World Today* 15, no. 2 (1959): 68–78, emphasis added. For the political legacy of the organization after Diệm and retention of positions, see Kahin, *Intervention*, 230–32, 299–300n37, chap. 11; see also Edward Miller, *Misalliance: Ngo Dinh Diem, the United States, and the Fate of South Vietnam* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2013), 134–35; Oliver Todd, "Special Feature: The Truths of South Vietnam," *Vietnam Bulletin*, March 1, 1974, 14.
35. Hoang, "Ideology," 130–40.
36. Vu, *Republic of Vietnam Commandos*, 22. Elite military units were paid with RVN salary, but also with "supplement money from MACV-SOG called 'Mission Money.'" Participating in these commando missions meant a relatively wealthy livelihood, as wives and families received handsome payment from the RVN when these men went on missions (ibid., 72).
37. Hoang, "Ideology," 97.
38. On Catholic anticommunism and importance in loyalty to Diệm, see Kahin, *Intervention*, 98. "After Diệm, Catholics continued … to constitute a highly influential group because of their cohesiveness and extensive representation in the officer corps of the armed forces, in the higher echelon of the civil service and among the liberal professional elements" (Harvey H. Smith et al., *Area Handbook for South Vietnam* [Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1967], 238); for northern *émigrés*, recruitment for RVN

elite military forces, and the importance of anticommunist beliefs and background, see Vu, *Republic of Vietnam Commandos*, 21–22.

39. "Tường-Trình Về Vấn-Đề Xử-Dụng Hồi Chánh / Report on the Issue of Hoi Chanh Implementation" and "Xử-dụng các hồi-chánh trong quân-đội Hoa-Kỳ / Implementation of Hoi Chanh in the American Army," Joseph Carrier Collection on the Chieu Hoi program and the Vietnamese Conflict, box 1:2, circa 1965, University of California, Irvine Special Collections and Archives. See also "Guidelines to Chieu Hoi Psychological Operations, the Chieu Hoi Inducement Program," Joseph Carrier Collection, box 1:6.
40. According to Young, Duiker, and a series of leftist historians, Diem was deposed because of his gradual shift toward dialogue with Hanoi, and his inability to ensure stability in South Vietnam.
41. Textbooks concerning nationalism included, e.g., Tran Van Que's *Sư Phạm Lý Thuyết* (Philosophy of Pedagogy, 1968), *Lịch Sử Việt Nam và Thế Giới* (The History of Vietnam and the World), by Tran Huu Quang, and *Sử Ký Địa Lý: Đệ Nhất A.B.C.D.*, by Le Kim Ngan. Regarding anticommunism, e.g., a middle school textbook describes communism as a "dictatorial regimes … organized by hiding under the visage of democracy, but in reality is a totalitarian regime" (Trần Đức Anh, *Chính Trị Phổ Thông* [Saigon: Sáng Xuất Ban], 115) and in opposition to the "democratic spirit" (*tinh thần dân chủ*) found in traditional forms of Vietnamese social organization (ibid., 38–48). See also *Quân Dân Việt Nam Chống Tây Xâm* (1971), 418, which offers a noncommunist revolutionary history of Vietnam.
42. Henry B. Davis IV, *Mind Games: Setting Conditions for Successful Counterinsurgency Military Information Support Operations* (Pickle Partners Publishing, 2015), 24–30.
43. Jeffrey Clarke, "Civil-Military Relations in South Vietnam and the American Advisory Effort," in *The Vietnam War: Vietnamese and American Perspectives*, ed. Jayne S. Werner and Luu Doan Huynh (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1993), 187–88.
44. Woodside, *Community and Revolution*, 281.
45. Espiritu, *Body Counts*, 55.
46. Ibid., 56.
47. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *The State of the World's Refugees 2000: Fifty Years of Humanitarian Action* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 91, http://www.unhcr.org/4a4c754a9.html (accessed January 5, 2016).
48. Espiritu, *Body Counts*, 55.
49. It is unclear how strong early resistance to communist rule was. See Vu Thuy Hoang, "Vietnam Refugee Ideological Battle Expected to Intense," *Washington Post*, December 25, 1977; on minor and sporadic resistances, see Lewis M. Simons, "Little Laos: Supplicant or Servant? Some See Threat of Dominance in Vietnam's Pledge of Aid," *Washington Post*, July 21, 1977; Denis D. Gray, "BC Cycle," Associated Press, March 20, 1977; Fred S.

Hoffman, "PM Cycle," Associated Press, April 27, 1977; Henry Kamn, "Viet Resistance Groups," *Globe and Mail*, January 30, 1978. For estimated counts of opposition forces, see George McArthur, "Sect Members Fight Red: Rule Mekong Delta Area," *Los Angeles Times*, January 18, 1978.

50. Phuong Tran Nguyen, "The People of the Fall: Refugee Nationalism in Little Saigon, 1975–2005" (PhD diss., University of Southern California, 2009), 133.
51. Examples of early reports on Phục Quốc activities articulating the resistance narrative: "Biên Hòa-Sóc Trăng bị ruồng bổ dử dội," *TrắngĐen*, March 13, 1976, 9; "Thành Phần Chỉ Huy QS Mặt Trận CQBV miền nam," *Trắng Đen*, March 27, 1976, 7; "Việt Nam và D. N. A Sẻ Đi Về Đâu?," *TrắngĐen*, March 27, 1976, 12–13; "Kháng Chiến Việt-Lào-Miên Liên Kết Hỗ Trợ Chiến Đấu: Người Mèo và Lực Lượng FULRO có Lực Lượng Hùng Mạnh," *Trắng Đen*, May 23, 1976, 4.
52. "Lập Quân Đội Cách Mạng Ngay Trong Lãnh Thổ Việt Nam," *Người Việt*, September 19, 1981: "khôi phục tinh thần trách nhiệm và danh dự của quân đội VNCH và tiếp tục công cuộc chiến đấu đến cùng để xây dựng tự do thật sự cho đồng bào."
53. Formations of Homeland Restoration organizations abroad originally began in 1976 with a France-based organization led by former South Vietnamese Air Force officer Lê Quốc Tùy ("500 Việt Kiều Ba Lê họp lập Mặt Trận Thống Nhất … Việt Nam Cộng Hòa Sáp Được Tái Lập?," *Trắng Đen*, March 6, 1976, 9; "Tuyên ngôn của Mặt Trận Thống Nhứt Các L. L. Yêu Nước Giải Phóng Nam VN," *Trắng Đen*, March 27, 1976, 4).
54. An early organization calling itself "Lực Lượng Yểm Trợ Kháng Chiến Phục Quốc Quân" (Support Force for the Resistance Homeland Restoration Army) was formed in January 1977 in Escondido, California (Hài Âu, "Dân Quân Quốc Gia Nhập Cuộc Ủng Hộ Kháng Chiến PQ," *Trắng Đen*, February 1, 1977, 17). It later merged with a Europe-based organization to form the transnational Mặt Trận Hải Ngoại Phục Quốc" (Overseas Front for Homeland Restoration) ("Tuyên Cáo Của Mặt Trận Hải Ngoại Phục Quốc," *Trắng Đen*, February 11, 1977, 7).
55. "Tuyên Cáo Của Mặt Trận Hải Ngoại Phục Quốc," *TrắngĐen*, February 11, 1977, 9.
56. "Chiêu Mộ Chiến Sỉ Về Nước: Sẽ Có Người Tình Nguyện Không?," *Trắng Đen*, November 24, 1979, 3.
57. Nguyen, "People of the Fall," 144–45.
58. For efforts by *Trắng Đen* to convince its readers of the reality and viability of resistance, see "Kháng Chiến Đả Được Nuôi Dưỡng Thực?," *Trắng Đen*, May 15, 1976, 11; "Mặt Trận Phục Quốc Thực Sự Có Bao Nhiêu Quân?," *Trắng Đen*, November 26, 1976, 9; "Xác Nhận Các Tin Tức Của Trắng Đen," *Trắng Đen*, January 5, 1977, 18; "Một Hiệu Trương Vửa Rời Sàigòn Xác Nhận Có Kháng Chiến," *Trắng Đen*, January 15, 1977, 25. For criticism by Vietnamese Alliance Association of early Homeland Restoration efforts,

see "đây, hoạt động của 2 mặt trận kháng chiến lập tại mỹ và pháp … ," *Trắng Đen*, April 2, 1976, 7.

59. Alongside reports by *Người Việt*, reports on the Vietnamese invasion of neighboring Indochinese countries, particularly Cambodia, were widespread in reports from the weekly Vietnamese exile magazine *Trắng Đen* throughout 1979. *Trắng Đen* advertised itself as "Tuần Báo Việt Nam Đầu Tiên Ở Hải Ngoại" (the first Vietnamese weekly abroad) and later "The Voice of Non-communist Vietnamese." Published in La Crescenta, California, the magazine ran from 1976 to 1979. For the importance of the outbreak of the Third Indochina War for Phục Quốc activism in the 1980s, see Phạm Văn Liệu, *Trả Ta Sông Núi Tập III* (Văn Hóa, 2004), 135–40.
60. "Cam Bốt: Chìa Khóa Giải Pháp Chính Trị Toàn Bộ Đông Dương," *Người Việt*, March 7, 1982.
61. "Hộp Họp Liên Miên Về VN Bàn Bạc Việc Liên Kết," *Người Việt*, September 19, 1981.
62. *Người Việt* reports: "Áp lục biên giới gia tăng, đài Hànọi leo thang tố cáo từ 'phản động' đến 'tướng cướp,'" October 28, 1981; "V.C. Đánh Cấp Sư Đoàn Vào Chiến Khu FULRO," November 6, 1981; "Chiến dịch mùa khô ở Cam Bốt VC đánh phá căn cứ địa kháng chiến Đường xá lưu thông bị cắt đánh giặc kiểu 'nhà giàu,'" March 31, 1982.
63. "Cam Bốt: Chìa Khóa Giải Pháp Chính Trị Toàn Bộ Đông Dương," *Người Việt*, March 7, 1982; "Dân CB Đại Hội Son Sann Tới Cali," *Người Việt*, December 26, 1981; "Thế Giới & Đông Nam Á: HK Hậu Thuẫn các lực lượng ĐD," *Người Việt*, November 21, 1981.
64. *Người Việt Daily News*—the longest running newspaper organ in any Vietnamese community abroad—was acquired through a relatively complete set of microfilm at the University of California, Irvine's Ayala Science Library. Located at the epicenter of the Vietnamese refugee politics and society, the newspaper caters to topics most relevant to the Vietnamese American population.
65. Free Vietnamese rejected the legitimacy of those organizations that have a presence only outside of Vietnam and have no interaction with the resistance within the nation stating, "These types of fronts are only … 'ghost' fronts or a product of deceptive politics" (Tổ Chức Người Việt Tự Do, "Một Mặt Trận Thống Nhất," *Người Việt*, October 14, 1981).
66. NUFLVN (National United Front for the Liberation of Vietnam), *Mặt Trận Quốc Gia Thống Nhất Giải Phóng Việt Nam và Con Đường Cứu Nước* (San Jose: Tổng Vụ Hải Ngoại Mặt Trận Quốc Gia Thống Nhất Giải Phóng Việt Nam, 2000), 12–13.
67. "Hội Họp Liên Miên Về VN Bàn Bạc Việc Liên Kết," *Người Việt*, September 19, 1981. Free Vietnamese Front (Mặt Trận Người Việt Tự Do) was a Vietnamese student organization from Japan that acquired a political presence in San Jose. The Committee for National Salvation (Ủy Ban Cứu Nước) was led by Trương Như Tảng. Armed Forces (Lực Lượng Quân Dân) is the organization

of which Minh was originally a part. Democratic Alliance (Liên Minh Dân Chủ) was headed by the Harvard-affiliated professor Nguyễn Ngọc Huy, based in Boston.

68. NUFLVN, *Con Đường Cứu Nước*, 13.
69. "Lực Lượng Quân Dân Sát nhạp Mặt Trận," *Người Việt*, September 23, 1981.
70. "Chủ Tịch Đoàn LM Dân Chủ Thành Hình Với 70 Nhân Vật," *Người Việt*, September 23, 1981; "Bản Tường Trình Chính Trị," *Người Việt*, September 26, 1981; "Tường Trình Chính Trị," *Người Việt*, November 21, 1981.
71. "Tường Chính Trị: Đại Hội Lực Lượng Quân Dân," *Người Việt*, November 21, 1981; Joanne Omang, "'Little Saigons' in U.S. Foster Hopes of Toppling Hanoi," *Washington Post*, January 16, 1983.
72. "Tường Trình Chính Trị Quanh Vụ Tướng Minh Phủ Nhận và Xác Nhận," *Người Việt*, March 24, 1982.
73. Ibid.
74. Ibid.; exact quote: "dung xảo thuật cướp công 7 năm kháng chiến, chụp mủ toan triệt hạ các cá nhân và tổ chức cạnh tranh và mưu toan lừa bịp dành độc quyền cai thẩu chống Cộng."
75. "Từ 'Thủ Đô Tỵ Nạn,'" *Người Việt*, October 10, 1981: "Các trung tâm tin tức về sinh hoạt chính trị đang thảo luận rất sôi nổi xem ai là những thành phần trong toán '12 chiến sĩ phục quốc giải phóng trở về nước nhà lần này."
76. "Phó Đề Đốc Hoàng Cơ Minh Cầm Đầu Toán Về Nước," *Người Việt*, October 14, 1981.
77. "Tường Trình Chính Trị: Từ Thủ đô tị nạn," *Người Việt*, October 17, 1981.
78. "Tiểu Sử Hoàng Cơ Minh," *Người Việt*, February 24, 1982.
79. "Tường Trình Chính Trị: Từ Thủ đô tị nạn," *Người Việt*, October 17, 1981.
80. Tảng and his organization were included among other exile organizations that met in late 1981 to discuss the formation of a unified Homeland Restoration movement. On Tảng and his role in HR politics, see Phạm Văn Liệu, *Trả Ta Sông Núi*, 142–44. For Liệu on Đoàn Văn Toại, see ibid., 143. *Người Việt* also published Tảng's ten-point program for communist overthrow: "Ủy Ban Cứu Nước Việt Nam Công Bố Lập Trường 10 Điểm," *Người Việt*, September 23, 1981; on calling for cooperation with Tảng, see "Lá Thư Liên Minh," *Thức Tỉnh* (newsletter of Liên Minh Hải Ngoại Phục Quốc), February 1, 1981. For the report on Tảng's organization fade into obscurity, see "Sinh hoạt chính trị Việt tị nạn năm Nhâm Tuất," *Người Việt*, January 12, 1983.
81. "Hearings before the Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Affairs house of Representative Ninety-Seventh Congress, First Session," October 15, 21, and 22, 1981, 5–11, 15–18. See *Người Việt* report on early efforts of Tảng and Toại: "Tảng Mày Mò Kiếm Sự Ủng Hộ Của Mỹ Để Bước Qua Đấu Tranh Quân Sự," *Người Việt*, August 22, 1981.

82. See the statement on Tang of the former South Vietnamese Premier Nguyễn Cao Kỳ: "Tường Trình Chính Trị: Đại Hội Lực Lượng Quân Dân," *Người Việt*, December 5, 1981; see also "Ô. Lục Phương Ninh nói rõ: chống Tảng," *Người Việt*, November 14, 1981 and "Ô. Nguyễn Chánh Thi Gửi Thư," *Người Việt*, November 13, 1981.
83. Judith Coburn, "Terror in Saigontown, U.S.A.: How Right-Wing Vietnamese Have Brought Their Brutal Vendetta to the Streets of San Francisco," *Mother Jones Magazine*, February–March 1983, 20; "Hearings before the Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs," 60.
84. "Ủy Ban Cứu Nước ra Quốc Hội Mỹ: Chưa Đi Tới Đâu," *Người Việt*, November 21, 1981.
85. "Đại Hội Cựu Quân Nhân: Tuyên Ngôn," *Người Việt*, December 19, 1981; "Từ Thủ Đô Tị Nạn: Kết Hợp … Giải Thích," *Người Việt*, October 24, 1981.
86. "Từ Kết Hợp Đến Giải Thích," *Người Việt*, October 24, 1981.
87. "Hội Thảo Phục Quốc," *Người Việt*, December 26, 1981; "Tuyên Cáo Của Đại Hội S.V.V.N Âu Châu Bruxelles 14.15_11_1981," *Người Việt*, December 19, 1981; "Tường Trình Chánh Trị," *Người Việt*, January 23, 1982; "Đồng Bào Bắc Cali Quốc Kháng năm nay," *Người Việt*, May 19, 1982; "Sinh Viên Vùng Bắc Cali Tổ Chức Đêm Không Ngũ," *Người Việt*, April 21, 1982.
88. "Xôn xao chờ 'kháng chiến lên ti vi,'" *Người Việt*, March 31, 1982; "kháng chiến được ti vi mỹ phóng sự," *Người Việt*, March 31, 1982; "Chúng tôi chỉ cần đồng bào vn chúng tôi khắp thế giới," *Người Việt*, March 31, 1982.
89. Vertical files, OC&SEA Collection, University of California, Irvine.
90. NUFLVN, *Tập Hình Ảnh Đặc Biệt: Chuyến Công Du Tại Nhật Bản Của Phái Đoàn Mặt Trận Quốc Gia Thống Nhất Giải Phóng Việt Nam* (General Directorate Overseas, 1984).
91. See "Legislative Day of Monday, May 16, 1983," Congressional Record—Senate, May 19, 1983, 13152.
92. "Orange County Residents Aiding Anti-communist Struggle," Associated Press, May 23, 1982.
93. "6,000 Vietnamese Gather to Support Fight for Country," Associated Press, February 13, 1983; "March Held to Support Vietnam Resistance," Associated Press, April 30, 1983; "Thousands Rally to Support End to Communist Rule in Vietnam," Associated Press, March 18, 1984.
94. Ken McLaughlin, "Vietnam Resistance Faces Generation Gap, Militant Anti-communist Haven't Captured Hearts of the Young," *San Jose Mercury News*, October 29, 1990.
95. Pete Carey and Ken McLaughlin, "Vietnamese Fund-Raisers Indicted Here," *San Jose Mercury News*, April 23, 1991.
96. These entail the Special Forces (Lực Lượng Đặt Biệt), the Paratroopers (Binh Chủng Nhảy Dù), the Rangers (Biệt Động Quân), the Marines (Thủy Quân Lục Chiến), and the Navy Commandos (Liên Đoàn Người Nhái).
97. "Xây Dựng Một Lực Lượng Vũ Trang," *Nguyệt San Người Việt Tự Do*, January 1982, 28.

98. Ibid., 29.
99. Ibid., 32.
100. "Phó Đề Đốc Hoàng Cơ Minh Cầm Đầu Toán Về Nước," *Người Việt*, October 14, 1981; "Tường Trình Chánh Trị: Tiếp xúc hai toán chiến hữu," *Người Việt*, February 17, 1982; "Tư Lệnh Quân Sự Mặt Trận Kháng Chiến Đặng Quốc Hiền Ra Hải Ngoại Công Tác," *Người Việt*, May 6, 1984.
101. "Tiểu Sử Hoàng Cơ Minh."
102. On riverine navy and Amphibious Force 211, which Minh once headed, and SEALORDS operations, see "Chapter: Winding Down the War, 1968–1973" (Naval History and Heritage Command), http://www.history.navy.mil/research/library/online-reading-room/title-list-alphabetically/b/by-sea-air-land-marolda/chapter-4-winding-down-the-war-1968–1973.html (accessed December 8, 2015).
103. "Tiểu Sử Hoàng Cơ Minh."
104. As Coburn, "Terror in Saigontown" noted, the image and activities of Minh's Front "suggest a parody of the National Liberation Front [Viet Cong]." The route from Thailand to the border of Laos that the Front took is paradoxically referred to as the "HoàngCơ Minh Trail." Even the sporting of a goatee by Minh references back to the fabled image of Ho Chi Minh in the caves of Pac Bo in the 1940s.
105. "Đường Về Việt Nam Đả Mở," *Nguyệt San Người Việt Tự Do*, January 1982, 5.
106. NUFLVN/Mặt Trận Quốc Gia Thống Nhất Giải Phóng Việt Nam, *Anh Hùng Nước Tôi*, 2nd ed. (San Jose: Cơ Sở Việt Tân Xuất Bản, 1986), 8.
107. "Xây Dựng Một Lực Lượng Vũ Trang," 26.
108. Ibid., 27.
109. The Front also published a number of cultural works including *Ca Dao Kháng Chiến* (Folk Poems of the Resistance).
110. NUFLVN, *Anh Hùng Nước Tôi*, 9.
111. Ibid.
112. Dolores Brooks Irwin, "Mysterious Mr. Tai: Gang Leader or Communist Fighter?," *Orange County Register*, July 28, 1982.
113. These labels can be traced back to the war years. See Gettleman et al., *Vietnam and America*, 156–60.
114. "Cộng sản nằm vùng" (communist sleeper agent) was used colloquially during the war to refer to those who operated secretly for the communists in South Vietnam.
115. "Dương Trộng Lâm Đã Từng Bị Cảnh Cáo gây gắt vì chống lại tỵ nạn ở Hoa Kỳ," *Người Việt*, August 1, 1981; "Quanh Cái Chết Của Dương Trọng Lâm: Báo Địa Phương Cho Là Vì Tình … Vì Tranh Ăn!," *Người Việt*, August 8, 1981.
116. Coburn, "Terror in Saigontown," 17.
117. "Communique No. 2 of the Vietnamese Organization to Exterminate the Communists and Restore the Nation on the Execution of the Communist

Cadre Duong Trong Lam," *Quê Hương*, August 7, 1981, cited in Thompson, "Terror in Little Saigon."

118. Thompson, "Terror in Little Saigon."
119. Ibid.
120. Seth Mydans, "War Continues for Vietnam Refugees," *New York Times*, August 25, 1989.
121. Arana, "Targeted by Terrorists," 17.
122. Ibid., 18–19.
123. "Vietnamese Who Supports Hanoi Angers Refugees," *New York Times*, May 6, 1981; Mark I. Pinsky and David Reyes, "Anti-communist Faction Stalks Fearful Vietnamese," *Los Angeles Times*, October 5, 1987. On the defense fund for Ngô Nghĩa, the assailant, and the condemnation of Ngo Vinh Long, see "Giúp Ngô Nghĩa," *Người Việt*, August 8, 1981. See also Joseph L. Garcia, "Legal Aid Fund Established for Refugee," *Harvard Crimson*, April 29, 1981 and "Vụ Án Anh Hùng Diệt Cộng Ngày Một Sôi Nổi," *Người Việt*, July 11, 1981.
124. Steven Arkow, "Panel Clashes on Cause of Vietnam's Woes; Agrees on Necessity of International Attention," *Harvard Crimson*, April 24, 1981; Garcia, "Legal Aid Fund."
125. Hoang, "Vietnam Refugee Ideological Battle." *Thái Bình* is described as "standing alone on the other side" of a Vietnamese exile press "with an explicitly anti-Communist stand."
126. Jeffrey Brody, "FBI Intensifying Probe of Viet Group Linked to Attacks," *Orange County Register*, January 28, 1988.
127. "Tin Thêm Về Vụ Trần Khánh Vân Bị Bắn: Tư Thù, Trừng Phạt hay Hiểu Lầm?," *Người Việt*, March 23, 1986.
128. "A Second Man Has Been Arrested in the Shooting … ," United Press International, April 5, 1986.
129. He also stated that during the 1960s, he opposed the antiwar activities of Nguyễn Văn Lũy at Berkeley. "Tin Thêm Về Vụ Trần Khánh Vân Bị Bắn: Tư Thù, Trừng Phạt hay Hiểu Lầm?"
130. Jerry Hicks, "Cooperman Friends Assail Verdict, Vow to Press Assassination Theory," *Los Angeles Times*, March 30, 1985.
131. "Congress Probes Activities of Slain Professor," Associated Press, December 18, 1984. Additional ties between the two cases: Lawyer Alan May defended both Trần Văn Bé Tư and Lâm Văn Minh, the student who killed Edward Cooperman ("Người Bắn Trần Khánh Vân Tự Nạp Mình Cho Cảnh Sát," *Người Việt*, March 28, 1986).
132. Nancy Wride and Josh Getlin, "Vietnamese Shooting Victim Thinks Attack Was Political; Police Unsure," *Los Angeles Times*, March 21, 1986.
133. Trần Văn Hữu, "Trần Văn Bé Tư: Thầy Giáo Cầm Súng," *Người Việt*, March 29, 1986, recited Klaaske Cooperman, originally cited in the Wride and Getlin, "Vietnamese Shooting Victim."
134. Nancy Wride, "Vietnamese Refugee Allegedly Confesses to Shooting Attack," *Los Angeles Times*, March 23, 1986.

135. Thompson, "Terror in Little Saigon."
136. Wride, "Vietnamese Refugee Allegedly Confesses."
137. "Nhóm Thân Hửu Tương Trợ Trần Văn Bé Tư," *Người Việt*, March 28, 1986, emphasis original.
138. Trần Văn Hữu, "Trần Văn Bé Tư."
139. Phạm Nghi, "Trần Khánh Vân, Và Trần Văn Bé Tư:Hai Con Người Hai Thái Độ," *Người Việt*, March 29, 1986.
140. The controversy over the trial came when "at a time of warming trends between the United States and Hanoi," and that Tran Van Be Tu's claim of responsibility is a "'badge of honor' to demonstrate his commitment to fighting communism." Anticommunism and "nationalistic pride" are not conceptually divorced in the context of this trial. Eric Lichtblau and David Reyes, "Vietnam War Passions at the Heart of Fellow Refugee's Assault Trial," *Los Angeles Times*, May 15, 1989.
141. Ibid.
142. Le Kim Dinh and James Robbins, "Letters Warn of Retaliation for Gunman's 7-Year Term," *Los Angeles Times*, September 30, 1989. Tran remains proud of his time in the Front, and admires the violent political work of the K-9 death squad for the Front (Thompson, "Terror in Little Saigon").
143. Nick Schou, "Invisible Enemies," *OC Weekly*, March 4, 1999; Pinsky and Reyes, "Anti-communist Faction Stalks Fearful Vietnamese"; William A. Orne, Jr., "In Our Own Back Yard," in Gonzalez, *Silenced*, 11.
144. Coburn, "Terror in Saigontown," 44.
145. McLaughlin, "Vietnam Resistance Faces Generation Gap."
146. Fox Butterfield, "Vietnamese Anti-communist Groups Gain Members in U.S.," *New York Times*, January 7, 1985.
147. Ibid.
148. McLaughlin, "Vietnam Resistance Faces Generation Gap."
149. Starting in 1981, the SRV developed a counterinsurgent program called Plan CM-12, which targeted anticommunist exile infiltrators. For the successes of the program, see Quảng Đỗ, "Kế hoạch CM 12-Tương kế tựu kế, lấy địch đánh địch," *Nhân Dân*, August 8, 2015, http://www.nhandan.com.vn/chinhtri/item/27111102-ke-hoach-cm-12-tuong-ke-tuu-ke-lay-dich-danh-dich.html (accessed December 10, 2015).
150. Peter Eng, "Trial of 18 Vietnamese Underground Fighters Begins," Associated Press, December 1, 1987.
151. "Newspaper Says Laotians, Cambodians Were among Infiltrators," Associated Press, December 25, 1987.
152. Jessie Mangaliman, "S.J. Vietnamese Group Admits Leader's Death Fourteen Years after the Fact, a U.S.-Based Anticommunist Organization Says Its Revered Chieftain Has Been Killed," *San Jose Mercury News*, July 29, 2001.
153. Triet Le and writers from *Văn Nghệ Tiền Phong* were among many who picked up the story and faced violent reprisal for their, often scathing, reports during the late 1980s. See also Cao Thế Dung's memoir *Mặt Trận:*

Những Sự Thật Chưa Hề Được Kể / The Front: The Truths That Have Never been Told (Houston, Tex.: Văn Hóa, 1991).

154. McLaughlin, "Vietnam Resistance Faces Generation Gap."
155. Sheila McNulty, "Anti-communist Vietnamese Insurgents Found in Cambodia," Associated Press, August 31, 1992.
156. Cheryl Downey, "Reforms; Vietnamese Want Elections in Their Homeland; Meeting in County Seeks to Topple Communist Regime," *Orange County Register*, August 12, 1991.
157. "The Formation of the Federation of Overseas Free Vietnamese Communities; Mark a Historic Event, the Turn of 20 Years in Vietnamese History," *Hải Ngoại*; August 12, 1995, Paul Tran Files, box 27:6, University of California, Irvine Special Collections and Archives.
158. De Tran and Ken McLaughlin, "Many Emigres in South Bay Looking Ahead Changed Thoughts: Anti-communist Sentiment Remains, but Some See a Chance to Bring Democracy to Homeland," *San Jose Mercury News*, July 12, 1995.
159. Keith Richburg, "Vietnam's 'Peace Generation' Ready to Make Up For Lost Time," *Washington Post*, July 17, 1995.
160. Viet Thanh Nguyen, "Refugee Memories and Asian American Critique," *Positions* 20, no. 3 (2012): 926.
161. Ibid., 922.
162. In 2003, the national flag of the former South Vietnamese state was instituted as the official flag of the overseas Vietnamese Community in Westminster, California, by Andy Quach in Resolution 8337–01 (Furuya and Collet, "Contested Nation," 67).
163. On the no-communist zone, see David Haldane, "The Region; Garden Grove OKs Measure Opposing Visits by Vietnamese Communists," *Los Angeles Times*, May 12, 2004.
164. User "Lê Mỹ Phi," "Bản án dành cho ông Lý Tống, đồng ý hay không?," *Người Việt*, July 2, 2012, http://www.nguoi-viet.com/absolutenm2/templates/viewarticlesNVO.aspx?articleid=151391&zoneid=393 (accessed December 10, 2015).
165. Võ Đại Tôn and Trần Văn Bá are renowned for their participation in the Homeland Restoration movement. In 1994, Võ Đại Tôn received honors "for his courage and devotion to the cause of securing freedom" by the state of Washington (Marty Brown, "Senate Resolution 1994–8661," Washington State Legislature, January 20, 1994). See report on Trần Văn Bá, "Tù nhân được thả sau 33 năm," *BBC-Vietnamese*, July 12, 2010, http://www.bbc.com/vietnamese/lg/vietnam/2010/07/100712_truong_van_suong_free.shtml (accessed December 10, 2015).
166. Kim Nguyen, "Reasons for the Public Introduction of Viet Tan," *Viet Tan: Commentary/Articles & Speeches*, November 5, 2004, http://www.viettan.org/Reasons-for-the-Public.html (accessed December 10, 2015).

167. Lê Duy San, "Quyên Di: Trí Thức Thân Cộng?," Liên Hội Cựu Chiến Sĩ Việt Nam Cộng Hòa, August 20, 2014, http://lhccshtd.org/LHCCSHTD_BV/CT/2014/LT/LHCCSHTD_BV_CT_2014_LT_quyendiTrithucthancong_2014AUG20.htm (accessed December 15, 2015).
168. Linda Vo, "Vietnamese American Trajectories: Dimensions of Diaspora," *Amerasia Journal* 29, no. 1 (2003): ix–xviii.
169. Marguerite Nguyen, "Situating Vietnamese Transnationalism and Diaspora," *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 18, no. 3 (2015): 382–91.
170. Valverde, *Transnationalizing Viet Nam*, 4.