

Exhibition guide

Photography exhibition

"Krieg ohne Ende" (War without end)

by Roland Schmid



Photobastei Zürich

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An exhibition in collaboration with Green Cross Switzerland

The authors

Roland Schmid

Freelance photojournalist in Basel. Initially studied [Slavic studies](#). After the political turnaround in 1989, he travelled extensively to many states of the former Eastern Bloc, which he documented photographically. Roland Schmid dropped out of

university and completed a photography apprenticeship with [Hugo Jaeggi](#). Since then, he has been working as a freelance photographer for national and international newspapers, magazines, companies and organisations. He has been working with Peter Jaeggi since 1999. From 2007 to 2008, Roland Schmid was an [artist in residence](#) at the Association Gwin Zegal in [Brittany](#). He is represented by the 13Photo agency in [Zurich](#). His own projects are related to social issues and the consequences of war. He has received several awards, including a World Press Photo Award in 2021. He won Swiss Press Photo Awards in 1999 and 2023 for his work on the long-term effects of the Vietnam War. mummonkan@me.com / schmidroland.ch

Peter Jaeggi

was just beginning his work on Agent Orange when he invited photographer Roland Schmid to do the photographic part in 1999. After several research trips to Vietnam together with Schmid, three books on the subject have been published by Lenos-Verlag, and numerous exhibitions have been realised. Peter Jaeggi is a freelance Swiss journalist, photographer, book and film author. His main focus is on scientific and social topics, as well as reports on the long-term effects of disasters. He received the renowned Zurich Radio Prize for his radio documentary programmes on Agent Orange. His work has been featured on the Radio SRF2 Kultur, SWR2, WDR and ORF radio stations, as well as in numerous national and international print media.

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- 1 Nguyen Thi Hien, of small stature, Da Nang, 2022
- 2 Map of the **areas** contaminated with Agent Orange and other herbicides
- 3 Over the Mekong Delta, 2013

Agent Orange

During the Vietnam War, the United States and its allies sprayed millions of litres of herbicides, including Agent Orange, as a chemical weapon. The defoliant, used to destroy enemy camouflage and **food** sources, contained the highly toxic dioxin TCDD. Fifty years after the end of the war, hundreds of thousands of people are still suffering as a result.

Today, children are already being born into the fourth generation to suffer from Agent Orange-related illnesses and ailments. There is no end in sight to this tale of woe. To this day, the USA maintains that it was not known at the time how dangerous Agent Orange and other herbicides used were for humans and nature, which also contained dioxin. It is now clear that those at the top knew. One of the largest detoxification operations in history is currently underway in South Vietnam. At the Bien Hoa airbase, once a trans-shipment centre for Agent Orange, hundreds of thousands of cubic metres of soil contaminated with dioxin are being decontaminated. Heating is used to eliminate the dioxin. A German dioxin researcher disagrees, saying that the planned method is questionable and could even be dangerous. In addition, the Trump administration dismissed USAID personnel in Bien Hoa from one day to the next. After protests, some of them were later reinstated. In the meantime, highly toxic dioxins escaped into the environment.

The Vietnam War

The war, which in Vietnam was called the 'resistance struggle against America' or 'the American war', lasted from around 1955 until 30 April 1975. North Vietnam and the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam (NLF), known as the 'Vietcong', were on one side, and the USA and South Vietnam were on the other. The war ended in 1975 with the victory of North Vietnam and the first military defeat in US history. If you add the French colonial war and the civil war between the US-backed South Vietnam and the communist North Vietnam, which was supported by the Soviet Union and China, the fighting lasted around three decades, making it one of the longest armed conflicts of the 20th century. Depending on one's point of view, the 'free West' was defended against 'communism' or a 'war of liberation against foreign powers' was waged. The proxy war between West and East was ruthlessly fought at the expense of the civilian population and resulted in millions of deaths.

(Texts Peter Jaeggi)

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4 Defusing a dud bomb, Quang Tri, 2022

5 Hanoi, 2022

6 In a hotel room in Hue: on 30 April 1999, TV images show forests stripped of their foliage by Agent Orange. It is the 24th anniversary of the capture of the South Vietnamese capital Saigon by North Vietnamese troops. The non-communist government failed and collapsed in South Vietnam. In 1976, Vietnam was officially reunified under a communist government.

7 Hanoi, 2022

8 Café in Ho Chi Minh City, 2022

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At the Cu Chi tunnels near Ho Chi Minh City, formerly Saigon, 2022.
(All photos in Cu Chi, 2022)

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War tourism

Cu Chi Tunnels (**24, 25**): The beginnings of the Cu Chi tunnel system near Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City) go back to the 1940s. At that time, the Viet Minh independence movement rose up against the French colonial power. Unbeknown to the French, the guerrillas networked the entire area with tunnels; they served as protection, as a weapons store, command post and hospital. In the 1960s, Vietnamese partisans, the so-called Vietcong, massively expanded the tunnel network in extent and depth. Eventually, it had a total length of 200 km on three levels. Entire underground cities were created, with schools, hospitals (**18**), offices and sleeping quarters. The buildings were connected by tunnels about 80 cm high and 60 cm wide. The entrances were secured by simple but effective traps such as bamboo spikes. It took the 'tunnel rats' to turn the tables – specially trained, small-statured soldiers who secretly ventured into the underground and attached explosive devices. When the tunnels were discovered, the US declared the area around Cu Chi a 'free fire' zone. This was the licence for unbridled killing.

Today the tunnels are a war tourist attraction where you can shoot at tin pigs with real weapons (**15**) from the war.

(Cu Chi, 1999 and 2022)

On 21 January 1968, the longest battle of the Vietnam War began in **Khe Sanh (19–23)** and transformed the tranquil mountain landscape into hell for seventy-five days. More than ten thousand North Vietnamese soldiers and around five hundred American and allied soldiers died here. Today, many war veterans visit Khe Sanh as a tourist destination.

(Khe Sanh, 2015)

In 1972, the North Vietnamese shot down a B-52D bomber over Hanoi. It crashed into Hu Tiep Lake **(26)**. The wreckage is now a tourist attraction.

(Hanoi, 2015)

27–36: War veterans. Hanoi, 2022

The **presidential palace in Saigon (38–46)**, now Ho Chi Minh City, was the residence and workplace of the South Vietnamese president during the war. Today it is another war tourism site. It was here that the end of the Vietnam War was sealed in 1975 and the palace was renamed the Reunification Palace. All three places are destinations for war tourism in Vietnam, which brings in millions of dollars for the country every year.

(Ho Chi Minh City, 2022)

A brave plaintiff

Tran To Nga **(37)**, born in 1942, a victim of Agent Orange and former Vietnamese resistance fighter, sued fourteen chemical companies that were producing the highly toxic defoliant at the time. In May 2021, the six-year legal proceedings came to an end at the district court of Évry near Paris. During the proceedings, Tran To Nga, a Vietnamese-French woman of Vietnamese origin, was subjected to verbal abuse and insults by lawyers for the chemical companies. The proceedings ended with a verdict that can only be described as scandalous. After all these years, the court declares that it has no jurisdiction and dismisses Tran To Nga's case. She appeals. In 2024, the new ruling confirms the 2021 decision and grants the companies immunity.

(Ho Chi Minh City, 2022)

War is male...

... but not in Vietnam. 'It was pure patriotism. We love our country and just wanted to protect and defend it,' says war veteran Phi Thi Thuy **(33)**, born in 1946. At the age of 19, she was one of the hundreds of thousands of women who went to war with the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam, also known as the Vietcong. On the Ho Chi Minh Trail, she repaired bombed-out roads and transported ammunition to the front. During this time, she was poisoned with Agent Orange: 'We drank contaminated water and ate poisoned food from the forest. It was in an area that had previously been heavily "treated" with Agent Orange.' A whole range of illnesses and ailments were the result. 'Worst of all, I lost two of my children, a son and a daughter.' At 20, the daughter died of leukaemia; the son died immediately after birth. He had deformed arms and legs.

(Hanoi, 2022)

Doing good against the former evil

Chuck Searcy **(36)**, born in 1944, is a prominent American war veteran. He was an intelligence officer in the Vietnam War. Through his work in military intelligence, Chuck experienced the fighting for Vietnamese independence and the brutality unleashed by American orders at first hand. He realised that the American people had not been told the truth and vehemently opposed the immoral actions of the United States by joining the organisations Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW) and Veterans for Peace. After the war, he returned to Hanoi, where he still lives. While his country continues to resist any form of reparation to this day, Searcy is committed to alleviating the long-term effects of the war in the former enemy country, together with other US veterans and locals on a private basis. He helps Agent Orange victims and is co-founder of Project Renew, which defuses unexploded ordnance. For him, his work in Vietnam is a kind of personal reparation, says Chuck Searcy.

(Hanoi, 2015)

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47 Ca Mui in the Mekong Delta at Vietnam's southernmost tip, 2015

48 Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum in Hanoi, 2015

49 Khe Sanh, 2015

50 View of the Saigon River from the Landmark 81 building, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam's tallest building at 461 metres, 2022

51 Tango dancers on the Hoan Kiem Lake in Hanoi, 2013

Wall 6 / 52 – 60

52 Temple of Literature in Hanoi, 2022

53 Barber in Truyen Nam, 2015

54 Ho Tay Lake, Hanoi, 2022

55 Hoi An, 2022

56 Ho Chi Minh City, 2022

- 57 Beach in Da Nang, 2022
- 58 Ho Tay Lake, Hanoi, 2022
- 59 Night watchman in Hanoi, 2022
- 60 Da Nang, 2022

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Napalm – It was hell

Ten-year-old Doan Son (61, 62) is playing with his friend Ho Dinh (63) in Truyen Nam (64) at the fireplace of the open-air kitchen next to the house. Their mother was cooking rice when aircraft suddenly appeared. She recognised the danger, grabbed the children and ran. But it was too late. The children were injured by the napalm bomb trails. Doan Son was particularly badly affected. The memory is still seared into his mind: 'The napalm continued to burn on our arms and hands. It just kept burning. I couldn't put it out. It was hell.' Shortly afterwards, an aid organisation brought him to Switzerland, where he underwent many operations at the Neumünsterspital and the Cantonal Hospital in Zurich. Doan Son (born 1957) owes an independent life to Dr Leo Clodius, who was a leading expert in plastic reconstructive surgery at the time. He later married a Swiss woman and returned to Vietnam.

The USA dropped almost 100,000 tonnes of napalm on Vietnam. A chemical product that burns incessantly and is difficult to extinguish with soil or water. Napalm victims are often literally consumed before the eyes of the horrified and paralysed onlookers.

(Truyen Nam, 2015)

- 65 / 66 Truyen Nam, 2015
- 67 Hanoi, 2022
- 68 Picnic in Hanoi, 2022

Wall 8 / 69 – 84

Dioxin hotspots: the ghosts I conjured up...

On the edge of Da Nang civilian airport, 8,000 concrete blocks, each weighing several tonnes, have been piled up to form an enormous furnace the size of a football pitch (78–84). They contain several thousand cubic metres of soil

contaminated with dioxin. This was once a huge US military base and a transshipment point for Agent Orange and other herbicides. One of the country's many dozens of dioxin hotspots. Hundreds of rods protrude from the blocks: a kind of oversized immersion heater, 335 degrees Celsius hot. The rods heat the contaminated earth for about 30 days. The intense heat, we are told, breaks down the dioxin into harmless components.

The clean-up was carried out by the USA, mainly using American construction companies, which was not well received in Vietnam. When the project was completed in 2018, it was discovered that the technology used was inadequate and that the surrounding area had been partially re-contaminated with dioxin.

The largest dioxin destruction operation to date is currently underway at the former US Air Force base in Bien Hoa, not far from Ho Chi Minh City, **69-77**. The site is considered one of the most severely dioxin-contaminated spots on the planet. Soil samples have shown dioxin levels 800 times higher than the permissible amount in Vietnam. About half a million cubic metres of contaminated soil will be cleared of the poison here – using the same technology as in Da Nang. Critics therefore say that here, too, dioxin is being released instead of being destroyed. An extremely costly bacteria rejected Vietnam. The local victims' support organisation VAVA speaks of around 8,900 people affected by Agent Orange in this province and points out that the figures are incomplete.

(Da Nang, 2013 and Bien Hoa, 2022)

Wall 9 / 85 – 96

85 War Remnants Museum (War Remnants Museum) Ho Chi Minh City, 2022

86–95 War cemeteries in Quang Tri and Bien Hoa. Covering an area of 125 hectares, the Bien Hoa War Cemetery is the final resting place of around 16,000 fallen South Vietnamese soldiers. Until a few years ago, signs forbade entry to the site. Even the dead enemies of yore were not to have any contact with anyone. Relatives were forbidden to tend to the graves of their family members.

(Quang Tri, 2015 and Bien Hoa, 2022)

96 Lang Yen, 2022

Wall 10 / 98 – 104

The evil deed of the great-grandfather

Phuong **(103)**, born in 1981, is of short stature, 95 centimetres, and lives with a curved spine. At the DAVA centre, an institution of the Vietnamese Agent Orange Victims Association in Da Nang, he is the head and trainer of the incense department. His sister, Nguyen Thi Hien **(98, 103, 104)**, born in 1987, is also of short stature at just 50 centimetres. She was born without kneecaps and can only walk with the help of sticks. She delivers newspapers using a small electric vehicle. The family can only just about keep their heads above water financially. The support from the state is very low.

The misery began during the war, when father Tan (born 1945) was exposed to toxic herbicides on the battlefield of Khe Sanh. Mother Nguyen Thi Dieu **(104)** (born 1945) had also been exposed to it in the rice field. She says: 'We were shocked and unhappy after the birth of our children. Some people said that their great-grandfather had done something bad in his life and this was the punishment.' The third child, brother Nguyen Ngoc Nhi (born 1992), is healthy and 160 cm tall.

"I don't blame anyone," says son Phuong. 'It's just bad luck that we were born this way. Of course it's Agent Orange's fault. And yes, the US should apologise.' His sister Hien feels the same way. As a child, she was very sad. "But not anymore. I don't want to blame anyone and I don't even want to think about it."

(Da Nang, 2022)

Wall 11 / 105 – 112

Phan Thi Cuc and her sad husband

In 1999, it was one of our first and most difficult encounters on the trail of Agent Orange. In the hamlet of Huong Xuan near Hue, in Quang Tri Province. During our visit, mother Phan Thi **(105)** Cuc, who was 31 years old at the time, was holding her newborn daughter, her first healthy child. Phan Thi Cuc's father lived in Agent Orange-poisoned areas for a long time. The woman seems apathetic and absent-minded. Next to her on the floor, her two first-born children are playing. Her first husband killed himself because of them. The boy Nguyen Huu An **(106)**, five years old, and his sister Nguyen Thi Thanh Tuyen **(106)**, three years old, have terrible birth defects. The girl has an elongated, crooked head and large, bulging eyes. Her severely visually impaired brother also has a larger-than-normal head and bulging eyes. Both children are severely mentally disabled.

‘After the birth of the two disabled children, my husband became very sad,’ says the mother. He could no longer bear to look at them. One day he drank a solution made from plant poison. Many villages in the area were sprayed with herbicides – mostly Agent Orange – up to seven times between September 1966 and August 1967.

(Huong Xuan, 1999)

107–111 Agent Orange patients at the Rehabilitation Centre for Disabled Children in Thuy An near Hanoi, 1999

112 Formalin-preserved embryos killed by Agent Orange, War Remnants Museum, Ho Chi Minh City, 1999

Wall 12 / 113 – 126

The ghosts I conjured up

Farmer Hoang Xuan Phuong (**123**) recounts: ‘I was picking up stones from the ground to build a small pigsty. Suddenly there was an explosion... A mine... It tore my left hand off... It was a terrible shock. Later I wanted to kill myself. I didn't want to go on living like that.’ But his family helped him to see a way forward. “I even found a wife, got married and now have two children.” He is one of many thousands of unexploded ordnance victims in Quang Tri province. On the wall of his house hangs a wall text. It reminds him of the good days when he was still able to play.

Nguyen Van Tuan (**126**) collected war scrap on a plantation. A grenade exploded, tearing off his right forearm. He uses a mirror to simulate the missing forearm, which takes away the phantom pain.

Since the end of the war (1975), an estimated 100,000 people have been injured or killed by landmines and other unexploded ordnance in Vietnam.

The non-governmental organisation Project Renew defuses and destroys unexploded ordnance, supports victims and teaches children about prevention.

(Quang Tri, 2015)

Wall 13 / 127 – 138

Twelve children died because of Agent Orange

In the Village of Friendship near Hanoi. It was initiated by former US soldier and Vietnam veteran George Mizo. He later died from the effects of Agent Orange. The village near Hanoi offers help and support to people suffering from the long-term effects of the war – children and young people with mental and physical disabilities, as well as older people.

Do Thi Hang **(130)**, born in 1990, also lives there. ‘We were once fifteen children. Twelve of my brothers and sisters have died because of Agent Orange,’ says the lively Do Thi Hang. She and two brothers and sisters survived, but her younger sister is paralysed down one side. Do Thi Hang has hydrocephalus, or “water on the brain”. Cerebral fluid builds up and has to be drained through built-in “channels” inside the body. Her condition does not allow her to live at home; in that village where her father goes to the cemetery once a week and lights incense on the twelve small graves. Father Do Duc Diu told his story to the online newspaper VNExpress: "Everyone drank the spring water carefree, unaware that it had been poisoned by the USA with Agent Orange. A year after our wedding, my wife Pham Thi Nuc gave birth to our first daughter. Two days after the birth, the baby suddenly started screaming and foam came out of its mouth. Its head was swollen, its skin was yellow like turmeric, it was bleeding from the nose, ears and mouth, and then it died in its mother's arms.

Like many **dioxin-damaged** couples, the parents thought that the next child might be born healthy.

(Hanoi, 2022)

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Agent Orange ‘home delivery’

None of the family was in the war. Father Do Van Ba **(143)**, born in 1955, served in the South Vietnamese police, later became a rice farmer and transported bricks. His wife Le Thi Anh **(143)**, born in 1959, was a farmer's wife. Father Ba remembers how, every five or six months, aeroplanes would fly over the house and spray herbicides. The house was surrounded by greenery. Son Do Trung Thanh **(141–143)**, born in 1977, was born without any disabilities. After a few months, however, he was no longer able to turn over in bed by himself. After about a year, he was

severely disabled. He understands what is being said, but Thanh is mute. He can more or less hold himself upright in a serving boy-like vehicle. Walking is impossible.

(Da Nang, 2022)

139 Party office in Long Xuyen, An Giang Province, 2013

Round-the-clock care

144–148 As a child, I saw how planes sprayed a kind of fog.’ Father Nguyen Bong, who is thin and sickly, talks about his early experiences of the war that would later cause the tragedy of his life.

Victims who experienced the herbicide rain first hand describe an odour ‘like a ripe guava’, others saw it hanging in the air ‘like fog’, talk of a ‘powder strip’ or that this poison rain looked like ‘ground limestone’. Actually, the descriptions are too poetic for the atrocity.

We are in the village of Tan Hiep in Quang Tri Province. Nguyen Bong, born in 1962, a day labourer, tells how there was fighting all around the village and how he sometimes had to help carry away fallen Americans. His village was a so-called ‘Wehrdorf’ or fortified village. ‘We more or less lived in lockdown. At night, we secretly went out and fished in the river, where hundreds of fish were floating dead on the surface as a result of the spray. We ate them at home.’ This is how the poison entered Nguyen Bong's body.

Nguyen Bong and his wife Tran Thi Gai (1964) are the parents of two severely disabled daughters. Nguyen Thi Tai and Nguyen Thi Tutet. Both are over thirty, have brain damage and require round-the-clock care. They have lost the power of speech. The mother, Tran Gai, is completely exhausted and can hardly speak. Decades of caring for the children has robbed her of her last strength and given her a heart condition.

(Tan Hiep, 2015)

Wall 15 / 149 – 159

Help from Switzerland

At the Da Nang Orthopedics and Rehabilitation Hospital, Le Trung Kien (**156, 157**), born in 2013, is getting **his** fourth leg prosthesis. He was born with a deformed hand and his right leg was missing at birth. His father, who served in the South

Vietnamese army, died in 2017. The prostheses that are made and fitted here are partly financed by Green Cross Switzerland. The hospital specialises in orthopaedic surgery, offers physiotherapy (154) and makes prostheses (155, 158).

149–153 In the operating theatre of the Da Nang Orthopedics and Rehabilitation Hospital. Correction of a leg deformity and the separation of toes that have grown together.

(Da Nang, 2022)

Wall 16 / 160 – 168

Fighting on the wrong side

160–162 ‘On the other side’ he was at war, says father Tran Quang Toan (born 1950). He means the US-backed South Vietnamese army. As a jeep driver for a monk and army chaplain. Father Toan speaks in a low voice. He is sick. For half a year, a nasty pneumonia has been tormenting him. He has to use an oxygen mask to help him breathe at night. He has learnt a lot from this Buddhist. To believe in the good in people.

After the war, he was unemployed and spent 24 years collecting rattan in the forests of Da Nang. His wife, Nguyen Thi Thanh, (born 1956) wove baskets out of it and sold them at markets. They barely had enough to eat. During the rattan season, the father-to-be came into contact with the poison in the forests that had once been sprayed with Agent Orange.

The severely disabled daughter, Tran Thi Le Huyen (born 1983), is considered a herbicide victim. Her arms and legs are deformed. She is deaf and dumb and cannot sit upright by herself. She has to be turned over five to seven times a day while lying down. Her mother sleeps in the same bed with her. When the weather changes, Huyen cries and her muscles cramp. It's a 24-hour job for her mother. ‘A disabled child requires a lot of patience. You have to be able to control your feelings.’ Sometimes she also has to take her husband to the hospital.

The money from the state is not enough to live on. Those who were on the wrong side of the law back then are left high and dry. The family can only make ends meet with the support of their healthy children. From time to time, charities and private individuals bring small food packages. Rice, oil, fish sauce, glutamate, biscuits. As she talks, the mother suddenly begins to cry and says, ‘I am very sad.’

(Da Nang, 2022)

An encounter of a depressing kind

163–168 When we arrive at the house in the very narrow lane in the Thanh Khe district of Da Nang, no one opens even after a long period of knocking and shouting. Then finally the son of the family, Le Trung Vinh (*1980), appears and apologises. He wanted to clear away the shards first. One of his sisters had just had a seizure. Broken dishes lie on the floor.

An oppressive image that we encounter in May 2022 during our Agent Orange research. In the small room there is a bed. Sitting on it, staring blankly and in silence, are the mentally ill Pha (b. 1970) and her sister Oanh (b. 1968). On a chair in front of them is their mother, Ho Thi Lang (b. 1939), who has been severely depressed for fifteen years. She is unresponsive. Her son Vinh attributes this to the great sorrow she feels for her family.

Father Le Ngoc Bich, who died in 2009, fought in the war and was often exposed to herbicide spray. 'Father told me that at first he thought it was fog and breathed in the supposed fresh air deeply.'

Son Vinh graduated from the Technical University in Ho Chi Minh City with a degree in telecommunications. That was before he developed schizophrenia. He hears voices in his head, he says, and he can't work because of the many fears he has. He takes care of the entire household.

The two sisters can't do almost anything, not even mop the floor, says the son. 'They just lie around all day.' It's at its worst when the sisters snap. One of them starts screaming, smashing things, gets a knife and wants to kill herself. 'I always have to hide all the knives well. Sometimes she takes off her clothes and goes out naked.' No, he never asks for help.

The only sentence that one of his sisters, Pha, says during our visit: 'I am tired and sad.' Regarding the guilt of the USA, son Vinh says: 'I don't blame anyone. It's life. No words can describe how we feel. But people around us live happily, and that makes me happy.'

(Da Nang, 2022)

Wall 17 / 169 – 182

The tragedy of mother Hoang The and her children

We first meet mother Hoang The in a marshy suburb of Da Nang, together with her two adult children. Both are severely physically and mentally disabled, both are

dioxin victims. Her daughter Tran Thi Nga (33) can still move around with difficulty using a kind of rickety walker. Since her birth, she has been kept upright by a support corset. Until she was nine, she was able to walk a few steps. Her mother has been at her limit for decades. Sometimes her daughter falls. Tran Thi Nga is overweight. 'I can't lift her by myself, so I have to get the neighbours to help.' Son Tran Duc Nghia (175–177), then 35 years old, is lying there, hunched over, completely immobile and paralysed. He has not been able to leave his bed for almost two decades. Nghia has also lost his hearing and speech. Sometimes his aunt Thi Chanh sits at his bedside and keeps watch.

The house with its corrugated iron roof is dilapidated, the rooms are dark and damp. Dirty streaks on the concrete walls show the water level of the last floods. No fewer than seven times, the residents have had to temporarily move out to avoid drowning in their own beds.

During the war, father Tran Ran was a messenger for the resistance and often came into contact with the highly toxic dioxin-containing defoliant Agent Orange. He died in 2002 as a result of his four-year captivity.

At the beginning, everything looked promising. 'I was even able to buy myself gold earrings,' says Hoang The's mother. But then the children fell ill. They spent all their assets on their treatment: their jewellery, their house, their land. What remains is a life of great poverty. There was not even enough for a balanced diet and medication. And there are children who never recovered.

In May 2022, nine years after our first visit (169, 170), we meet with mother Thi Hoang in Da Nang once more. She is now 84 years old. Much has changed. The two most significant events: her severely disabled son Tran Duc Nghia died in 2016 at the age of 42. And the old, dark, musty house from back then has been demolished. Her son from her second marriage built a new home for himself and his mother and her disabled daughter Tran Thi Nga.

(Da Nang, 2013 and 2022)