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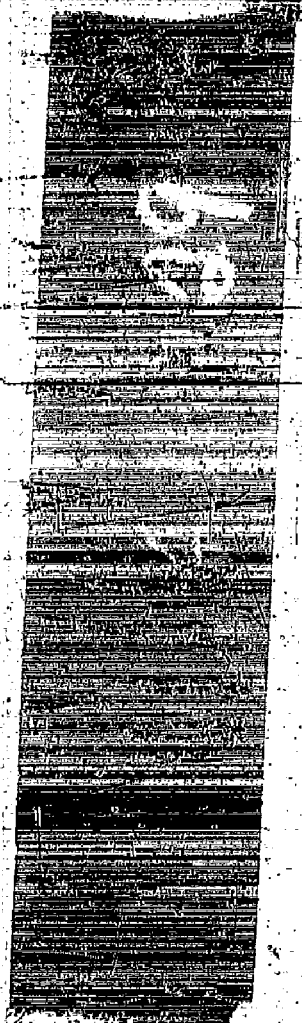

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CASE STUDIES IN INSURGENCY AND REVOLUTIONARY WARFARE: VIETNAM 1941-1954

Primary Research Responsibility
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January 1964

APR 23 1964

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TASK REVOLT

Research Completed: May 1963

on Insurgency and Revolutionary Warfare: 23 Summary Accounts, which has already been published.

Comments and suggestions from readers regarding this study, or relevant to the program as a whole, will be welcomed.

Theodore R. Vallance

FOREWORD

This case study of the Vietnam Revolution from 1941 to 1954 is the third in a series of such studies being prepared at the Special Operations Research Office (SORO) for the Department of the Army. The first study covered the Cuban Revolution (1953–1959), while a second, on Algeria (1954–1962), was completed later.

As noted in the Summary, the revolution which is the subject of this study is not to be confused with the internal war which is being waged in South Vietnam quite vigorously at the time of this writing. However, this latter war, in which the United States currently has a major politico-military commitment, has many roots in the earlier revolution and its outcome which are studied herein. Indeed, a strong case can be made that the ongoing war in South Vietnam cannot be fully understood without the kinds of knowledge about the earlier colonial type revolution synthesized in this case study. Many of the social, economic, and political factors which provided the contextual setting of the earlier revolution are still relevant in today's situation in South Vietnam, although, of course, many new situational dimensions have appeared along with the changed nature of the revolutionary movement.

All of the case studies in this series are part of a broader research effort at SORO which is concerned with increasing our understanding of insurgencies, revolutions, and internal wars, primarily those in the developing nations. The scope of the research covers the development of concepts and methods of forecasting such conflicts, as well as analysis of problems associated with their management, their resolution, and their aftermaths. All three revolutions in the series are being studied from a common frame of references which will allow later comparative analysis, but with a format that does not preclude examination of unique factors in each situation.

Other related studies include an analysis of the Guatemalan situation between 1944 and 1954, and preparation of a *Casebook*

PREFACE

A few words concerning the style of this case study of the Vietnamese Revolution are required in order to avoid misunderstandings about its concept and intent.

The case study is not a chronological narrative of the revolution from beginning to end. That type of historical case study is valuable for many purposes and a number have been published (see Bibliography). Rather, this study attempts to analyze, individually and successively through time, a number of factors in the revolutionary situation and the revolutionary movement itself which, on the basis of prior studies of revolutions, have been identified as being generally related to the occurrence, form, and outcome of a revolution. The case study, then, is devised to test the "explanatory power" of certain statements of relationships in terms of their applicability to the Vietnamese Revolution in particular. For this reason the reader is urged to read the definition of terms and the conceptual framework underlying the study which appear in the Technical Appendix.

Such an approach has both advantages and disadvantages to the reader. One who is interested in a particular topic (e.g., social antagonisms, revolutionary organization) need only read that section to get all the essential information on that topic. The reader who is interested in the entire case study will inevitably notice some redundancy from section to section, although every attempt has been made to keep unnecessary repetition to the absolute minimum. But some redundancy is inevitable for two reasons: a given historical event can have multiple significance (e.g., both social and economic significance, or both psychological operations and sabotage significance) and there is an interaction among events in a given society (e.g., political actions may be related to economic actions, or underground supply effectiveness may be related to guerrilla interdiction effectiveness).

The rationale for using such a systematic approach goes beyond the quest for analytic understanding of the Vietnamese Revolution itself. Companion case studies have been

prepared on the Algerian Revolution (1954–1962) and the Cuban Revolution (1953–1959) using the same conceptual framework and evaluating the same factors.* At the same time, a case study of the situation in Guatemala between 1944 and 1954 is being prepared, using a different approach more suitable to that situation. Thus, a basis is being prepared for comparative analyses that will, hopefully, provide generalizations applicable to more than a single revolution. The net result of this approach for this case study is a series of related analytic conclusions regarding the character and dynamics of the Vietnamese Revolution, but not a smoothly rounded literary story.

All of the sources used in preparation for this study are unclassified, and for the most part secondary sources were used. Again, certain advantages and disadvantages accrue. As an unclassified document, the study will be more widely distributed and whatever contribution to understanding it contains will be put to wider use. Reliance on unclassified secondary sources, however, may have led to the exclusion of certain significant considerations or to the use of unreliable information and thus to factual and interpretative errors. It is believed, however, that the advantages outweigh the disadvantages. If, because of its sources, the study adds no new information about the revolution, it does claim that maximum, systematic, analytic use of already available open information is a meaningful contribution to the study of insurgency and revolutionary warfare.

Finally, the intent of this case study is not to present any particular "slant" on the Vietnamese Revolution, the actors and parties in it, or the role of foreign (to Vietnam) powers. Rather, the intent is to present as objective an account as possible of what happened in terms of the hypotheses being evaluated. Thus, some of the case study necessarily deals with how the Vietnamese perceived events, or, more accurately, how it is believed they perceived events.

The aim has been to prepare the case study from the viewpoint of an impartial, objective observer. Perhaps such an aspiration is beyond grasp—the events may be too recent, the sources too unreliable, the "observer" too biased toward objectives compatible with Western democratic interests. For these reasons, no infallibility is claimed and it is readily conceded that this study cannot be the final word on the Viet-

*As a final note on redundancy, it should be noted that this Preface and the Technical Appendix are identical with those in the companion case studies.

namese Revolution. Subsequent events always have a way of leading to reinterpretation of prior events. However, any errors of omission or commission are not deliberate, but truly errors—and they certainly are not a result of an intent to foster any particular political "slant."

At the same time, there is no question that many of the subjects discussed are "politically sensitive." It must be recorded, therefore, that the above denial of any deliberate intent to "slant" the case study also means that there was no intent to "cover up" historical facts and interpretations which might be perceived as reflecting unfavorably on any party. Little is to be gained in terms of increased understanding of revolutions if justification of past particular policies, or advocacy of any given current policy, was the real intent under the guise of objective analysis. An effort was made, however, to avoid use of a style and language which in itself would be unnecessarily offensive or in poor taste.

Beyond the resolve of objective analysis in the preparation of the study, sources were selected on the basis of their judged reliability. A balance was sought among sources of known persuasion in order not to unwittingly bias the case study in one direction or another. As a final check, the study draft was submitted to two area specialists, Dr. Bernard Fall of Howard University and Dr. William C. Johnstone, School of Advanced International Studies, The Johns Hopkins University. The experts reviewed the manuscript for accuracy of fact and reasonableness of interpretations and their comments and criticisms provided the basis for final revisions. Although their contributions were substantial, final responsibility for the manuscript, both with respect to substantive content and methodology, rests solely with the Special Operations Research Office.

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SUMMARY

PURPOSE OF STUDY

The objective of this case study is to contribute to increased analytic understanding of revolutionary (internal) war. Specifically, the study analyzes the Vietnamese Revolution by examining two types of information in terms of their relationship to the occurrence, form, and outcome of the revolution:

(1) Social, economic, and political factors in the prerevolutionary and revolutionary situations;

(2) Structural and functional factors of the revolutionary movement, such as the composition of actors and followers, revolutionary strategy and goals, organization and techniques.

The study is not focused on the strategy and tactics of countering revolutions. On the premise that development of U.S. policies and operations for countering revolutions—where that is in the national interest—will be improved by a better understanding of what it is that is to be countered, the study concentrates on the character and the dynamics of the revolution.*

ORGANIZATION OF STUDY

The first two parts contain the major analyses of the case study. Part I presents an analysis of social, economic, and political factors in the revolution, Part II, an analysis of the revolutionary movement. For the benefit of the reader, a brief Epilogue of events after 1954 is presented in Part III.

This Summary is for readers who must restrict their reading and is focused primarily on major analytic conclusions. For those readers who wish to study more deeply the aspects of the revolution, a Bibliography is provided which contains references to the source materials used in the preparation of this report. The Technical Appendix contains a description of the rationale and the study procedures used, reserving this Summary and the other parts of the study for substantive content and analysis.

SYNOPSIS

In 1941 Ho Chi Minh and other leading Vietnamese Communists formed the Vietminh, a revolutionary organization work-

*A summary of the Vietnam Revolution is included in the *Casebook on Insurgency and Revolutionary Warfare: 23 Summary Accounts* (Washington: Special Operations Research Office, 1963).

ing to overthrow the French, who had controlled Indochina* since the late 19th century, and the Japanese, who occupied the French colony throughout World War II. Although the organization was under Communist control at all times, the Vietminh carefully refrained from identifying itself with Communist ideology and radical social doctrines. Its only openly avowed political goal was independence from foreign rule, and it called for the unification of the northern, central, and southern regions of Vietnam into an independent and democratic republic.

Operating as a clandestine underground organization, except in certain remote areas where it early assumed overt political power, the Vietminh cautiously laid the foundations in the 1941–45 period for a nationwide seizure of power when the opportune moment should arrive. That time occurred in August of 1945 when a power vacuum was created by the capitulation of the Japanese and the delayed arrival of Allied forces, together with the absence of the French colonial administration, which the Japanese had destroyed earlier in the year, and the lack of any other government to oppose the Vietminh. On September 2, 1945, Ho Chi Minh announced the formation of a provisional government under his leadership and proclaimed the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV).

This Vietminh regime exercised *de facto* control over all of northern Vietnam and much of the south until December 1946, although since March the French had maintained garrisons in the DRV's capital city of Hanoi, and other key positions in the north. In November–December 1946, after negotiations between Ho Chi Minh and the French over Vietnam's political future had broken down, military hostilities broke out between the Vietminh guerrillas and the French regular forces. When a concerted surprise attack on French positions on December 19 failed, the DRV Government fled Hanoi and went underground to embark on a protracted war of independence.

Over 7 years of military, political, and psychological warfare between the Vietminh and the French and the Vietnamese allies ensued, at a cost to France of nearly one hundred thousand casualties and $11 billion. Total cost to the Vietnamese in terms of lives and money is not known. The nature of the Franco-Vietminh hostilities ranged from guerrilla warfare and

*Indochina borders Burma and Thailand and extends from China to the Gulf of Siam. For administrative purposes it was divided by the French into five areas: Laos, Cambodia, Tonkin, Annam, and Cochin China. Vietnam comprises Tonkin, Annam, and Cochin China. Although the main concern of this study is Vietnam, often it will be necessary to discuss the areas as one unit, referred to as Indochina.

counterinsurgency operations to a combination, in the later stages of the war, of guerrilla warfare and regular warfare involving conventional military operations. After 1950 the conflict developed from a local colonial war into an international crisis threatening a confrontation between the Communist and non-Communist blocs.

The interplay of international diplomatic pressures and domestic political considerations in both France and Indochina led to the Geneva Conference of 1954 which ended the war. The Geneva accord partitioned Vietnam, similar to the models of Korea and Germany, into a northern Communist state and a southern non-Communist state. Further, the accord terminated France's official connections with the Indochinese states of Laos, Cambodia, and the divided Vietnam. Thus, the Vietminh's goal of Vietnamese independence from foreign rule was achieved, but the goal of national unification remains unfulfilled at this writing.

SELECTED ANALYTIC CONCLUSIONS

Why was a Communist-dominated nationalist movement able to seize power in Vietnam when in neighboring colonial areas of Southeast Asia the Communists were unsuccessful? In Malaya, Indonesia, Burma, and the Philippines—all colonial countries with a socioeconomic profile similar to that of Vietnam—Communist guerrilla movements were defeated or contained in the decade following World War II. There was never any serious threat from Communist revolutionaries either in independent Thailand or in Cambodia, Vietnam's sister state in French Indochina. The following analysis will attempt to show why and how a Communist-nationalist revolution came about in Vietnam.*

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

Vietnam was a prosperous area by Southeast Asian standards; it had long been an exporter of rice and raw materials and the French had introduced new export crops, such as rubber, and had laid the foundations for light industry. Generally

*No assumption is made that any given set of social, economic, or political conditions will inevitably lead to a revolution. Such conditions are assumed only to provide a favorable environment for a revolutionary movement, although they may be directly related to the formation of a revolutionary movement in many cases

speaking, the Vietnamese standard of living was rising prior to World War II when the economy broke down under the impact of Japanese occupation and Allied bombing which resulted in extreme poverty and mass starvation in some areas. *Revolutionary potential initially was generated by the lag in social and political reforms which failed to keep up with rising living standards and by the social implications of Vietnam's colonial and plantation economy.*

Economic Maladjustment

French control of the Vietnamese economy had the salutary economic effect of providing foreign capital necessary for development; this was done at a time when such capital was not otherwise readily available. However, the economic drawback of French regulation of the local economy appeared during the war when Vietnam was cut off from the outside world and had to depend on local industry for manufactured goods which had formerly been imported. *The social implications of French (and in some areas Chinese) economic hegemony in Vietnam were of contributory importance in the generation of revolutionary potential.* The Vietnamese middle class found itself frustrated in its commercial and industrial ventures by powerful economic interests injoying political and financial support from the French colonial regime, which were employed to stifle Vietnamese business competition.

The lack of a diversified economy limited opportunities for social mobility among the Vietnamese. Although the French introduced a number of different export crops, these did not alter the basic nature of Vietnam's plantation society. The presence in Vietnam of a large European population of the lower and middle classes, as well as a sizable Chinese population, curtailed the opportunity of the indigenous middle class to advance itself through employment in government and business. Only during the war years did the Vietnamese middle class participate in significant numbers in the public administration and economic life of the country; it was this degree of national participation which appeared to the Vietnamese to be threatened by the return of French colonial rule in 1945–46.

The living conditions of the rural population made this group susceptible to Communist agitation for land reform. Those peasants who owned their own land, as was most often the case in northern Vietnam, were chronically in debt to local moneylenders. The lack of a workable system of agricultural credit

was a prime source of rural discontent. Another social group whose revolutionary potential was enormous was the body of frequently unemployed migratory workers—the so-called "floating proletariat." From these discontented masses came the rank-and-file followers of the Vietminh.

Social Antagonism

The establishment of French rule in Indochina near the turn of the century initiated the demise of Vietnam's traditional society and the evolution of a new social group, which may be referred to as a "middle class." The earliest members of this group were those Vietnamese who attached themselves to the French as translators and local functionaries; often these were Vietnamese of the lower classes, since many of Vietnam's traditional elite were contemptuous of Westerners and Western ways and chose to ignore the French presence in their country as long as possible. Later, when the advantages of Western education became clearer, many Vietnamese aristocrats overcame their reluctance to send their children to French schools.

By the end of the colonial period, a sizable minority of the Vietnamese population had become acquainted at least superficially with Western ways and values and some Vietnamese were highly educated and thoroughly imbued with French culture. A degree of Westernization became the touchstone of the emergent native middle class, which drew recruits from both the traditional elite and the traditional masses and included professional people, skilled workers, civil servants, miltary personnel, businessmen, and students. *It was from this numerically small but socially significant native middle class that the Communist-nationalist leaders of the revolutionary movement were drawn.*

Sources of social tension in colonial Vietnam included conflicts between landlord-moneylenders and peasant debtors, rivalry between mandarin traditionalists and Western-educated reformers, racial prejudice and discrimination between French and Vietnamese, and the traditional antagonism between the Vietnamese, and the ethnic minorities (e.g., Cambodians, Chinese, *montagnards*—or hill tribesmen). Communist and nationalist revolutionary leaders exploited these social tensions for purposes of political agitation and recruitment into the revolutionary organization.

The number of marginal intellectuals* who found their

*See the Technical Appendix for a definition and discussion of the marginal intellectual.

way into the revolutionary movement would indicate that this social group was particularly susceptible to the influence of nationalism and the social ideology of the Vietminh. Vietnamese intellectuals were caught up in a cultural and psychological dilemma. Their acceptance of Western values and modern ways conflicted with their traditional culture, yet few of them were fully accepted into local European society. The result was psychological strain which gave rise to social tension, both among themselves and in their relations with the French. Vietnamese intellectuals often viewed their economic, social, and political dealings with the French in the light of their own personal frustrations. The attitudes of racial and cultural pride, verging on xenophobia, which were characteristic of the traditional mandarins, were transmitted to a generation of Westernized intellectuals who strongly voiced modern Vietnamese nationalism.

The cultural shock of the French conquest of Vietnam at the end of the last century cannot be overemphasized. It created an ideological break which for many Vietnamese intellectuals could best be repaired by the revolutionary ideology of communism; others found solace in various religious sects and nationalist theories (i.e., Sun Yat-sen's Kuomintang nationalism, Japanese fascism, and Christian syndicalism).

Political Weaknesses

Economic conditions in Vietnam – even the social tensions noted above – would not have been sufficient in themselves to generate revolution had it not been for certain weaknesses in the political structure. Foremost among these was the lack of sufficient Vietnamese participation in the governing process, referred to in this study as "political imbalance." *Had Vietnamese demands for wider participation in government been met in time, the revolutionary movement might have been deprived of its chief source of popular appeal and many of the issues between the French and Vietnamese might have been resolved through nonviolent channels.* A hard core of revolutionaries would likely have continued in violent opposition to the government, but they would not have had the popular support that the Vietminh enjoyed.

Vietnamese political demands began quite modestly in the 1920's, and consisted mainly of demands for wider participation in the French colonial administration. After World War II Vietnamese political leaders first demanded various degrees

of self-government and local autonomy within the French Union, a political status similar to that of the self-governing dominions in the British Commonwealth. The political reforms which the French were prepared to put into effect invariably lagged behind the current demands of politically conscious Vietnamese; reforms were made, but they were too few and, above all, too late.

Prior to its overthrow by the Japanese early in 1945, the French colonial regime operated efficiently with respect to routine administrative functions. It successfully put down two major uprisings, in 1930 and again in 1940, and generally maintained order in the country. When the regime was reimposed in 1945–46 it was not able to operate with its customary efficiency because of the political and military situation then prevailing in Vietnam. Purges of traditional colonial administrators who were sympathetic to Vichy also impaired the efficiency of French operations. Conditions of political imbalance and fragmentation of the ruling elite undermined the efficiency of the machinery of government at a time when the revolutionary movement had attained the physical means of challenging the colonial government's authority openly in many parts of the country.

REVOLUTIONARY DYNAMICS

Environmental factors alone were insufficient to bring about a nationalist revolution in Vietnam. An organized revolutionary effort was necessary to complete the equation. This function was performed by a group (some Communists and some non-Communists but all of them Vietnamese nationalists) organized early in the 1940's, under Communist control, as the Vietminh (League for Independence of Vietnam). The salient characteristics of the Vietminh's leadership and following, strategy and goals, ideology, organization, techniques, and foreign support are summarized and analyzed below.

Actors

The revolutionary leadership came primarily from the emergent middle class, as did much of its early following. Although the rank and file of the Vietminh's guerrilla and regular army forces were for the most part peasants and urban workers, the intermediate and lower echelon leaders – the so called "linking cadres" – were from the lower middle class and all

had some degree of Western education and experience. Often these leaders at village level were, or had once been, local civil servants in the colonial administration. Most of these "grass roots" leaders of the Vietminh were Communists, and as the revolution progressed – especially after 1950 – their ideological commitment to communism deepened and expanded until all non-Communists were either converted or eliminated from positions of responsibility in the revolutionary movement.

The top leadership of the Vietminh was composed predominantly of Communists, most of the key leaders having been active in the Communist movement since the late 1920's. Many of these were highly educated intellectuals and professional people, all thoroughly familiar with French culture and generally schooled in Western ways, either having lived abroad for many years or having attended Western schools. As to social origins, most Vietminh leaders were from middle or lower-middle-class families and several* came from an aristocratic mandarin background. These Vietminh leaders shared the xenophobia which was a part of Vietnam's historical tradition; in their formative years they had come to accept the ideas embodied in nationalism, often made known through personal contacts with mandarin rebels who opposed the French. They were nationalists long before they became Communists.

Strategy and Goals

The Vietminh followed the classic Communist strategy of the "united front," whereby a broadly popular goal, such as national independence with socioeconomic reform, is articulated on the public level, while the more narrow, ideological goals of communism are reserved for articulation among a small but expanding "in-group" of Communist and potential Communist leaders. The Vietminh laid primary stress on Vietnamese independence from foreign rule; *doc lap* (independence) appeared in all the slogans of the revolutionary movement. The possibility of an independent Vietnam "within the French Union" was held out at first in order to appease pro-French elements in Vietnam and to improve the Vietminh's bargaining position with France.** After 1950, when Communist con-

*For example, Pham Van Dong (see biographical details on page 73) and Phan Ke Toai, former Viceroy of Tonkin. Now DRV Minister of Interior.

**In the early postwar period the Vietminh sought French support against the Chinese warlords occupying northern Vietnam under a wartime agreement among the Allied forces; also, they expected the French Communist Party to come to power in France at this period.

trol of China was effected, the Vietminh moved rapidly in the direction of more open identification with communism and the Sino-Soviet bloc. "Class struggle took its place along with "independence" in the forefront of revolutionary slogans, and Communist socioeconomic measures were introduced in territory controlled by the Vietminh.

Ideology

While there can be no doubt that the leaders of the Vietminh were at all times committed to the Communist ideology, it is equally true that the ideology held by the Vietminh's mass following was not communism but anticolonialism and nationalism. Nationalism also animated the revolutionary leaders, but in this case it came to be expressed through the jargon of Communist ideology. The Vietnamese intellectual was particularly susceptible to communism, which to many Vietnamese seemed to fill the void left by the breakdown of the traditional value system. Although communism was Western in its origin, in its practical application it seemed to point the way toward the destruction of Western domination over the colonial East. *Communism's anticolonial stance was the primary source of its appeal among Vietnamese intellectuals; it provided a doctrinal basis for anticolonialism and thus legitimized the independence movement.* Its emphasis on a narrow, educated ruling elite corresponded closely to the mandarin political tradition of elite rule. Thus, communism appeared as a synthesis of the modern and the traditional, the Western and the Eastern, and the practical and the theoretical.

The mystique of the Vietnamese revolution had its origin in the revolutionary leadership's success in identifying the movement with popular sentiments for independence from foreign rule and relief from specific grievances. The Vietminh kept the focus of its propaganda on the national question until December of 1949, when an out-and-out Communist orientation seemed feasible. The general popularity and supremacy of the Vietminh among the masses was achieved through the systematic elimination of rival non-Communist nationalist groups and the uncompromising devotion and energy with which the Vietminh persisted in its opposition to the return of French rule. The failure of the French to provide a genuine nationalist alternative to the Vietminh drove the moderates into the ranks of the revolutionary movement. Thus, nationalism became the Vietminh's major ideological weapon, and with this psychological advantage its mass support was assured.

Summary

Organization

The Vietminh provided an organizational structure by which the Vietnamese Communist leadership exercised control of the revolutionary movement. The "united front" strategy permitted the Communists, who organized and controlled it, to make maximum use of anticolonial feeling and nationalism. After August 1945 the government and army of the Communist-dominated DRV came into being. In 1946 the Communists organized the Lien-Viet (Vietnamese United Front), a broader front organization, which included the Vietminh and several other groups. The Communist Party disappeared as a separate organization in 1945 but reappeared in 1951 as the Lao Dong (Workers' Party). Individual Communist leaders kept control of key positions in the DRV Government, its army and guerrilla organization, and the Vietminh and Lien-Viet political organizations.

The aim of the Communist leadership was first to gain and maintain control of all organized groups among the Vietnamese and second to enlist the active and organized participation of the entire population in the work of the revolutionary movement. *The Vietminh's emphasis on organized participation by the whole population, from the former Emperor to the coolie laborer, was of major psychological and organizational importance in its success.* Broad participation meant that many people not ideologically committed to communism were involved in and committed to the revolutionary effort as such.

Techniques

In a general sense, the techniques employed by the revolutionary leadership included all of the strategy, ideology, and organizational concepts discussed above. In a more specific sense, however, they refer to operational techniques, which may be subdivided broadly into political and military categories. *A distinctive feature of the Vietnamese Revolution was the interaction and close coordination of political and military operations.* Political activities invariably preceded military operations, for the sympathy and support of the indigenous population in the operations area was thought essential to military success.

Propaganda and agitation units were sent into rural villages, recruiting for guerrilla and political organizations. After

1945, governmental actions designed to win popular support to the DRV regime included tax reductions, anti-illiteracy campaigns, and distribution of land to poorer peasants. Of these political acts the most significant seem to have been the literacy campaign, which gave the Communists opportunity for mass indoctrination, and land reform, which gave the recipients of confiscated land a stake in the success of the revolution.

The Vietminh's military techniques included terrorist activities and hit-and-run ambush attacks by small guerrilla units, progressing to more complex, large-scale tactical operations after 1950; guerrilla operations continued in areas not completely controlled by the DRV's regular armed forces. The military situation gradually improved from the Vietminh standpoint after initial withdrawal of French forces in 1946–47. By the early 1950's the availability of logistical support from the Soviet bloc, together with the practical experience derived from several years of guerrilla warfare, permitted the revolutionary army to undertake a sustained drive against the French. A series of French military defeats, of which the fall of Dien Bien Phu was the last and most climactic encounter in the 7-year revolution, led to a negotiated settlement of the conflict.

Foreign Support

The roles of China, first as a foreign sanctuary and later as an ally of the revolutionary regime, and of Japan in destroying the machinery of French control over Vietnam cannot be overlooked. It seems improbable that the revolutionary war would have gotten under way when it did had the Japanese occupation of French Indochina not occurred. Not only did the Japanese accidentally oblige the revolutionists by removing the French from the scene, but they were responsible, whether by accident or design, for the Vietminh's obtaining much of its first armaments and military supplies and equipment. Ironically, the Vietminh also received considerable aid and support at the time from U.S. forces operating in south China. To the Japanese the Vietminh represented a nationalist organization to foster and to arm against the possibility of an Allied invasion of Indochina. On the other hand, it represented itself to the Allies as an ally against the Japanese.

The Vietminh was organized on Nationalist Chinese territory, and throughout the revolutionary period China offered

a convenient sanctuary and base of operations. Chinese warlords in south China, rather than the Chinese Nationalist central government, were responsible for the hospitable treatment accorded Ho Chi Minh and other Vietminh leaders on numerous occasions. Though not necessarily sympathetic to communism, these warlords were willing to cooperate with Vietnamese Communists in anticipation of future economic control over an independent Vietnam. Later, the Chinese Communists became a significant foreign ally of the Vietminh revolutionary forces, providing substantial logistical and training support.

SUMMARY TO SELECTED ANALYTIC CONCLUSIONS

In Vietnam the emergent middle class came into conflict with an established foreign minority. Finding access to political channels blocked, certain elements of this social group turned to revolution for the resolution of the conflict, which involved aspects of economic competition, social discrimination, cultural and racial pride, and ideological tension – all of which they subsumed under the general category of "nationalism." The Vietnamese were more politically conscious than other ethnic groups in French Indochina, due in large part to their possession of a highly developed national heritage, a tradition of opposition to foreign control, and their longer and closer association with European civilization.

That the Vietnamese revolutionary movement came under Communist control was the result of such factors as the personal aggressiveness and ability of Communist leaders and their successful elimination of non-Communist competition for leadership. Ho Chi Minh developed a well-disciplined and coordinated Communist-led nationalist movement which enjoyed wide popular support and which was substantially aided by the chaos created in the wake of the Japanese occupation and the Allied liberation. After more than 7 years of military operations the Vietminh achieved partial success from the Geneva Accords of 1954, whose terms were as much the result of international political forces as of a decision reached on the field of battle in Vietnam.

PART I
FACTORS INDUCING REVOLUTION

ECONOMIC MALADJUSTMENT

The economic system of Vietnam during the colonial period (1860's to 1950's) was highly vulnerable to the type of nationalist-socialist revolutionary movement which developed. Although economic problems need not always lead to a revolutionary crisis, certain indicators of economic maladjustment, such as gross disparities of wealth among the population and foreign control of productive resources, must not be overlooked in an analysis of the environment out of which revolution develops. Vietnam's colonial economy was characterized by foreign control, through French investments and direct ownership; by concentration of land ownership; by an undiversified economy dependent on rice and rubber as export crops; and, except for brief periods such as that prior to World War II, by a depressed standard of living among the indigenous population.

FOREIGN CONTROL OF THE ECONOMY

French Trade Policy

European expansion in Asia during the latter half of the 19th century was conducted under an economic theory which has been termed neomercantilism. The colonial territory was absorbed into the tariff and commercial orbit of the metropolitan or mother country. It supplied the metropolitan country with raw materials and provided an outlet for that country's manufactured goods. Neomercantilism was designed to advance the economic well-being of the mother country; the economic interests of the colonial territory were always secondary and subservient.[1]

The twofold function of French dependencies was to supply the mother country with cheap raw materials and products which did not compete with French products and to absorb French consumer goods. The economy of French Indochina, and thus of Vietnam, became dependent on Paris financial and business interests. Subsistence agriculture, cottage industries, and barter exchange largely disappeared under the impact of French commercial relations.[2] Disruption of Vietnam's traditional economy and mode of exchange had drastic and far-reaching social and political implications, as well as immediate economic effects.

Factors Inducing Revolution

In the period after World War I, economic ties between French and Indochina grew stronger, and by 1938 some 53 percent of all Indochinese exports went to France. Of particular note was the role and influence of French textile and metal industries, which accounted for some two-thirds of all French exports to Indochina. French policies did not intentionally aim at the impoverishment of theVietnamese; indeed, they sought to raise the living standards of the Asian peasants so that they could, in turn, afford to buy more goods from France.[3] After the depression of the early 1930's, Paris granted the colonial government some tariff autonomy, and importation of goods from other countries was permitted so long as these did not offer serious competition to French products.

French Investments and Ownership

The neomercantilist trade policies of the Paris government were complemented by the preponderant position of French capital and direct French ownership of various facets of the Vietnamese economy. French financial control was exercised through the *Banque d'Indochine*, which from its headquarters in Paris controlled all investment and financing in Indochina. There was considerable Vietnamese discontent during the colonial years because the bank was able to manipulate colonial policies and veto any proposed social and political reforms which in the least threatened the economic position of French investors.

Another source of discontent was French control of all industry and commerce; most manifestations of Vietnamese initiative along commercial and industrial lines were frustrated in their early stages of development. It was French policy to hinder Vietnamese business through petty restrictions and prohibitive taxation. Vietnamese businessmen were forced to pay higher taxes than those paid by French entrepreneurs in the same business; banking rates and interest as well as business licenses and fees were higher for the Vietnamese. Those industries which were from an economic point of view complementary to the Indochinese economy, such as food processing, mining, and sugar refining, were generally owned by the French or by Chinese nationals living in Vietnam. Although the Vietnamese were quite active in small-scale mining enterprises, even here the French authorities taxed each ton of mineral that was mined, and the Vietnamese entre-

preneur had to sell to French buyers for all export. Foreign commerce was entirely in the hands of the French.[4]

The French maintained a monopoly over the production of alcohol and opium in Vietnam. Income from the sale of these two items provided a substantial part of revenue for the general budget. In order to maintain or increase such revenue, the alcohol and opium monopolies levied quotas for the consumption of these two products on certain villages or provinces. In spite of the efforts of metropolitan France to abolish the opium monopoly, the colonial administration permitted this practice to continue.[5] Though this form of indirect taxation was a financial burden on the Vietnamese, its negative effect appears to have been more psychological and social than economic, and had an ominous impact on the entire society.[6] The moral debilitation caused by this type of government monopoly and the dishonesty associated with the administration of this form of taxation was an important element in the general malaise, cynicism, and disaffection of the population toward the entire colonial regime.

French economic predominance is reflected in the fact that of some $464 million invested in Indochina in 1938 (of which some $328 million was in various commercial or business enterprises), European capital amounted to about $303 million, and of this, 95 percent was French capital. One-third of this French capital was invested in agriculture, the remainder in food-processing industries, mining, trade, and banking. Chinese capital dominated the rice trade and retail business; some 80 percent of all rice mills and roughly half of all wholesale trade in other commodities was in the hands of Chinese nationals. The *Banque d'Indochine* required of all potential mining companies that a three-fourths majority on their Board of Directors be of French nationality.[7] No foreign financial interests were allowed to participate unilaterally in Vietnam; not more than 49 percent of the total capital in any mining, industrial, or commercial firm could be of foreign origin.[8]

Impact of World War II

The defeat of the French and the occupation of Indochina by the Japanese early in World War II dealt a death blow to the policy of neomercantilism and the assimilation of Indochina into the French economic sphere. Japanese expansionism in the Far East during the years 1940–45, officially labelled

the "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere," gave substance to the slogan "Asia for the Asiatics." French monopoly over the economy of Indochina was gradually replaced by Japanese control. Japan's economic policy toward occupied colonial countries was basically no less exploitative than the old European regimes. The first Japanese economic agreement with the French colonial government took place in May 1941, subsequent agreements spelling out in greater detail further Japanese demands. In general these called for the exportation from Indochina of various raw materials and food (e.g., rice, coal, and phosphate), and the importation of Japanese manufactured goods. By giving Japan favored trade terms, these agreements substituted Japan for metropolitan France as the main beneficiary of the Indochinese economy.

Japan sought to cripple French businesses in Indochina by failing to deliver the agreed quota of imported goods. For example, the import quota for Japanese cottons was scheduled at some 1,850 tons per quarter, but in actuality only some 32 tons arrived. This was due in part to the effectiveness of the Allied sea blockade. At the same time, the Japanese kept Indochina's exports at a minimum price but raised the price of Japanese imports to the colony.[9] In addition, the power and control of the French small businessman were seriously weakened by the influx of small Japanese merchants and businessmen. They duplicated French stores and monopolized to a great extent the small amount of goods which did come into Indochina.[10]

By 1943, inflation was becoming a serious problem. To combat it, the French colonial administration imposed rigid controls over the production, sale, and marketing of rice and coal – the main resources of the colony as far as the Japanese were concerned. These two items loomed large in Japanese plans for Indochina. In 1942, well over a million tons of rice were shipped to Japan; agricultural production, though hindered by floods, appears to have been at least normal during the early years of Japanese dominance.[11] Rice was particularly desirable in view of the fact that it was more economical to ship this crop to Japan from Indochina than from other areas of Southeast Asia. The output of coal, in contrast to rice production, declined from the prewar figure of some 2.3 million tons to 1.2 million. With Japan as the only customer, coal production naturally decreased to that amount which was needed by Japan and for local consumption.[12]

As the war proceeded, the ability of the Japanese to continue the shipment of rice to Japan and of manufactured goods from Japan declined. Consequently, the overall economic situation in Vietnam deteriorated rapidly, particularly in the cities and larger towns. The peasant population, accustomed to primitive living standards, was less affected by the shortage of manufactured goods and the higher cost of living. The decline in imports cost the colonial government one-fourth of its revenue receipts, which came largely from customs duties. The French administration's financial situation was not helped by the fact that all Japanese occupation costs and the salaries for their advisers and administrative bureaucrats had to be borne by the French colonial regime. Acute shortages of cloth goods, tools, electrical supplies, gasoline, and medical supplies led to more inflation and widespread black market.[13]

Indochina, long dependent on foreign trade, was virtually isolated from the outside world during the war. Even contact between north and south Vietnam was seriously hampered; the ships and light transport boats used in coastline shipping were lost through Allied bombing. Rail traffic, on which the economy was very dependent, was curtailed through bombing and lack of normal maintenance. One train a week ran between Saigon and Hanoi, and by late 1943 there were only six freight locomotives left in the colony.[14] By 1944 difficulties in shipping created a shortage of coal in Saigon, and although the 1943–44 rice crop maintained a relatively high level, food shortages developed because of transportation difficulties.[15] In 1945 approximately a million northern Vietnamese died of starvation.

To alleviate the plight of an urban population faced with mounting costs for food, clothing, and fuel, the colonial regime instituted pay raises for its clerical workers; created public work projects for the unemployed transport workers, miners, and other industrial workers; and made vigorous efforts to build up local manufacturing capability. Local industries began at this time to produce car batteries, automobile tires, and ersatz petroleum products. Efforts were made to halt inflation and strengthen the government through bond drives.[16]

All these economic policies came to a halt when the Japanese took direct control of Indochina in March 1945. Until then the Japanese permitted the facade of French control to continue except in the case of certain strategic iron ore and phosphate

mines.[17] After that time, all capital and working assets were appropriated by the Japanese.

By the late stages of the war, shortages and inflation had begun to affect the condition of the peasant cultivator. Even his modest standard of living was not entirely immune to the damaging effects of inflation. For example, there were certain materials that he needed for cultivation and consumption, such as tools, farm implements, and cotton cloth. Cotton cloth had cost some 35 centimes a meter before the war (100 centimes equal 1 piastre); this increased to about 12 piastres during Japanese occupation.[18]

The Japanese occupation of Indochina, with its continuous demands on the economy and the disruption of trade and economic relations with France that resulted, created an economic situation characterized by inflation, black market, and loss of confidence in the French business community. Particularly among the urban population but also among the peasants, real economic privation was experienced during the war years. The indigenous bourgeois, long resentful of French and Chinese domination and control of the colony's economy, were treated to the spectacle of Japanese economic control over their political overlords. Under wartime conditions, the Vietnamese business community, such as it was, enjoyed greater economic freedom than at any other time in French colonial history.

Summary

Neomercantilism best describes the economic relationship between France and Vietnam. Under this system the French introduced Western economic methods to a primitive rice growing and fishing economy and by 1939 had developed a prosperous enterprise dependent, however, on Paris financial and business interests. The Japanese ended and gradually replaced French monopoly in Vietnam in the period from 1940 to 1945. The economic isolation of the war years created grave hardships, somewhat alleviated by the establishment of local manufacturing plants and increased economic freedom for Vietnamese business interests.

CONCENTRATION OF LAND AND LANDLESS PEASANTS

The concentration of landownership in the hands of a minority of French and Vietnamese landlords was a significant

characteristic of Vietnam's colonial economic structure, particularly in the south. In precolonial Vietnam the village had been an autonomous community with respect to certain social and economic functions, not the least of which was the system among the villagers which administered the partition of communal lands to indigent peasant families. Peasants were not isolated individuals but part of a cohesive and integrated community.

It must not be assumed that before the period of French colonial rule there had been no inequality in landed wealth. However, this inequality was to some extent offset by the responsibility felt by the traditional leaders of the community and the communal spirit among the peasants themselves. Those peasants who lost ownership of their lands through the changing conditions of nature were able to turn for support to the communal lands.[19] The village commune system was not suited to the type of economic development and commercialization which the French introduced to Vietnam, so communal lands were either neglected or transformed into the private holdings of individual peasants or landlords.

The system of land tenure varied widely. In the north in the Red River Delta area, small holdings under peasant proprietorship predominated, and extreme subdivision of land prevailed; it is estimated that there were approximately 16 million individual plots of land farmed by different cultivators. In general, the small proprietors farmed their own land, but a majority of the medium-sized holdings and all of the large holdings in Tonkin were composed of plots of land which were leased or rented to tenant farmers.

In the Mekong Delta region of the south, called Cochin China by the French, the landholdings were larger. Most of the French-owned plantations were in this area. The larger holdings were farmed either by tenants or by hired labor.

Even where small-scale ownership of land was the prevailing system of land tenure, the small farmer was practically a tenant. He existed in chronic indebtedness to the local moneylender, who usually allowed the farmer to remain on the land in return for annual payments of interest and a certain amount of rice.[20] The rates of interest and land rent varied from area to area in the colonial period. However, it has been estimated that the average payment of rent to the landlord came to around 40 percent of the entire rice crop. Moreover, the landlord claimed control over the entire crop, so

that the freedom of the tenant to dispose of his own crop was severely limited.[21]

The landlord, who in many cases was the proprietor of a medium-sized farm, was the main source of credit for the tenant cultivator and furnished rice and capital to the tenant at an interest rate estimated at about 50 percent for 8 months or 1 year. The only alternative to borrowing from the landlord was to borrow from the professional moneylenders, whose rates of interest were between 70 and 80 percent for a 3-month period.[22] Persons who had land as security could obtain capital through the Agricultural Credit Institutions, set up by the French after 1913, at relatively low interest rates and could then loan this money to landless peasant cultivators at the exorbitant rates quoted above.[23]

The credit institutions that existed in the colonial period did not improve the lot of the perpetually indebted tenant farmer. The landlord-moneylender was unable to invest his surplus capital in commercial or industrial activities which guaranteed an attractive profit because of French restrictions on the indigenous entrepreneur, thus usury was the surest way for the bourgeois to improve his economic position.

Chronic agricultural indebtedness and an economic structure based on interest payments rather than agricultural production had a debilitating effect on the Indochinese economy.[24] It has been charged that any commercial prosperity which Indochina experienced was spurious and that the true productivity of the country remained practically stationary throughout the entire French regime.[25] In sum, the concentration of land and capital in the hands of a small landlord-moneylender class, some of whom were French, produced a state of economic stagnation and general frustration among the mass of the population which was later capitalized upon by the nationalist revolutionary movement.

Summary

During French rule the Vietnamese enjoyed two types of landownership: small holdings under peasant proprietorship in the north around the Red River Delta; and, in the south around the Mekong Delta, large estates mostly owned by Vietnamese and some French absentee landlords who rented their land to tenant farmers. Major differences between peasant proprietors and tenant farmers were few because of the farmer's chronic indebtedness to moneylenders.

ABSENCE OF A DIVERSIFIED ECONOMY

The cultivation of rice has traditionally been the chief economic activity in Indochina. Its importance is shown vividly by the fact that of some 6 million hectares of cultivable land in Indochina, some 5 million hectares were in rice prior to World War II.[26]

During the years before World War I, annual rice exports were generally well below a million metric tons. It was not until the boom years of the 1920's with the introduction of rice production into the semivirgin Mekong Delta region that exportation reached over a million metric tons annually; and by the late thirties it averaged approximately 1.5 million metric tons per year. At that time Indochina provided 25 percent of all rice that entered the world market.[27]

The effect of fluctuations in the world rice market bore heavily on the individual Vietnamese peasant farmer, who depended exclusively on the sale of rice to meet his economic needs. In a good year when his production was high and the demand and price the same, he cleared a profit. The lean years, however, ate up the good ones, for when his crop or the market failed, he was forced to go to the moneylender.[28] There was a considerable increase in bankruptcy among small peasants during the depression, 1928–31, when the price of rice fell 68 percent. To make matters worse, there was no corresponding decrease in the cost of the manufactured goods which the peasant bought. Many a small farmer, trying to meet the demands of the tax collector and the moneylender, lost his holdings.[29]

Not only was Indochina overly dependent on the export of a single crop, it was outstandingly inefficient in its production. The average yield of 12 to 13 quintals of rice per hectare was low by world standards.[30] Low productivity was to some extent caused by objective factors related to the soil, climate, and technological backwardness of the country. Of equal significance was the general feeling of weariness and dissatisfaction among the mass of poverty-stricken peasantry, who felt that a man had no control over his economic fate and who saw little connection between labor and reward. The indigenous middle-class farmer was more concerned with rents and interests than with rice production. Consequently, there was little real support for efforts of the colonial government to increase rice productivity. The French introduced the cultivation of rubber to Indochina and encouraged cultiva-

tion of cotton, coffee, tea, and other tropical export crops; the socioeconomic result of these attempts to diversify agriculture was similar to that of the rice culture: a plantation economy still predominated.

Summary

The Vietnamese economy was overly dependent on the cultivation and the export of rice for its revenue. Rice brought relative prosperity to the Vietnamese during good years, but when natural calamities caused low production, or when the world market price for rice dropped, then Vietnam faced serious economic crises.

LABOR CONDITIONS

The estimated number of wage earners in Indochina in 1941 can be set at 280,000, out of a total population of 23 million people. This represents an increase of 225,000 over 1906, but both figures are probably underestimates since the occasional wage earner is not included.[31] These workers were low paid by any standard. For example, the unskilled laborer in Cochin China, the most prosperous region, received an annual wage of 55 piastres in 1931, compared with the same unskilled worker wage of 620 piastres in France and 185 piastres in Morocco.[32] Unemployment was not, however, a significant problem.

Rural

The major part of colonial Indochina's labor force was made up of peasants, most of whom worked in the rice fields of the overpopulated regions of north and central Vietnam. Many of them were recruited for contract labor in the south, a practice which began early in the century and reached serious proportions between the wars.

Elaborate regulations protected contract workers, fixing the term of contracts and eventually introducing a deferred pay system, free food, housing, and health service.[33] Work hours were fixed at 8 a day and a minimum wage scale established.[34] Noncontract agricultural wage earners were less favored, remaining unprotected by government regulation even after the labor legislation of the 1930's which covered noncontract industrial workers.

A prevalent labor practice, especially on plantations, was the use of a local intermediary between European employer and hired laborers. He was called a *cais* and acted as foreman. The *cais* was noted for corruption and extorted a good part of the wages of those under him,[35] reducing the worker's modest income further.

The rural proletariat, or "floating" agricultural worker, had definite revolutionary potential. He had no ties to the land which he worked, to the village where he lived, or even to one landlord. This element of the population constituted an "active force" and a "social danger," and it grew steadily in size throughout the colonial period.[36]

Urban

By the 1940's there were approximately 140,000 wage earners in Indochina employed in mining, industrial, and commercial undertakings. Fifty-three thousand of these were in the mines, a third of them in the Hon Gay mines of northern Vietnam. Other workers were employed in light industries and processing of agricultural products. The shipyards of Saigon were the only heavy industry of note. The colonial railways employed nearly ten thousand Vietnamese.[37]

Industrial labor was noncontract labor, recruited locally and not regulated until the 1930's.[38] Strikes were common before 1930, but participation in one generally cost a laborer his job, for unions had little bargaining power and no legal status. Settlement of disputes by arbitration and mediation was made mandatory in 1930. A further law in 1932 provided the machinery for compulsory conciliation, outlawed strikes against the public service, and forbade collective cessation of work except in a particular dispute.[39] This restriction was aimed not only at preventing politically motivated strikes, but forestalling the development of territorial labor unions and precluding the possibility of a general strike.

In 1936 the Popular Front government in France introduced labor reforms into Indochina. These included a 40-hour week, paid vacations, right to form territorial unions, and social security insurance. The reforms were opposed by the colonial business community and were not widely implemented. A series of strikes in the same year, notably a 6-day coal strike involving 6,000 miners, did result in the colonial government's instituting wage and hour regulations. Yet once again the

right to strike and to enter into large scale union organization was strictly regulated.[40]

Although government labor policies were benevolent, the union movement was not encouraged and did not develop significantly in the colonial period. As with the agricultural workers, some industrial workers, especially the miners, profited from labor legislation but others, particularly in the light industries where the *cais* system was also used, were not greatly affected.

Summary

The number of wage earners in prerevolutionary Vietnam was low compared with the total population. The majority of these were agricultural laborers, who made up a rural proletariat with considerable revolutionary potential. Although France gave the Vietnamese one of the most progressive systems of labor legislation in Asia during the 1930's, only part of the labor force was practically involved. Both official and unofficial restrictions kept organized labor in a low state of development.

SOCIAL ANTAGONISM

TENSIONS WITHIN THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE

The Social Structure in Prerevolutionary Vietnam

Prerevolutionary Vietnamese society was characterized, first of all, by its colonial nature. The indigenous population stood apart from and, in a very real sense, in an inferior position to the French colonial population. Even the Vietnamese upper class held an inferior position to the lower-class French colonial elements with respect to political and social rights. It is necessary therefore to discuss French colonial society and Vietnamese indigenous society separately.

To describe the indigenous social structure of Vietnam in the familiar lower-, middle-, and upper-class categories would be inappropriate. It is better to examine the traditional social structure of the rural agricultural society as one aspect, and then to analyze separately the emergent and more fluid urban social patterns.

The overwhelming majority of the Vietnamese population

in the prerevolutionary years were rural agriculturalists living in small villages. These settlements, concentrated in the alluvial deltas and lowland coastal regions, continued to reflect the traditional communal organization of Vietnamese society and the basic rice culture. Throughout this period the agrarian social structure remained generally intact, although it came under increasing pressure as time passed. The small cultivator, whether landowner, tenant, or contract laborer, lived on a subsistence standard under primitive social conditions.

The social group immediately above was that of the so-called "middle" peasant, a landlord or bourgeois, whose position in society was determined by ownership of land and the income derived from farm tenancy. The social status of this gentry was reinforced by the recruitment from its ranks of the traditional mandarin bureaucracy which served as the ruling elite of the village.

Although technically civil servants in the imperial bureaucracy, the mandarins were in actuality the masters of Vietnamese society and polity before the French conquest. They were educated in the Chinese classics and Confucian philosophy and dominated the intellectual horizon of precolonial Vietnam. Admission to the mandarinate and promotion through the various degrees and ranks of its hierarchy depended on the candidate's passing rigid examinations in classical fields. When the French occupied the country, many individual mandarins were removed from power, but the mandarinate survived as an institution to be used by the colonial authorities to administer village affairs.

The most significant social development of the colonial period was the gradual formation of an urban society. Although embryonic in comparison with the country's basic agricultural mode of society, this urban social structure was a crucial environmental factor in the Vietnamese Revolution. Urban society developed largely as a consequence of the French conquest and unification of Indochina. The economic activities which came with the establishment of French rule—industry, commerce, and railroads—brought about a social organization markedly different from the society of the old market and administrative villages.

There were, however, no large metropolitan centers in colonial Indochina. For example, in 1936 there were only three cities in Vietnam with a population of more than 100,000: Hanoi, Cho Lon, and Saigon. The smaller urban areas con-

tained the residences, businesses, and offices of landlord-moneylenders, small merchants, native functionaries, unskilled laborers, and Western-trained Vietnamese, who worked for the French administration as translators, clerks, messengers, or low-level officials. The standard of living among urban Vietnamese was generally higher than that of the rural population, but there were glaring differences in living standards among the urban social groups.

At the apex of the social structure was the numerically small but politically and economically dominant French colonial society. The population of Vietnam in 1937 was approximately 19 million; of these some 19,000 were termed "Europeans and assimilated groups." Over two-thirds of the gainfully employed European population were affiliated with either the military or the colonial government. The next main category of occupation was professional (law, medicine, and teaching); commerce, including banking and insurance, was the third occupational category, followed closely by mining and industry.[41] Most of these individuals lived in small urban centers such as provincial capitals, market towns, or maritime ports. Generally, Europeans enjoyed higher living standards than Vietnamese, although there were exceptions.

National Antagonisms

Throughout the colonial period there existed an inherent sociopolitical distinction between the ruler and the ruled, between the European colonials – whether government functionaries or private businessmen – and the indigenous society. The *raison d'être* for this distinction was rooted in the tacit understanding (on the part of the French and a small minority of the Vietnamese) of the superiority of the French in cultural, economic, and political affairs. Thus, the realities of Vietnam's colonial social structure, i.e., French domination, were in conflict with the social values held by the majority of the indigenous population – who believed that Vietnamese culture was at least equal if not superior to that of the West exemplified by France.

The Vietnamese group responsible for active opposition to French domination during the early colonial period was the traditional ruling elite, usually referred to as the mandarin class. These Vietnamese aristocrats, Confucian and Chinese-oriented in culture, were bitterly resentful of the French who had replaced them as the economic and political overlords

of the country. Many of these Vietnamese disapproved of intermarriage with Europeans. From this group of mandarin aristocrats came a number of nationalist revolutionaries before World War I.

After the 1920's the opposition to the French came from a new class—the Western-educated, urbanized middle class, created, ironically, by the French presence in Indochina. Educated to understand and appreciate Western culture, with its emphasis on social justice and national independence, these Vietnamese were increasingly frustrated by their social environment.

Generally the older, more tradition-oriented, indigenous officials, as well as the middle-class Vietnamese, evinced no overt hostility to the French in the later colonial period, but they rarely cooperated fully and maintained "a reserved and distant attitude" toward their social and political masters. Social antagonism between the French colonials and the passive indigenous masses remained a stubborn and "nascent problem" throughout the colonial period.[42]

The presence of non-Vietnamese Asians in colonial Vietnam also gave rise to a certain degree of social antagonism. In addition to Chinese, Indian, and Cambodian minorities in Vietnamese urban centers and villages, there were approximately a million *montagnards** living in the mountainous interior regions. They are remnants of prehistoric civilizations which flourished in Vietnam prior to the Vietnamese migration into the area from south China. The *montagnards*, driven out of the fertile lowlands and seacoast areas by their more powerful neighbors, were isolated from the outside world and lapsed into a primitive and stagnant existence.

The Vietnamese term them *Moi* (savages) and look upon them as inferior, uncivilized, lazy, and wastefully occupying land that could better be utilized by Vietnamese settlers. The *montagnards* have in turn been hostile to the Vietnamese, whom they regard as the chief threat to the continuance of their tribal way of life. They frequently viewed the French as allies and defenders.[43]

Class Antagonisms

Behind a certain facade of homogeneity and national unity which was based on the practical fact that a handful of Euro-

*The strategic importance of these hill tribesmen outweighs their numerical importance, since they occupy nearly half of the territory of Vietnam.

peans was governing an immense mass of Asians, French colonial society in Vietnam exhibited the same class antagonisms and political dissension which plagued metropolitan France during the Third Republic (1870–1940). The traditional French civil-military dispute, the anticlericalism, and the antipathy between the civil servant class and the business circles all served to weaken the sense of national solidarity within the French colonial community. Although every French colonial was a petty lord as viewed by both the indigenous Vietnamese and the French, a distinct hierarchy based upon status and wealth was apparent among them.[44]

Class antagonisms were likewise present beneath the surface of the Vietnamese social structure. In precolonial Vietnam social tensions had been neutralized by a sense of responsibility on the part of the traditional leaders and by a communal spirit among the peasants, though there were occasional peasant revolts. In the colonial period commercialization of the peasants' subsistence agriculture introduced an antagonism, new to the area, between the peasantry and the landlord class. An economic and legal relationship superseded the old sociocultural relationship.[45] Further, the landlord class (traditionally the source of the political elite) lacked substantive authority under the French and sought to improve its own status at the expense of the peasantry. Finally, the peasants felt contempt for the traditional leaders who had become the puppets of the French. Local governmental functions and the administration of justice were corrupted and weakened by social discontent and class antagonisms.[46]

Summary

The largest sector of the Vietnamese population was made up of illiterate peasants, most of whom lived in small villages and worked the ricefields. A middle class emerged from the predominant peasant class shortly after the French established their authority. It was made up of merchants, officials, and intellectuals; though Western-oriented they had virtually no political or economic power. The privileged class comprised a small percentage of the population and consisted of Europeans (mostly French), Chinese, and a few Vietnamese. Economic and social strains of the French presence created new tensions between traditional Vietnamese elite and the masses.

DEMISE OF TRADITIONAL SOCIETY

Description of Traditional Society and the Impact of Colonialism

Since the beginning of the Christian era, Chinese Confucian cultural influences had been dominant throughout the area known today as Vietnam and traditionally consisting of the Tonkin, Annam, and Cochin China regions.* The social structure of the area was characterized by a sharp division into two main classes: the ruling mandarin-landlord class and the general peasantry. Both classes shared a common world view and a common system of values based on the autonomous family, the cult of ancestor worship, and filial piety. Around the compact villages a complicated pattern of interpersonal relationships was ordered and structured within the Confucian system, and the basic questions of life and ethics were integrated and formalized.[47]

The Confucian verities and virtues of probity and loyalty, sincerity and benevolence, reverence and passivity were inculcated through the family and provided the value system for social and political conduct. The Confucian socioethical institution, which is commonly compared to the role of law and religion in the West, resulted in a strong sense of social cohesion and political equilibrium.[48]

Those who exercised political power, the mandarin-landlord class, generally had absolute power within the Confucian ethical code. Although society was sharply divided between the scholar-aristocrat-administrator and the peasant, there was some opportunity for intelligent and able men of peasant stock to make their way up into the select rank and, through the system of imperial examinations, be admitted to the mandarinate class. Thus, there existed a certain degree of social mobility. The peasant masses accepted the traditional way of life unskeptically as something respectable and inevitable.[49]

The failure of the indigenous monarchy to halt the French action to "establish a position" for France in Vietnam (1858–83) seriously undermined the traditional respect upon which the imperial administration was based. The technical superiority of the West, symbolized by the steam engine and advanced weaponry, threatened the cogency of Vietnam's ancient system.

*Of these three regions, Annam in central Vietnam had achieved political unity and control over the northern Tonkin and the southern Cochin China regions early in the 19th century, and had given its name to the language and culture of the entire territory. Thus, the terms "Annam" and "Annamese" or "Annamite" found in sources from the colonial period are generally equivalent to the terms "Vietnam" and "Vietnamese" used in more recent sources.

Factors Inducing Revolution

The traditional ethic and routine acceptance of things came to be questioned by some of the Vietnamese.

Although the French kept many of the forms of traditional society and polity, the substance disappeared under the influence of a European administrative organization, with alien laws and concepts and a dynamic, profit-motivated economic system. (In the economic sphere, as discussed earlier, colonialism brought about the commercialization of what had been formerly a subsistence rice economy.) The result was a social revolution. The disappearance of the old way of life had serious psychological effects on both the uneducated peasantry and the intellectual elite as well. By the turn of the century there was evident a social malaise, or "simmering of discontent," within the Vietnamese society, which was reflected in sporadic outbreaks of violence.[50]

French conquest and colonization implied that the Confucian tradition had been proved inferior to the Western ethos with its concepts of individualism, commercialism, and rationalism. While they adopted individual ideas and techniques from the West, most of the Vietnamese intellectual class regarded Western culture with disdain and contempt, even when they rejected the old values as having been found wanting in the modern era. Resentful, bitter, and frustrated, the Vietnamese stood in need of a new social ideology by the beginning of the century—one that would restore and revitalize both their national pride and their political freedom and economic autonomy. The gradually increasing Western-educated intelligentsia particularly felt this need for an integrating philosophy.

The Search For a New Value System or Social Integration

Association. During the early decades of French rule and to the 1920's, some Western-educated Vietnamese looked to France for new social and political values. They believed that the changes effected during colonial rule would ameliorate living conditions and that over the years there would evolve some sort of Vietnamese autonomy through "association" under tutelage of the colonial power. They came to accept the idea that they were culturally inferior and cooperated with the French in maintaining the facade of the traditional monarchy, with the understanding that greater power and responsibility would eventually be distributed to the emerging bourgeoisie. In theory, French colonial policy was based on this association idea, but in practice the colonial regime never operated according to the principles of Franco-Vietnamese association.

The failure of the regime to support the plans and aspirations of these Vietnamese in any meaningful manner prevented it from winning wide support. Cooperation between French and Vietnamese was at its best in the period immediately following World War I, but shortly declined. Thereafter, except among those Vietnamese whose economic well-being was directly linked with the colonial regime, the concept of "association" had little attraction.

Mandarin traditionalism. The mandarin elite led the opposition to French rule until well into the 1920's. These traditionalists sought to maintain the social fabric and believed that the ouster of the "foreign devils" would revivify Vietnamese society and the Confucian ethic. They had no interest in the social and political reforms that some Western-educated Vietnamese sought via "association" with France.

The Japanese victory in the Russo-Japanese war of 1905 had a tremendous impact on the minds of some Vietnamese traditionalists to whom it was a signal event pointing the way to victory over the French conqueror. Pan-Asianism reaffirmed for the conservative elite the innate viability of their tradition and implied that the expulsion of the European colonists would be possible under a reanimated monarchy. The racial and cultural pride of the Vietnamese was bolstered by the Japanese successful strike against Europe on behalf of the Asian races. It is commonly asserted that Japan lit the fires of nationalism throughout the Orient by its victory in 1905.[51]

The influence of mandarin traditionalists in the nationalist movement receded and leadership passed to younger, Western-educated Vietnamese of middle-class origins in the late 1920's. Beginning in this period and increasing as Western education made its impact, was the idea that nationalism should encompass broad social reform, including the overthrow of the Vietnamese elite.

Sun Yat-sen and national reform. Inspiration for revolutionary national reform, in contrast to a conservative restoration of the mandarinate, came from the noted Chinese revolutionary, Sun Yat sen, and his movement, the Tun Meng Hui. Sun Yat-sen linked the concept of a social revolution with national independence. He was the first modern Chinese leader to offer a coherent sociopolitical philosophy to a traditional Asian society; because of the long tradition of Chinese influence in Vietnam, this nationalism and reform appealed to Vietnamese. A particularly attractive feature of Sun Yat-sen's idea was its emphasis on "people's livelihood." This

generally envisaged some type of land reform and government ownership of commerce and industry.[52] Nationalism in Vietnam became more than the xenophobia of the mandarins; influenced by Sun Yat-sen, it began to call for both material and social change.[53] With the addition of this teleological orientation, Vietnamese nationalism became attractive to the frustrated intellectuals.

Leninism. It was at this juncture, in the 1920's, that Leninism, which combined nationalism with a revolutionary technique for controlling social change, arrived on the Vietnamese scene. The national movements of the colonial countries against their "imperialist overlords" were assigned a conspicuous role in the Leninist revolutionary theory. More important, however, in the appeal of Leninism to the Vietnamese was the concept of a highly organized and vigorously disciplined elite capable of reorganizing society. This had wide appeal among the Vietnamese because of their tradition of the mandarinate with its political absolutism by an educated elite.[54]

Summary

The demise of traditional society with its Confucian ethic left an ideological void. Frustrated and disillusioned, but still hopeful of revitalizing their society, the Western-educated Vietnamese were at odds not only with French domination and the values it represented but also with the value system of their own traditional elite. The search for a new integrating system involved not only the desire for political independence but for an entirely new social organization, and many Vietnamese found the answer in Leninism.

MARGINALITY OF INTELLECTUALS

Intellectuals as a Class

In a society in which most people are illiterate, the role of the few who are educated is out of proportion to their numerical importance. In such a society the educated element stands in sharp relief and may be defined as a distinct social group, usually referred to as the intellectual class. For the purposes of this analysis, the term intellectual is defined broadly to include all educated Vietnamese not engaged as laborers in

agriculture or industry. It includes students, teachers, journalists, lawyers, doctors, and other professional people, as well as the functionaries who served as clerks, translators, and minor officials in the colonial government, and even skilled workers. The mandarin class, still nominal rulers at the village and province level, and the imperial bureaucracy at the court in Hué, must also be included in this intellectual category; however, these traditionalists had little in common with the Western-educated Vietnamese who, during the colonial era, became the overwhelming majority of the intellectual class. White-collar workers—the minor officials in the light technical industries, railroads, banks, mining companies, large estates, and commercial establishments—may also be considered a segment of the intellectual class. Most intellectuals lived in the provincial capitals and market towns and in the larger cities such as Saigon and Hanoi.

The Vietnamese intellectual class provided the link between the social antagonisms of the colonial period and the revolutionary movement. First the mandarin intelligentsia and later, after the 1920's, the Western-educated intellectuals took the initiative in formulating and voicing national and reform demands. Traditionally charged with political leadership and social responsibility, this element of the Vietnamese population bore the psychological brunt of French colonial rule. Their reaction to colonialism was of crucial significance in the eventual defeat of French authority in Indochina.

Problems of the Intellectual

As the Vietnamese intellectual turned his back on the traditions of his native culture and adopted French ways and European sociopolitical ideas, he found himself culturally isolated, no longer at home in the Asian milieu yet not accepted in the world of the Europeans. Traditional ways and values became increasingly less viable as the exposure to European civilization continued. The intellectual element was not alone in this cultural dilemma, but it was naturally the one most articulate in voicing the hopes of the Vietnamese people.

If partially fulfilled aspirations among employed intellectuals made difficulties for the colonial regime, unemployed intellectuals posed an even greater problem, that of finding employment, other than in government, for the young intellectuals who had left technical school. Commerce and industry did not appeal to the educated Vietnamese, as they could not compete

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in these fields with the Europeans and Chinese who had superior financial backing and organization. Moreover, the French did not welcome such competition in economic affairs.[55] The situation led the French to restrict education at secondary and higher levels to those who could be absorbed into the public or industrial life of the country.[56]

It has been said that colonialism, by aggravating social tensions, nurtures the forces which are destined ultimately to destroy it. The Vietnamese intellectual, influenced by the harsh realities of Indochina's political and economic dependence on France and by the theories of social justice and national self-determination learned from the West, was vulnerable to the appeal of the particular type of revolutionary nationalism which developed in the 1920's. Western sociopolitical concepts opened his eyes to factors which he believed responsible for the misery and poverty about him. Moreover, he had dreams of power and influence in keeping with his mandarin traditions.

Summary

The Western-oriented intellectual class was composed of all educated Vietnamese who rejected the traditions of their native culture and accepted Western sociopolitical ideas. However, the members found themselves in a cultural dilemma, when, after accepting Western ways and ideas, they were rejected by the European circles. Social tensions were generated when they began to articulate the appeals of revolutionary nationalism.

POLITICAL WEAKNESS

POLITICAL IMBALANCE: REPRESENTATION, PARTICIPATION, AND DISCRIMINATION

Pre-World War II Period

Throughout the prewar colonial period the indigenous peoples of Indochina had a minimal degree of political representation in the various *Conseils* (councils) established by the French, which were partly elective and partly appointive. Administrative laws were made by the French colonial administration in the colony. Judicial and executive powers were exercised by French colonial officials and, in some cases, by

mandarins and traditional judges acting under French supervision.

The French employed direct rule in Cochin China, but in Annam and Tonkin, and in the non-Vietnamese territories of Laos and Cambodia, they developed a system of indirect government, involving parallel structures of local and French administrative cadres. However, French hegemony prevailed equally throughout the territory. There was always more local participation and representation in government and administration at the commune and provincial levels than at higher ones.

At the federal level there was the French Governor General, appointed by the government in Paris and given certain powers and responsibilities for the administration of the five regions of Indochina. The Governor General was assisted by various consultative and advisory bodies composed of high French military and civil officials and a few prominent Vietnamese. For example, in the late thirties the 37-member *Conseil de Gouvernement* included five Vietnamese representatives (one from each region), and half of the 56 members of the *Grand Conseil des Intérêts Économiques et Financiers* were Vietnamese. They funtioned in a staff capacity only, and were either appointed by the Governor General or elected indirectly by local assemblies; these did not represent the indigenous population in the usual political sense.

The French Governor who headed the colonial administration in Cochin China was assisted by two advisory bodies, the *Conseil Privé*, composed of eight French and two Vietnamese officials nominated by the Governor General, and the *Conseil Colonial*, composed of 10 members elected by universal suffrage of resident French citizens, 10 members elected by a restricted Vietnamese suffrage, and 4 delegates from the chambers of agriculture and commerce. These bodies had no legislative power and were consulted only on budgetary matters; the *Conseil Privé* could overrule the advisory opinions of the *Conseil Colonial*. In the village commune the French retained the institution of a *Conseil de Notables*, composed of locally prominent and well-to-do Vietnamese. French residents of Cochin China, of whom there were some 16,000, were represented in the national legislature in Paris by one deputy elected by universal suffrage. The number of Vietnamese who became naturalized as French citizens and were therefore eligible to vote in this election was negligible.

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In the protectorate states of Annam and Tonkin, the form, but not the substance, of Vietnamese participation in government prevailed. Here the French colonial administration paralleled the traditional governmental structure of the Annamese monarchy and used the latter to administer the area for France. The Emperor and his Court at Huế and the provincial mandarins in the market towns did not represent the interests of the people. At the village level there was some political representation through the mayor and the *Conseil de Notables;* however, that council was not a democratic institution but a self-perpetuating oligarchy of prominent landlords. In Tonkin there were two such administrative councils at village level, and since both bodies had to agree on any decisions reached this bicameral arrangement further diminished local political action.

The French administration was headed by a *résident supérieur* in each of the two protectorate states and by a *résident* in each of Annam's 16 and Tonkin's 23 provinces. These officials were assisted in a staff capacity by the same type of consultative bodies that functioned on the federal level and in Cochin China. Vietnamese representation in all of these councils was of minimal political significance. The councils did not and were never intended to function as representative legislative bodies in the sense that legislative councils, for instance, have functioned in British colonial areas.[57] Even the elective *Chambre Indigène des Représentants du Peuple*, which assisted the *résident supérieur*, has been described as a mere camouflage for French control. "Most of its members were elected, but by a narrow group of officials and others of trusted loyalty. Even then it could not debate political subjects, while on other matters it could express its views only if the *résident supérieur* agreed to a debate."[58]

Japanese Occupation

Until March 1945 the Japanese forces occupying Indochina left the French colonial administration intact in accordance with diplomatic agreements between Japan and the Vichy French regime for economic and military cooperation. The Japanese needed the French to administer Indochina, which was vital to the Japanese war effort for economic and strategic reasons, and the French needed to retain at least the facade of administrative control in the colony against the day when the international situation would permit the ouster of Japa-

nese influence.[59] Realizing the psychological impact on the indigenous population of the fall of France and the Japanese occupation, Governor General Vice Adm. Jean Decoux* sought to parry discontent by liberalizing the colonial regime.

The chief effort along this line was to bring more and more Vietnamese into the administrative structure. From 1940 to 1944 the number of Vietnamese in the intermediate and upper echelons of the colonial administration more than doubled. Paradoxically, this effort provided the future revolutionary regime with a number of trained and experienced officials.[60] (Efforts to increase Vietnamese participation in colonial administration had begun early in the colonial period and had received active support from several Governors General such as Sarrault (1911–14) and Pasquier (1928–34), but the results of these efforts were meager in comparison to the wartime developments.)

Decoux encouraged decentralization and the separate development of the Indochinese states; he sought to strengthen the prestige of Bao Dai** and the kings of Cambodia and Laos. Moreover, he urged a closer social relationship between French and Vietnamese elites (for example, requiring the French to use *vous*, the polite form of address, to Vietnamese, instead of the traditional *tu* form)*** and encouraged the teaching of the Vietnamese language to the French. To counter Japanese influence among the Vietnamese, Decoux opened new schools to provide technical and vocational training, and he instituted a national youth movement for sports and physical education, with a paramilitary undertone. These groups later became hotbeds of nationalism.

While Decoux's paternalistic policy involved greater participation by the Vietnamese in the administration and removed many aspects of social discrimination, it took away even the minimal degree of political representation enjoyed in the prewar colonial period. In November 1941 Decoux dissolved all elected bodies except municipal councils, creating instead a Federal Council of Indochina with 25 indigenous members chosen for their loyalty to France. In 1943 this body was changed to a Franco-Vietnamese Grand Council, in which

*Decoux was Commander in Chief of the French naval forces in the Far East in 1940. In July of that year he was appointed Governor General of Indochina by the Vichy Government, a post which he held until he was interned by the Japanese in March 1945.

**Bao Dai became emperor in 1925 at the age of 12 on the death of his father, Emperor Khai Dinh. However, he did not ascend the throne until 1932 after he had completed his education in France; he was the first French-educated "ruler" of Vietnam. He had no real power.

***The *tu* form was used in addressing the Vietnamese as one would speak to a child or servant, thus implying inferiority.

Vietnamese outnumbered French 30 to 22. This council, however, did not have even the budgetary powers of the prewar councils but was purely advisory, and its members were all appointed by Decoux.[61]

After March 9, 1945, when the Japanese arrested Decoux and dismantled the French colonial apparatus, Vietnamese participation in government increased beyond anything previously experienced. The Japanese Commander in Chief functioned as Governor General and the Japanese Ambassador and other members of the Japanese diplomatic corps served as political advisers to the indigenous governments of the Indochinese states* and as mayors of Saigon, and Hanoi, but all other posts were assumed by Vietnamese. One of the first acts of the Japanese was to release between eight and ten thousand political prisoners, many of whom assumed positions in the new administration. Although the Japanese did not institute a representative democratic administration in Indochina, they disrupted the structure of French control, destroyed the illusion of French power, and permitted the establishment of government by Vietnamese.[62]

Summary

The French administration in Vietnam was highly centralized and dependent on the Paris government. Within this system the Vietnamese could play only a minimal role. Real power was exercised by French colonial officials. Various councils which included some elected or appointed Vietnamese officials were established, but these bodies were primarily concerned with local affairs and then only in an advisory capacity. French administration remained relatively intact under the Japanese occupation during World War II until March 1945, when the Japanese dismantled the French colonial apparatus, and the Vietnamese took over the administration of the government.

POLITICAL FRAGMENTATION OF RULING ELITE AND OPPOSITION GROUPS

Pre-World War II Period

On the surface the colonial regime appeared to be a monolithic, centralized bureaucracy with control emanating from

*Emperor Bao Dai declared Vietnam independent under Japanese "protection" on March 11, 1945. He formed a government at Hué, the traditional capital of Vietnam, and attempted to replace the French administration. Bao Dai abdicated in favor of Ho Chi Minh's Vietminh government in August 1945.

Paris through the office of the Governor General. Below the surface, however, French colonial politics were beset by all the political dissension of France's domestic politics, compounded by administrative and bureaucratic rivalries. In fact, since the beginning of French rule in the 19th century there had been a continuous and bitter difference of opinion over how to approach the problem of ruling Indochina and how to carry out a policy once it had been formulated.

Governor General Paul Doumer (1897–1902) is generally credited with laying the administrative foundations of French Indochina, which in the 1890's had been fused into a colonial federation out of a hodgepodge of separate French holdings in the area. Doumer's centralizing policies aroused opposition from those colonials whose economic interests were hurt by more direct French control in the area, from the Vietnamese, from those Frenchmen who disapproved of the policy of "cultural assimilation," and from military officers who looked with disfavor upon civilian control of the colonial government. Doumer also caused concern in Paris by his independent attitude and vigorous administrative measures.[63]

From this time the colonial administration was characterized by the struggle of the Governor General for greater executive independence from Paris and for greater political control over his subordinates within the colony. His position became equivocal: a strong man tended to be despotic over subordinate echelons, while a weak governor signaled a reign of intrigue throughout the officialdom. Many were politicians who had fallen into disfavor in France, and were "kicked upstairs" in this way;[64] they were generally well-educated and some were first-rate. Although appointed for 5 years, colonial governors seldom lasted long due to the nature of French parliamentary politics. Between 1892 and 1930 Indochina had 23 Governors General and even more colonial ministers in Paris.[65]

The arrival of a new governor and his retinue invariably touched off a clash with career functionaries. Bitter opposition by the lower officialdom to the central bureaucracy of the Governor General's office occurred throughout the colonial period. Administrative decentralization measures and the policy of "association" which came after Doumer tended to weaken the hold of the Governor General over local colonial officials, especially in the protectorate states. When Governor General Sarrault (1911–14, 1917–19) proposed more formal training for colonial officials, there was strong criticism against him from those who had risen from the ranks. Governor

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General Pierre Pasquier (1928–34), who had himself risen from the ranks, ran into similar opposition when he undertook to improve the quality of French colonial administrators in the 1930's.

The most serious rupture in relations between the Governor General's office and the colonial elite occurred during the term of Alexandre Varenne (1925–28). A Socialist member of Parliament before his appointment, Varenne first alarmed colonial officialdom by opening various administrative positions in the civil service to Vietnamese aspirants. His efforts at the same time to protect Vietnamese workers through labor legislation aroused indignation in both metropolitan France and Indochina. In addition, he dared to speak openly of the colony's eventual independence. Thus, he became the target of sustained and unmitigated attacks on the part of the colonial ruling elite.

Varenne's successor, Pasquier, was not a politician but an administrator who had spent 30 years in the colony. His policies were almost identical to those of Varenne and they encountered similar opposition, but the personal attacks on Pasquier were less violent.[66] His efforts to reduce salaries in order to balance the budget during the depression years, and to reduce the number and improve the quality of French officials by stiffening civil service examinations, brought on the wrath of his former colleagues. Throughout the interwar period, antagonisms existed between the local functionaries of the colonial regime and the career officials of the French colonial service who were their superiors.[67]

Japanese Occupation and Postwar Period

Political dissension among the French in Indochina was intensified after the fall of France in 1940 and the resulting split between the Axis-oriented Vichy regime and the Free French Forces under General Charles De Gaulle. In 1940 the Vichy Government sent Admiral Decoux to head the French colonial administration of Indochina. French officials suspected of anti-Vichy sentiments were removed from power and often replaced by "reliable" Vietnamese. Expanding Vietnamese participation in the colonial administration during this period has been described as a convenient way of ousting De Gaullist French personnel from positions of power.[68]

Decoux planned to keep his position by avoiding the least hint of provocation of Japan. He hoped to be in a position to

negotiate for a peaceful evacuation which would leave French control intact. In August 1944, after the liberation of Paris and the establishment of the Free French Committee of Liberation as the provisional government of France, Decoux urged that the *status quo* be preserved in Indochina and that there be no provocations.[69]

The De Gaulle forces, to ensure the return of Indochina to France after the war, insisted that the colony take an active part in a liberation campaign against Japan. To counter foreign designs, particularly Allied postwar plans for Indochina, the De Gaullists promised a new political status for the colony in the postwar years. In addition, an unofficial Free French military mission was sent to Vice Admiral Mountbatten's* headquarters in Ceylon and another to Chungking, the headquarters of the Chinese Nationalists.[70]

Free French missions sought to establish an underground organization in Indochina to serve as an operational framework for the "liberation" of the colony. However, because of the suspicion and distrust among the French in Indochina, who were reluctant to cooperate with the Free French for fear that Decoux informants had penetrated the organization and that their careers and positions in the colony would be compromised, this plan never developed. According to one observer of the wartime situation in Indochina, "very few Frenchmen entirely trusted most of their countrymen until they had been thoroughly tested."[71] In the end, this suspicion and political discord undermined efforts to seek a coordinated approach to the impasse presented by the Japanese occupation.

The March 1945 coup widened the breach between Vichy and the De Gaullist French in Indochina. Decoux, arrested and jailed by the Japanese, believed that the recklessness of Free French sympathizers on his own staff had precipitated the Japanese move. Later, Vichy adherents blamed the De Gaullists for not demanding, at the time of the Japanese surrender, the release of those French forces arrested in March, and for not using the French forces who had escaped to Yunnan Province in south China after the Japanese coup to liberate Indochina from the Japanese in August 1945, before the Allies arrived.[72] One group charged the De Gaullists with preferring to lose Indochina rather than use its members in the liberation of the colony. Fragmentation of the ruling elite reached its extreme at this point.

*Vice Admiral Lord Mountbatten was Supreme Allied Commander in Southeast Asia during World War II.

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This dissension in the immediate postwar period prevented the French from devising a political program which would be acceptable to the Vietnamese nationalists and yet would keep Indochina within the French sphere of influence. It facilitated a policy of drift which tempted the more traditional-minded colonial officials to opt for a military solution at a time when a political solution was needed.[73] At this crucial juncture in Franco-Vietnamese relations, certain telegram communications from Ho Chi Minh to the French Government in Paris were unaccountably "delayed in transmission." Since communication lines between Hanoi and Paris ran through Saigon, the stronghold and center of anti-Vietminh sentiment, it has been suggested that French officials in Saigon sabotaged these negotiations by delaying messages.[74]

The Vietnamese opposition to the French was similarly fragmented. There were religious sects in Cochin China, such as the Cao Dai and Hoa Hao, which maintained paramilitary organizations and favored some sort of political autonomy for Cochin China; though nationalistic, these sects frequently fought among themselves. They eventually joined the French forces against the Vietminh. The Vietnamese Catholic hierarchy supported the Vietminh during the first years of the resistance war, until Communist domination of the revolutionary movement became apparent. The Vietnamese nationalists were divided into three main groups during the resistance war period: the "hard core" or Vietminh adherents; the "moderates" around Bao Dai; and the so-called "*attentistes*" who adopted a "wait and see" attitude, remaining aloof from the various schemes devised by the French and the moderate nationalists to give Vietnam something less than complete independence.

Summary

French colonial politics were beset by differences of opinion, dissension, and rivalry, particularly between the local party functionaries of the colonial regime and the career officials of the French colonial service. During World War II and even greater breach existed between the Vichy Government in France and the De Gaullists. This fragmentation in the immediate postwar period prevented the French from arriving at a political solution agreeable to the French factions and those Vietnamese nationalists who were demanding moderate concessions.

INEFFICIENCY OF GOVERNMENTAL MACHINERY

With respect to routine administrative functions, such as maintaining public order and providing public services, Indochina's prewar colonial government operated with reasonable efficiency, consistent with the area's technological development. Charges of administrative inefficiency have not been conspicuous among the many complaints brought against the French by critics of colonialism in Indochina. However, a government has the additional function of providing a viable political mechanism through which the demands of conflicting interest groups may be processed and reconciled in an orderly manner. Failure to adapt old institutions to new situations and an inadequate response to the revolutionary movement in its initial stages constitute governmental inefficiency in one sense and indicate political weakness in the prerevolutionary environment.

Failure to Contain Vietnamese Nationalism

In the years following World War I, Western-educated Vietnamese began demanding wider participation with the French in colonial administration and also a part in the political processes of the colony. As mentioned earlier, the official French policy envisioned a gradually expanding Vietnamese role in administration in accordance with the policy of "association." Aside from the psychological implications of wider participation in administration, such a policy had advantages of a purely administrative nature in that better qualified Vietnamese personnel could be employed at less financial cost than French civil servants. It was such financial considerations that lead to employing more Vietnamese during the depression years, despite the protests of French bureaucrats who felt threatened by local competition.[75]

Although the French did not countenance the development of self-government by the indigenous population of any of the five regions of the federated colony, they made some attempts to meet the challenge of rising nationalisms through reforms in certain colonial and Vietnamese institutions. In the early twenties, local membership in the *Conseil Colonial* of Cochin China was increased from 6 to 10, and throughout Indochina the native electorate for provincial and local economic advisory councils was set on a somewhat broader base. After 1930

wider representation was given on the *Grand Conseil des Intérêts Économiques et Financiers*, and in 1932 the French permitted the young French-educated Emperor Bao Dai to make certain administrative changes in the Annamite court at the expense of the mandarin traditionalists and in favor of the Western-oriented new elite.[76] One of the the latter was Ngo Dinh Diem, a young Vietnamese provincial official "known for his perfect integrity, his competence and intelligence"; he was appointed Minister of Interior at Bao Dai's court and made secretary of a reforms commission in May 1933. Finding his efforts sabotaged by the French and the antireform elements at court, Diem resigned in September.[77] The greatest upsurge of Vietnamese participation in government occurred under Admiral Decoux's Vichy French Regime (1940–44).

Reforms invariably lagged behind nationalist aspirations, however, for what the French granted the Vietnamese in 1940–44, for example—and then only under obvious international duress—was what the nationalist leadership had demanded much earlier. The physical isolation of both Indochina and France during the war years, the psychological shock of France's sudden defeat by the Axis bloc, and the effect this event had on both French and Vietnamese contributed to the fragmentation of the French ruling elite and encouraged a policy of drift in colonial affairs during the crucial 1945–47 period.

In March 1945, soon after the Japanese move against the Vichy French regime in Indochina, De Gaulle announced that after the war the colony would have a federal government presided over by a French Governor General and composed of French and Vietnamese ministers; there would also be a "mixed" federal assembly. De Gaulle's proposal was roughly comparable to what had been suggested by French liberals in the early 1930's. According to one observer, it actually amounted to less home rule than Indochina had under Decoux's Vichy regime.[78]

At the time De Gaulle made this proposal few people in a position to influence the course of events were aware of the depth and breadth of the revolutionary and nationalist movement in Vietnam. When the French finally began returning to Indochina, roughly a month after the collapse of Japanese authority in the area, they found the Vietminh revolutionary organization exercising various degrees of control over Vietnam. Vietminh control was strongest in the Tonkin regions of the north and weakest in Cochin China. The international

situation (see page 108) strongly favored the consolidation of Vietminh authority over Tonkin and northern Annam; consequently, the French found it necessary to enter into diplomatic negotiations with the Kanoi-based Vietminh regime of Ho Chi Minh before French Army units entered these areas.

On March 6, 1946, a preliminary Franco-Vietnamese agreement was reached by Ho Chi Minh and De Gaulle's emissary Jean Sainteny. The Ho-Sainteny Agreement recognized Vietnam "as a free state within the French Union with its own parliament, army, and finances," but it left decision on "the exact status of Vietnam as a member of the Indo China Federation and the French Union . . . [and] the question of diplomatic representation" for a later conference. A referendum was to decide Cochin China's future.[79]

The next, and last, important peacetime meeting between representatives of France and the Vietminh occurred at the Fontainebleau Conference in France during the summer of 1946. For a variety of reasons, many of them connected with the vagaries of French domestic politics and the machinations of extremist elements in Indochina—both French and Vietnamese—no permanent agreement was ever reached. On September 14, Ho Chi Minh, who at this stage was eager for a peaceful settlement and a political understanding with France, signed a *modus vivendi* dealing with financial, economic, and cultural relations with France, and calling for a cease-fire between French troops and Vietnamese guerrillas by October 31. This agreement also provided for a resumption of talks by January of 1947; however, in November-December 1946 large-scale fighting broke out in the Hanoi-Haiphong region and negotiations were abandoned by both sides. The chance of a political settlement with the Vietminh had been lost and the contest entered the military phase.

The French made several attempts during the course of the fighting to institute a political alternative to the Vietminh regime which would attract non-Communist Vietnamese away from the revolutionary movement. When the attempt to create an autonomous puppet state in Cochin China proved to be a complete failure, the French turned to the ex-Emperor Bao Dai, who by this time had broken with the Ho regime and taken up residence in Hong Kong. Negotiations with Bao Dai began in the summer of 1947 and continued until March of 1949, when Vietnam was accorded something less than dominion status as an Associated State in the French Union with Bao Dai as chief of state. This so-called "shadow independence"

failed to win the wide support of Vietnamese nationalists. Ngo Dinh Diem, speaking for the nationalist majority who refused to commit themselves to either Ho Chi Minh or Bao Dai, turned down all offers to head Bao Dai's Cabinet, declaring that "the national aspirations of the Vietnamese people will be satisfied only on the day when our nation obtains the same political status which India and Pakistan enjoy."[80]

Inadequate Response to Revolutionary Movement in Its Initial Stages

The French responded to Vietnamese nationalism and the revolutionary movement which grew out of it with a variety of countermeasures, ranging from political and socioeconomic reforms to police and military action. Some of these political measures were discussed and evaluated in the preceding section.

In the wake of a major uprising in Yen Bay in 1930, the French undertook certain reforms, such as public works projects, liberalized agricultural credit facilities, and reforms in the colony's tariff structure; there were even official recommendations that the government bring about "a broad agricultural reform based upon individual property ownership."[81] Later in the 1930's there were other significant reforms through labor legislation enacted in France under the left-of-center Popular Front regime of Leon Blum (1936–37). The maintenance of French rule in Indochina during the 1930's depended less upon civil action, however, than on military action; the organizational weakness of the revolutionary movement at this time also contributed to the success of French control.

The uprising began in February 1930 when two companies of Vietnamese troops stationed at the Red River port of Yen Bay revolted and killed six of their officers. Insurrections and violence against the French spread quickly to every part of Indochina. The French authorities reacted quickly and "with the most tremendous severity. Every kind of manifestation, even unarmed demonstrations, was broken up by force and so many of its leaders were arrested that the [VNQDD]* party dissolved."[82] To suppress these disorders, which continued into the fall of 1930 and included peasant revolts as well as urban mob violence, "the French were obliged to summon every available source of power, not only wing regiments of the

*The Viet Nam Quoc Dan Dang, a Kuomintang-oriented, non-Communist nationalist revolutionary party, initiated the revolt, but Communist elements later joined in to capitalize on the revolutionary situation.

Foreign Legion but also employing tribal [non-Vietnamese hill tribes] retainers and rickshaw-pullers in the capacity of spies and detectives."[83] In some instances, planes were used against rebellious villages.

Thus, prompt and vigorous military suppression and continued police surveillance reestablished French control and frustrated this first attempt by Vietnamese nationalist to come to power. In this limited sense, the French reaction may be regarded as an adequate response to the revolutionary movement in its early stages. Had the time thus gained been used to reach a mutually satisfactory political understanding between French and Vietnamese interests, the military action in 1930 could be regarded as an unqualified success; but such was not the case.

The repression of Vietnamese nationalism in the early 1930's had a demoralizing effect on the leadership and organization of the nationalist movement. It has been suggested that non-Communist elements such as the VNQDD, in the nationalist movement, were particularly hard hit by the events of 1930. The Communists, who had the advantages of a powerful, if remote, foreign patron, a clearly defined doctrine of clandestine operations, and greater organizational discipline, were in a much better position to operate underground. Thus, one of the results of the 1930 repression of political activity was the chance it gave the Communists to gain control of the nationalist movement by the elimination of their non-Communist competitors.[84]

The French response to the revolutionary movement in the early 1940's was conditioned by the fact that France no longer exercised absolute sovereignty over Indochina. Although in 1940 the Japanese had permitted the French a free hand in suppressing Communist-led riots in the south and even an uprising by pro-Japanese nationalists in the north, as the war wore on they began more and more to "protect" Vietnamese nationalists from the French police.[85] In March of 1945 the Japanese swept aside even the facade of French sovereignty over the colony. Consequently, in the crucial summer months of 1945 when the Vietminh revolutionary movement was in the initial stages of coming to power, there was no vestige of French authority left in Indochina to oppose it. In its formative years between 1941 and 1945 the Vietminh had established a base of operations in the remote northern frontier regions of Tonkin, near the Chinese border, and an underground network in the coastal cities; it had scrupulously avoided

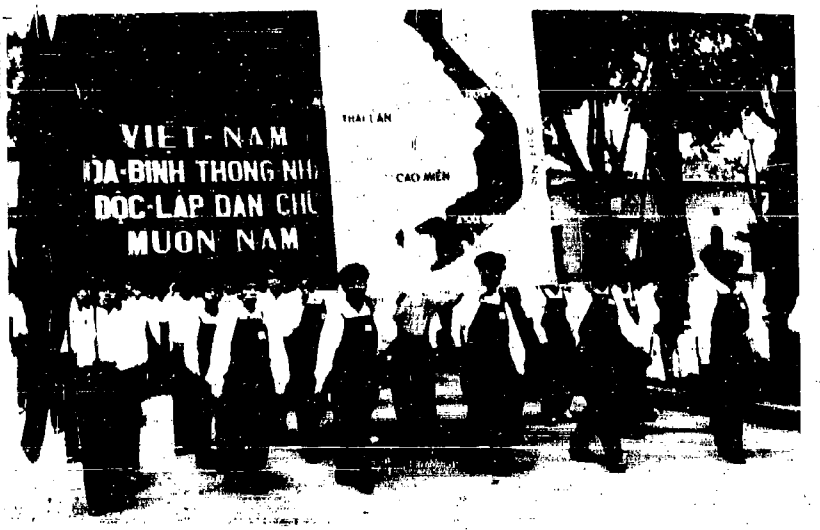
premature attempts to seize power until the Japanese had eliminated the French and were themselves on the verge of capitulation to the Allies.

When French military units returned to the country in 1946 the situation had so deteriorated that the type of anti-insurgent military operations which had been successful in 1930 and 1940 was no longer appropriate. As one observer has noted, "the French forces sent to Indo China were too strong for France to resist the temptation of using them; yet not strong enough to keep the Vietminh from trying to solve the whole political problem by throwing the French into the sea."[86]

Summary

Generally the French were able to govern Vietnam effectively. In the early years of colonization and in the interwar period military and police action successfully put down a number of uprisings. Political reform in the 1930's, though lagging behind nationalist aspirations, granted the Vietnamese a number of concessions. The impact of the Japanese occupation and the coup of March 1945 completely loosened French control of Vietnam and afforded the Vietnamese a degree of self-rule that had not been experienced since the French had come to Indochina. The French were reluctant to change the old colonial setup after World War II, and when violence broke out they met it with military operations, a course neither effective nor appropriate.

(United Press International Photo) Ho Chi Minh (1892–?), Communist leader of the Vietminh and President of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (north Vietnam) since 1945.

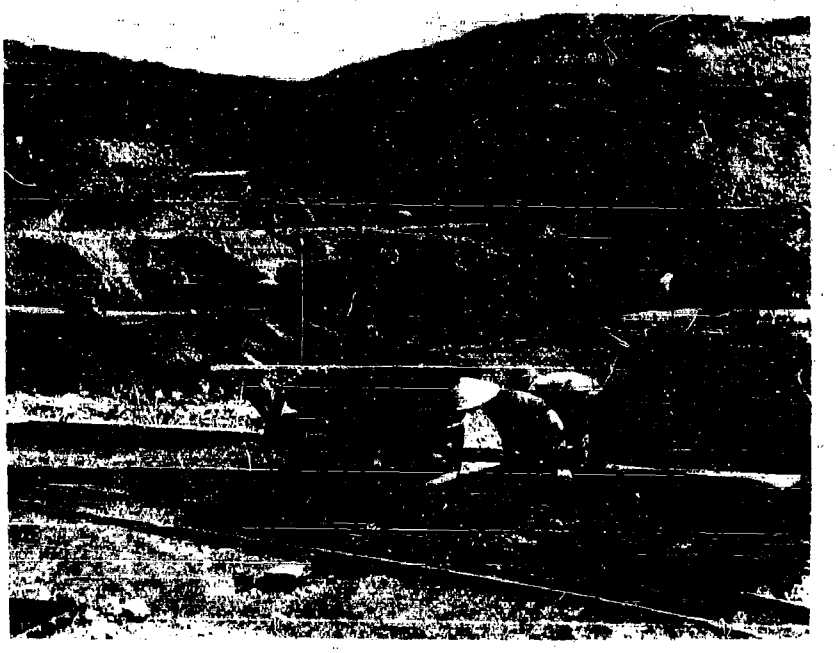


(United Press International Photo) Vietminh demonstrators carrying posters calling for "Peace, Unification, Independence, and Democracy in Vietnam for Ten Thousand Years!" In photo below, demonstrators carry a picture of Ho Chi Minh captioned "May President Ho Live Ten Thousand Years."

(United Press International Photo) Signs attached to the backs of Hanoi bicycle rickshaws in 1954 demanded "Independence or Death" and protested against partition at the Geneva Conference.

(United Press International Photo) Anti-Bao Dai cartoons and posters lampooning the absentee Emperor's life on the French Riviera prepared the way for Ngo Dinh Diem's election victory in 1955.

(United Press International Photo) Vietnamese farmers using bicycles to transport their crops to market in Saigon. Loads up to 220 pounds can be carried by bicycle, and tricycles often carry loads of 1,000 pounds or more each.



(United Press International Photo) Open pit coal mining at Hongay in North Vietnam. Most of Vietnam's industrial potential is situated in the Northern (Communist) zone.

(United Press International Photo) French troops searching an unnamed village in Vietnam for Vietminh guerrillas during the first year of war.

(United Press International Photo) French amphibious units operating in the inundated Mekong River Delta region during the rainy season.

(United Press International Photo) French Union infantrymen taking part in "Operation Seagull," aimed at destroying Vietminh ammunition dumps and outposts in the Ninh-Binh area.

(United Press International Photo) Vietnamese recruits undergoing obstacle course training at the French military training center of Quan Tre near Saigon during the last year of the war.

(United Press International Photo) Villagers near Saigon viewing bodies of Viet Cong guerrillas killed in an encounter with the South Vietnamese Army.

(United Press International Photo) Viet Cong guerrillas and flag captured by South Vietnamese troops operating in Mekong River Delta area near Truonghoa.

(United Press International Photo) An American helicopter (manned by men of the 93d Helicopter Company from Ft. Devens, Mass.) delivering Vietnamese troops in the Tourane area.

(United Press International Photo) A Montagnard standing guard at his village.

PART II
DYNAMICS OF REVOLUTION

COMPOSITION OF REVOLUTIONARY ACTORS

EARLY LEADERSHIP BY THE TRADITIONAL ELITE

Until the end of World War I the leadership of the struggle against French control was centered in the traditional mandarin elite who sporadically sought to oust the French and reconstitute their control over Vietnam. Thereafter new ideas and new influences gave rise to a new leadership.

THE RISE OF NEW LEADERSHIP: COMINTERN AND KUOMINTANG INFLUENCE

During World War I many Vietnamese* went to France where they came in contact with Marxist socialism and where liaison was established between the Vietnamese and the French extreme leftwing which shortly after the war organized the French Communist Party. In the years after 1918 government employees, professional people, white-collar workers, skilled workers, and students swelled the ranks of the Vietnamese intellectual class. These people assumed the prestige and responsibility of the mandarin class who had previously led the struggle against the French colonial system. They became the vehicle for the propagation of a revolutionary nationalism. The failure of the French regime in the 1920's to support the moderate element of the new intellectual class in carrying out political and social reforms drove the younger and more impatient to cast their lot with the violent Marxist revolutionary movements.

Communist-Oriented Movements**

During the 1920's there were several revolutionary movements dominated by various influences and trends. The most

*According to Dr. Bernard Fall, two hundred thousand Vietnamese went to Europe during World War I (1914-18).

**Chronology of Communist-controlled organizations:

Communist Party Organizations

Indochinese Communist Party (ICP) 1930-45

Marxist Study Group 1945

Vietnamese Workers' Party (Lao Dong) 1951

United Front Organizations

Vietminh 1941-51

Lien Viet 1946-55

Government Organization

Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) August 1945

important for our analysis was the Comintern-directed Than-Nien (Revolutionary Youth League), which was formed in Canton in 1925 and initially directed by Ho Chi Minh, who was at that time a Vietnamese agent for the Comintern. Ho did not then plan to establish an independent Communist Party in Indochina, but sought instead to develop an elite organization for propagating doctrines that would be initially nationalist, and subsequently Marxist-Leninist.[87]

By 1929 the leadership of Ho's Revolutionary Youth League had been split by internal dissension and had to be reorganized. During the following year Ho and other young Vietnamese exiles met in Hong Kong and finally organized the Indochinese Communist Party (ICP). It was accepted by the Comintern into the family of Communist parties. In 1930–31 ICP activities in Indochina were severely repressed and the Comintern apparatus disrupted by the French. British authorities in Hong Kong, at the request of the French Government, arrested and imprisoned Ho from 1931 to 1933. This suppression had demoralizing effects on the revolutionary movement in Vietnam, but a clandestine organization continued in existence.

Kuomintang-Oriented Movements

Other revolutionary groups were formed and were active in the period after 1925. The most significant of the non-Comintern movements was the Viet Nam Quoc Dan Dang (Vietnamese Nationalist Party), better known by its initials in Vietnamese. This party was modeled after the Chinese Nationalist Party and the Kuomintang, and its leadership looked to China for support. Never an organization of moderates, the VNQDD initiated and led the insurrections in 1930. Severe repressions by the colonial regime decimated VNQDD leadership and efforts to revive it under the wing of the Chinese Nationalists during the 1930's and in World War II were to no avail.

Trotskyite Movements

Continued internal struggles in the Comintern-oriented leadership throughout the 1930's weakened the revolutionary impact of the movement. The effort of the Comintern to exert its leadership and influence over other revolutionary movements throughout Asia in the 1920's and 1930's was not marked by any spectacular success. The most notable split among

the Communist revolutionaries in Vietnam was the Trotskyite splintering that took place in the late 1920's. The Trotskyite Communists were critical of Comintern leadership, the two-stage concept of revolution (a nationalist revolution followed by a Communist revolution), and the emphasis on the peasantry as the revolutionary mass. They were particularly incensed by Stalin's control of the Comintern apparatus. They were strongest in Saigon and Cochin China where, in the 1936–39 period, they were able to elect their candidates to the *Conseil Colonial.*[88]

THE RISE OF HO CHI MINH AND OTHER LEADERS

Besides the problem of factionalism among the Communist cadres, the leadership was also weakened by the repression of the party that began in 1939, after a 3-year period of relative political freedom. The leadership of the revolutionary movement was compelled to flee to China, where the External Bureau of the Indochinese Communist Party was established in Kwangsi Province. A further split developed between the leaders in China and those who remained in Vietnam over the issue of reaction to the Japanese occupation of the northern part of Vietnam in September 1940. Ho Chi Minh, from Kunming, counseled caution, but the local leadership in southern Vietnam decided for insurrection. After another round of repression and decimation resulted, the leadership was reorganized in China in 1941 under Ho's domination. His emergence as the legendary leader of the Vietnamese revolution was helped in no small way by the elimination of possible rivals through the successive French suppressions in Vietnam.

It is interesting to compare the careers of some of the most outstanding leaders in the ICP revolutionary movement in terms of their age, social and educational background, and continuity in the leadership. The first of these is, of course, Ho Chi Minh. The acknowledged leader of Vietnamese communism since even before the ICP was founded as a separate organization, Ho Chi Minh, or Nguyen Ai Quoc* as he was generally known until the 1940's, made himself the dominant personality in Vietnamese nationalism.

Ho was born in 1892 in the north central province of Nghe An, a region well known for its frequent peasant revolts.**

*Both names are aliases. His real name is Nguyen That Thanh. Nguyen Ai Quoc means "Nguyen the Patriot" and Ho Chi Minh has been translated as "the Enlightened One."

**The revolutionary tradition of Ho's home province has been a source of trouble for the Vietminh regime. Nghe An was the scene of the Quynh Luu peasant uprising in November 1930.

his father was a mandarin ex-official whom the French had removed from office for his political activity. Reared in an atmosphere of nationalist intrigue and frustration, Ho left home in 1911 at the age of 19 to work as a cabin boy on a French merchant ship. He visited the United States and Europe and finally settled in Paris, where he came into contact with Vietnamese nationalists and immediately developed an "extraordinary taste for politics." [90]

Ho's first venture in the realm of international power politics was his submission to the Versailles Peace Conference of a petition calling on the Allied Powers to apply President Wilson's principle of self-determination to Vietnam. Next he attended the Socialist Congress of Tours in 1920, where he joined the ultra-left faction which later was organized into the French Communist Party. By 1923 Ho was in Moscow to attend a Comintern-sponsored congress. There he was educated in Communist doctrines and the strategy and tactics of insurgent military operations. On Ho's return to the Orient in 1925 he began his career as a Comintern agent and Vietnamese nationalist and revolutionary. He has consistently remained in the leading position in the Vietnamese revolutionary movement and today heads the Vietminh regime of North Vietnam.[91]

Another leader is Truong Chinh,* a key member of the Lao Dong Party, as the Vietnamese Communist Party has been called since 1951, and a powerful figure in the DRV Government. Born in 1909, Truong Chinh was active as a high school youth in nationalist demonstrations and strikes and clandestine journalism; he was arrested during the uprising of 1930. He was released from jail during the "Popular Front" period (1936–39); then when the French moved against the party in 1939 he fled to China. There he was a member and secretary general of the External Bureau of the Indochinese Communist Party and a leader in the Vietminh. Truong Chinh is known as the theoretician of the Party and the leader of the pro-Peking faction of North Vietnamese communism.[92]

The noted military commander, Vo Nguyen Giap, is another outstanding revolutionary leader. Born in 1912 of peasant stock, Giap was active in student agitation and arrested in 1930. Upon release he studied at the University of Hanoi and was active as a teacher and agitator during the Popular Front years. In 1937 he received a license to practice law and a doctorate in political economy.[93] Giap fled to China in 1939

*Truong Chinh's real name is Dang Xuan Khu.

but later he returned to northern Vietnam to organize the peasants and the hill tribes for insurgent operations. He commanded Vietminh's military forces in the 1946–54 hostilities and is a well-known theorist on Communist revolutionary warfare. Giap's bitterness toward the French has often been attributed to the deaths of his wife and child in a French prison in 1943.

Pham Van Dong, the current Prime Minister of North Vietnam and long time close associate of Ho Chi Minh, was born in 1906 into an aristocratic family with a tradition of service in the mandarinate. In spite of this conservative background, he began a career of revolutionary activity at the age of 19 when he joined the Vietnamese exile group in Canton which Ho Chi Minh had organized as the Association of Revolutionary Youth. Sent back to Vietnam to organize Communist cells, he was arrested and sentenced to 6 years imprisonment on the penal island of Poulo Condore, where he functioned as a zealous Communist propagandist among the political prisoners. On release, Dong remained in Vietnam until September 1939 when he fled to China along with other leaders of the ICP. Pham Van Dong was active in the Vietminh and accompanied Ho to the Fontainebleau Conference in 1946.[94]

COMMUNIST CONTROL OF THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT

The revolutionary movement, known as the Vietminh after 1941, was a national front type of organization under the leadership of the Communist elite. Although there was an attempt to bring into the Vietminh leaders of other nationalist groups, such as the defunct VNQDD, the power centers of the Vietminh organization were dominated by Communists who had been the leaders of the Comintern-directed ICP. The dissolution of the Comintern by the Soviets in 1943 may have given the Vietnamese leaders more incentive, and an independence from outside control may have aided them in appealing to those elements which had disapproved of strong Comintern influence in the revolutionary movement.

The only issue upon which there seemed to be dissension among the Communist leadership of the revolutionary movement in the postwar period developed over negotiations with the French. Particularly during the summer of 1946, when Ho Chi Minh was in France for the Fontainebleau Confer-

ence, the younger leaders who remained behind in Hanoi doubted the wisdom of Ho's strategy of moderation and patience toward the French.[95] These leaders, including Vo Nguyen Giap and Truong Chinh, also favored a more radical line on social policy and land reform. Nevertheless, Ho's leadership remained intact and his moderate social policy was reflected in the Vietminh constitution that was adopted in the fall of 1946. It was during this period that the charismatic appeal and the popularity of "Uncle Ho" as the coy and folksy patriarch emerged.[96]

The outbreak of hostilities in the 1946–47 period contributed to the strengthening of Ho Chi Minh's leadership within the Vietminh. By prudently limiting his social policy to less radical measures than the leftwing elements of the Vietminh were calling for and by posing as first and foremost a genuine nationalist, Ho was able to attract a wide following among the Vietnamese middle and upper classes. His avowed position at this time was that he was fighting for national independence from the French colonial regime; he said he was willing to accept a Dominion or Commonwealth status within the French Union. The Communist leadership claimed that the Vietminh was the only true champion of Vietnam's independence and they dominated the other poorly led, poorly organized nationalist elements, denouncing as French puppets any nationalist leader who refused to adhere to the Vietminh line. It should be noted that the continuity of Communist leadership in the Vietminh organization has existed down to the present time.

Summary

Although the nationalist groups had the common goal of opposing the French regime, they varied in ideology, intensity of opposition, and size of revolutionary following. Most of the revolutionary leaders, however, were Marxist-Leninist in orientation.

After 1941 the revolutionary movement was led by the Vietminh, a nationalist front organization. Although the Vietminh took over most of the non-Communist nationalist groups, power remained in the hands of the Communists led by Ho Chi Minh and his commander in chief, Vo Nguyen Giap. There was some dissension within the Communist leadership in the immediate postwar period over Ho's strategy of patience and moderation with the French, but the outbreak of hostilities strengthened his position.

REVOLUTIONARY STRATEGY AND GOALS

LENINIST THEORY OF REVOLUTION

The earliest rebels against the French regime had no coherent or comprehensive overall strategy. Their goal was simply to expel the French and they called for the use of all types of opposition by whatever methods were available. Assassinations, plots, conspiracies, and sporadic guerrilla operations were commonplace, but these were not parts of a unified strategy. Political motivation was based on racial and cultural pride; it was more xenophobia than nationalism.

It was only with the introduction of Leninism that a strategy of revolution appeared in Vietnam with a comprehensive rationale and dynamism. The Leninist theory of revolution programed a "two-stage" revolution for a colonial area such as Indochina with an elite cadre serving as the engineers of revolution. In the first stage an alliance of all classes opposed to foreign domination would bring about a "bourgeois" nationalist revolution leading to independence. In the second stage the classic alliance of "workers and peasants" would make a "Socialist" revolution leading to the establishment of a "Communist republic."

The strategy of Comintern agents in the 1920's was to work for a gradual buildup of revolutionary consciousness through agitation and propaganda activities before forming a small elite Communist Party. The emphasis in this period was on political indoctrination and personnel training. This cautious and unhurried strategy was in marked contrast to the approach of the non-Communist Kuomintang-sponsored movement. The Comintern's gradualism in Vietnam is reflected in the fact that it was not until 1930 that the Indochinese Communist Party was formed and affiliated with the parent apparatus. Factional disputes over policy and organization had by then begun to weaken the Revolutionary Youth League, which since its founding in 1925 had served as a preliminary to forming an Indochinese Communist Party. For the entire decade between 1921 and 1931 the strategy of Communist revolutionaries in Vietnam was focused not on overt action, but on developing a framework for the organization of revolution, training personnel, and preparing a clandestine apparatus.

In 1930 the newly formed ICP was faced with a "revolutionary crisis" in Vietnam which required a shift in strategy.

Dynamics of Revolution

The Chinese Nationalist-oriented VNQDD, which had harassed the French regime throughout the late 1920's, instigated in February 1930 the famous mutiny among Vietnamese troops at Yen Bay in northern Vietnam. This was followed by a series of armed actions and peasant uprisings. Such a widespread "revolutionary situation" forced the hand of the ICP and beginning on May Day, 1930, it organized a series of peasant demonstrations. Not to be outdone by the VNQDD, the ICP called for radical agrarian reform encompassing the abolition of taxes, the seizure of land, and the formation of "rural soviets." The ICP succeeded in attracting many peasants who had been particularly hard hit by the depression. There were Communist-organized strikes and demonstrations in the rural areas among rubber plantation workers, cotton mill workers, and unemployed rice workers, and in September 1930 peasant soviets were set up in provinces in central Annam.[97]

The failure of the uprising in 1930 called for another change in strategy. Admonished by the Comintern for "leftist deviationism," for tactics of terror and pillage, and for defective security and ineffectual clandestine activities, the ICP concentrated (1931–35) on rehabilitating its ranks.[98]

"UNITED FRONT" STRATEGY

Popular Front Period

In 1935 the ICP party congress, held in Portuguese Macao, formally adopted the concept of the "united front" as laid down at the Comintern meeting earlier in Moscow. Vietnamese Communists followed this strategy throughout the remainder of the revolutionary period. The united front was devised by the Comintern so that a Communist minority could enter into coalitions with more popular nationalist and democratic forces. Organizational and agitational activities were to continue clandestinely through front-type groups rather than Communist groups. ICP members were advised to join all nationalist, reform, democratic, and trade union organizations that had any mass following at all, and to form Communist cells within these bodies. The Communist aim was to penetrate, win over, and gain control of as many as possible of the non-Communist organizations in Vietnam under the guise of a united front.[99]

This strategy was based on the belief that an armed uprising against the French colonial authorities was impossible without the organized support of a broad peasant-bourgeois mass movement. The Comintern warned the ICP against the creation of "partisan detachments" and attempts to stage armed uprisings until such time as there occurred a "rising wave" of the mass movements and an actual "revolutionary situation" in which all segments of the united front were involved.[100] The period 1935–39 was the highpoint throughout the world for the Comintern use of the united front.

The impact on the ICP was of tremendous importance, for it involved the temporary abandonment of the struggle for separation from France. In a strategic about-face the French Communist Party in 1937 denied the unequivocal right of colonial people to separation and independence.[101]

The ICP was subordinate to the Moscow-directed Comintern which called for supporting the Popular Front government in Paris in an anti-Fascist posture. This was part of the Soviet Union's policy of cooperating with France against Nazi Germany and Japan. In Tonkin and Annam the Democratic Front, a Communist front body, advocated struggle against any possible Japanese invasion. Taking advantage of the laxity of police surveillance under the Popular Front regime the ICP propagandized and agitated for the anti-Fascist united front campaign. Refraining from anti-French propaganda, attempting to create a single national front against Japan, and demanding an increase in political rights and protection for labor, the ICP held its revolutionary aims in abeyance.

The polical situation in Europe continued to determine the strategy of the ICP, for with the approach of war between Hitler and the Western democracies and the Hitler-Stalin Pact, the ICP once again shifted its ground. It prepared itself for the outbreak of war and the advent of a possible revolutionary situation in the wake of hostilities. A meeting of the ICP Central Committee on November 9, 1939, adopted an antiwar policy, meaning to weaken and harass the French colonial regime, thereby precipitating a revolutionary situation. The old Democratic Front was abolished and a new United Front of Anti-Imperialist Indochinese People was formed to oppose the "imperialist war" and work for the overthrow of the French colonists.[102] It was this strategy – the formation of the new united front – which ultimately brought success to Communist leaders in their bid for power in 1945.[103]

But in 1940 the local ICP leadership was overly encouraged

by the sudden fall of France which they interpreted as the harbinger of a revolutionary situation in Indochina. Immediately upon the invasion of northern Tonkin by the Japanese in September 1940, the ICP opted for decisive action. Using the strategy of the united front, the ICP swung into action. Demonstrations throughout the country demanded an end to political arrests and police reprisals against the political agitators. At this time the ICP External Bureau in Kunming, headed by Ho Chi Minh, counseled against accelerating violence, but the local leaders wanted armed insurrection and they were supported by other leftwing nationalists. The November 1940 insurrection started in Cochin China in a sparsely settled area called *Plaine des Jonce*. Again armed insurrection failed, for after coming to an understanding with the Japanese, the French administration in Vietnam moved to reconstitute its control through vigorous measures against the ICP and its front organizations.[104]

Vietminh Period

It was now obvious to the ICP that if success was ever to be forthcoming it had to organize wider mass support in a broad nationalist movement. In addition, political action and agitation would have to be more complete before military action could be initiated. In the 8th session of the ICP Central Committee, held in 1941 in China following the November 1940 debacle, the "essential task" was identified as the formation of an alliance with all social classes and political parties, patriotic and revolutionary groups, religious groups, and all people fighting the Japanese and desiring national independence from France and Japan. Social revolution and reform were demoted to minor importance and all slogans for agrarian reform were extracted from ICP propaganda. Simultaneously, it was decided to found a new front group which would carry out the strategy of the broad united front alliance; this was the Viet-Nam Doc-Lap Dong Minh Hoi (League for Independence of Vietnam), better known by the short form, Vietminh.

Stressing the slogan of national liberation rather than the worker-peasant-bourgeois revolution, the Vietminh sought to rally as many disparate elements as possible under the simple slogan of national independence. Writing for a U.S. wartime agency, a Vietminh official emphasized the fact that the

problem of national liberation and independence overrode all other problems:

> All political theories are empty talk during a period when there is no national independence. To obtain national independence, there must be a national force. To have national unity there must be a common program acceptable to all organizations, party and non-party. National independence is this ground and base.[105]

Political mobilization of the masses under the Vietminh was considered the main task; armed insurrection was given a secondary role and was not to be undertaken until such time as political indoctrination was well advanced. Throughout the period after 1941 until March 1945 this strategy was carried out to its fullest in the Viet Bac region, the mountainous area north and northeast of Hanoi along the Chinese border. Here efforts were made to transform villages into "liberation-bases"—villages effectively held and controlled by Vietminh cadres who had won the popular support of the villagers. After the villagers were politically mobilized into front organizations, platoon-size armed groups freed from production and other village tasks were formed. Subsequently these platoons were incorporated into larger guerrilla units. Even when the Vietminh had organized whole villages under their control and had formed their own military units, however, they did not attempt to set up a revolutionary government in competition with the existing French and Japanese authorities because the time was not considered opportune.[106]

Four years later the Japanese move against the French on March 9, 1945, presented the ICP leaders with the opportunity for which they had been waiting. The Party Central Committee ordered mobilization for national liberation and acceleration of independence propaganda as a "prerequisite for general insurrection"; preparations were made to shift to insurrection at the right time. In May 1945 guerrilla warfare against both Japanese and Bao Dai forces was launched and "revolutionary power" was openly established in certain areas.[107]

The cautious strategy of the ICP in the period after the March coup was based on the lessons of 1940 and the ICP Central Committee resolutions of 1941. The latter specified that before another attempt at a national revolution could be made, certain concrete conditions would have to exist: the population must be unified under the national liberation front; the masses must appear ready to support insurrection; the ruling regime i. Indochina must be in the midst of a political

and military crisis; certain "objective conditions" favorable to an uprising, such as the defeat of Japan, the outbreak of a French or Japanese revolution, or the landing of British-United States forces in Indochina, must be present. In May 1944 the Vietminh reiterated these cautions, admonishing its followers to begin no uprising until the enemy was disunited, all Vietminh organizations were prepared for action, and the masses supported the national liberation movement. The ICP cadres were instructed at this time to "feel the pulse of the movement" so they would know the mood of the people, and to estimate clearly the world situation in order to "seize the right opportunity" for the uprising.[108]

Thus, the distinctive aspect of Vietminh strategy was its emphasis on seizing the right opportunity to strike. Even after the Japanese had placed the Bao Dai regime in power, the Vietminh prudently observed a "go slow" policy. On March 12, 1945, it was decided that the possibility of Bao Dai and Japanese forces reacting strongly to a Vietminh uprising precluded nationwide action. The most favorable opportunity for launching an insurrection would be when Allied troops landed in Vietnam forcing the Japanese to send troops against the invaders, leaving the rear vulnerable to attack from the Vietminh. The decision of March 12, 1945, added:

> If revolution breaks out and people's revolutionary power is set up in Japan, or if Japan is occupied . . . and the Japanese expeditionary army is demoralized, then, even if Allied forces have not arrived in our country our general insurrection can be launched and win victory.[109]

VIETMINH SEIZURE OF POWER

Vo Nguyen Giap, the ICP and the Vietminh Central Committee which it controlled, decided to launch the insurrection and set up "people's power" immediately after the Japanese capitulation and before Allied powers arrived. It appears that the strategy in this phase of the revolution was based on the political acumen and opportunism of the leadership, perhaps best exemplified by Ho Chi Minh. The Vietminh's revolutionary success depended primarily on its having seized the right opportunity, although prior planning contributed an important part. Giap has emphasized the great value of the Vietminh's using the political and psychological upsurge of the people, which had been inspired by the ICP and which was supported by armed and semiarmed forces organized in the 1941–45 period.[110]

The immediate strategy of the Vietminh at this stage was first the neutralization and then the elimination of the existing government. To achieve this it was necessary to seize and occupy all public buildings and utilities as a vivid indication of the change of power. Perhaps the Vietminh's most important single strategic move was the destruction or subversion of the Bao Dai regime's administrative apparatus. Moreover, once the decision was made to strike for power, speed was essential. The suddenness of the *fait accompli* of September 2, 1945, reduced the chances of the development of opposition to the Vietminh.

VIETMINH STRATEGY AFTER COMING TO TEMPORARY POWER

Fontainebleau Negotiations

Although there were limited guerrilla activities by the Vietminh in Cochin China in September 1945 (immediately after the arrival of the British and French), the overall strategy of the Vietminh during the period between September 1945 and December 1946 was to win popular support and influence world opinion. Therefore, the Vietminh emphasized its democratic character and indicated a willingness to negotiate with the French Government concerning the future political status of the revolutionary regime.

The revolutionary leaders were faced with three alternative courses of action. They could wage an all-out revolutionary war against the French leading to complete victory; Ho Chi Minh and his cohorts dismissed this course because of the unfavorable international situation. They could wage a short war leading to favorable terms with the French; but this course might lead to the complete destruction of such strength as the revolutionary regime possessed at that time, for it would involve some loss of military cadres and a part of its territory, and many Vietminh supporters would defect to the French or to a French-controlled puppet regime. Finally, they could negotiate with the French. Citing as his justification the Treaty of Brest-Litvosk, which had allowed Lenin time to reinforce his army and political power, Ho Chi Minh decided to open negotiations with France.[11]

Ho's strategy was based on his assessment of the strength of leftist forces in metropolitan France which he expected

would help him consolidate his gains. But the course of negotiations was based on the clear and unequivocal principle that the Vietminh would fight if necessary to achieve its goal of complete national independence. Vietminh political and military strength was not dismissed by U.S. observers.*[112]

Guerrilla Warfare: 1946–54

With the outbreak of hostilities on a large scale at the end of 1946, negotiations were suspended and the Vietminh began its famous resistance war which was to continue until July 1954. The resistance war period was one of all-out revolution to achieve "national independence" for all three regions of Vietnam under Vietminh control. By denying any Communist links the DRV and the Vietminh leadership sought to obtain the widest possible international and domestic support and also to hold open the way to a negotiated settlement with the French. The nationalist pose which Ho Chi Minh struck was an essential part of the strategy.

In 1949–50 the combination of the victory of the Chinese Communists and the French success in forming a rival nationalist regime under Bao Dai led to a shift in Vietminh strategy. A common border with Communist China meant that aid from Soviet bloc countries could now be obtained. It became possible to plan a military campaign which looked to an eventual counteroffensive and the shift of guerrilla warfare into regular warfare. After 1950 local counteroffensives by guerrilla bands were initiated. This signaled the gradual development of guerrilla warfare into regular or "mobile warfare."[114] Giap's concept of military strategy envisaged a three-stage development – defensive, equilibrium, and offensive – with each stage blending slowly and imperceptibly into the other.[115]

After 1950 there was also a shift in political strategy away from the former emphasis on nationalist slogans to a campaign for radical social reforms along Communist lines. The ICP, which had been dissolved in 1945 as a concession to the united front strategy, was reconstituted in 1951 as the Lao Dong Party.[116]

*U.S. observers who entered Hanoi with the Chinese Nationalist Army of occupation were impressed with the organization and efficiency of the revolutionary regime. They were confident that if talks between France and the DRV broke down, the latter would "take to the hills and continue guerrilla warfare." The Liberation Army of the DRV was described as "well-organized and well-armed."[113]

Summary

With the adoption of Leninism, the Vietnamese revolutionaries acquired a comprehensive strategy, and in 1930 the Indochinese Communist Party (ICP) was formed. The policies and strategies of the ICP shifted according to conditions, were militant or conciliatory as circumstances permitted, and generally followed the "official line" as dictated by Moscow. From 1935 to 1939 a "united front" policy was followed; in 1939 there was a shift to an antiwar, anti-imperialist policy and the Vietminh (or League for Independence of Vietnam) was formed to assure its implementation.

In September 1945 the Vietminh succeeded in seizing power. By December 1946, however, large-scale hostilities had broken out and the Vietminh, relatively conciliatory up to that time, adopted more militant policies and launched a revolutionary war against the French which was to continue until July 1954.

IDEOLOGY OR MYTH

ANTECEDENTS OF REVOLUTIONARY IDEOLOGY: MANDARIN TRADITIONALISM, SUN YAT-SEN REFORMISM, AND LENINIST COMMUNISM

Submerged by the conquering French, the Confucian ethic which provided the ideological foundation of Vietnamese society sustained a serious and traumatic blow. The early opponents to French rule were not consciously reaffirming their traditional ideology. Activated by a selfish concern over losing power to the foreigners, the mandarins' first attempts to resist the French lacked an integrated ideological basis. At its earliest stage resistance was inspired by antiforeignism and racial and cultural pride.

The ideology of the mandarinate, particularly their racial and cultural xenophobia, was reinforced in 1905 by the victory of fellow Asians, the Japanese, over the Russians. Blatant pan-Asianism and antiforeignism under the leadership and inspiration of Japan served as a makeshift but attractive ideology in pre-World War I Vietnam. The anticolonial mandarins were attracted to Japan because that country might serve as a convenient base of operations and a possible source of material aid. They believed that Japan and Vietnam shared

common cultural and racial heritage, and they regarded Japan's victory as symbolizing the resurgence of Asia against the West. Furthermore, Japan's progress and modernization had been carried out under the auspices of a traditional bureaucracy and monarchy similar in some ways to the Vietnamese mandarinate.*

Pan-Asianism was reinforced in a different way by the influence of Sun Yat-sen and the Chinese revolution of 1911. Sun's combination of republicanism and nationalism excluded the possibility of a rejuvenation of the imperial system and the ideological validity of Confucianism. Modern nationalism encompassing total reform of society emerged as the most significant aspect of the revolutionary milieu.

The most important increment to the Vietnamese revolutionary movement was the introduction of Marxism-Leninism with its integrating "messianic" appeal. Nationalism, defined as the concept of national independence and decolonization, received due respect as a component of Marxism-Leninism, and to it was linked the concept of socioeconomic reform.[118] In addition, the Leninist ideology included the idea of an educated elite to serve as the architects of revolution, a penchant for organization, and a preoccupation with strategy and tactics.[119] Woodrow Wilson's influence in the development of Vietnamese nationalism was also significant; however, Wilson's ideas on the self-determination of peoples lacked the organizational and tactical concepts of Leninism.

FUNCTION OF LENINIST COMMUNISM IN REVOLUTIONARY IDEOLOGY

Providing a unique combination of Western technique and anti-Western sentiment, Leninist communism offered a common ideological meeting ground for both the traditional nationalist, who wanted "to drive the foreign devils out," and the Sun Yat-sen type of nationalist who wanted to reform Vietnamese society. Communism linked the anti-French activities of Vietnamese nationalists to a worldwide revolutionary movement and, at a time when colonialism was under intellectual attack in many quarters, Leninism offered not only an intellectual critique but an organizational and tactical basis for anticolonial operations.

*Some scholars feel that the role of Japan in Asian nationalism has been overemphasized by Western observers.[117]

Dynamics of Revolution

An important aspect of Leninism for the Vietnamese revolutionary movement was its tactical flexibility; many revolutionists found the tactical retreat and the tactical compromise difficult to master. An inherent part of Leninism, this concept emphasized that revolutions could be won by opportunism rather than by uncompromising consistency with abstract principles. Operational flexibility made possible the strategy of the united front which, after many variations and shifts in the 1935–45 period, ultimately proved successful.

Closely related to the idea of flexibility in operations was the Leninist theory of revolution in two stages. According to the "two-stage" concept, the Communist revolution could occur only after a nationalist revolution had prepared the way by creating such objective conditions as the overthrow of the colonial regime and the establishment of an indigenous government. Thus, according to this view the correct tactic to be followed in Vietnam was one of close collaboration with non-Communist, anti-French forces in the first stage "bourgeois" nationalist revolution. These non-Communist allies could then be dealt with in the second stage "Socialist" revolution. This provided Vietnamese Communists with a much needed rationalization for their long and extensive collaboration with non-Communists in the Vietminh and other united front organizations.*

VARIATIONS IN COMMUNIST IDEOLOGY: 1941–54

Ho Chi Minh was able to proclaim the united front in 1941 in order to gain control of the revolutionary movement and to increase its popular support. Such Communist ideas as class warfare and social revolution were not then openly proclaimed as part of the Vietminh's ideology of revolution. National independence was made the dominant issue until about 1950. The Vietminh leaders of the revolution called all classes of the Vietnamese people to rally behind their leadership in the quest for independence and liberation. The issue of national independence took precedence over all political theories and plans for the postrevolutionary period; it was the lowest common denominator which could serve as an attractive ideology for the largest number of people.

When the Vietminh began to exercise governmental control over parts of the country during 1945–50, the emphasis con-

*This "two stage" concept of revolution was one of the points of disagreement between the ICP and the Trotskyite faction.

tinued on national unity rather than radical social reforms. All classes and groups were urged to develop "the unity of the people" and to fall in behind the "revolutionary banner" of the Vietminh to resist the attempts of the French to overthrow the new government. The historic cultural and racial unity of the Vietnamese people and the need for political unity in time of crisis were themes stressed by Vietminh DRV officials in the early postwar period.[120]

After 1950 and the establishment of Communist power in China, the Vietminh began to expose the more narrow Marxist ideological traits of a typical Communist regime. Since then the radical social revolution and political totalitarianism found in other Marxist-Leninist states have been apparent in the development of the DRV. The "socialist revolution," "class warfare," and the "rectification of the Party cadres" have become common slogans. Marxism-Leninism has been proclaimed to be the "compass of all activities" and the "one and only ideology . . . ."[121]

MYSTIQUE OF REVOLUTION

The mystique of the Vietnamese Revolution was closely related to its ideology or myth, which we have shown to have had as its common denominator the general desire for national independence and social reform. In many ways similar to the notion of *esprit de corps*, the revolutionary mystique or spiritual vitality which operated in the Vietnamese situation drew its strength from the revolutionary tradition of the country, the charismatic personality of Ho Chi Minh and lesser Vietminh leaders, and from whatever confidence in the Vietminh's ultimate victory may have been engendered by propaganda or the Vietminh's actual successes.

When the Vietminh appeared on the scene in the 1940's the habits and attitudes of insurgency and antigovernment intrigue were already well-established in Vietnam. Anti-French revolts and plots occurred sporadically throughout the colonial period, and violent political intrigue certainly predated the arrival of the French in Indochina.

Ho Chi Minh's personal charisma has been attested to by many observers.[122] In the early postwar period Ho's followers developed a legend of him as the "old man" of the independence movement. Known affectionately as "Uncle Ho," his picture appeared widely throughout areas under Vietminh control, and

revolutionary propaganda organs fostered a personality cult around him. In the January 1946 elections candidates found it an invaluable political asset to be identified as a friend or companion of "Uncle Ho."[123] Although his image suffered temporarily because of his conciliatory attitude toward France, Ho regained his wide popularity after fighting broke out in 1946–47.

Summary

The Confucian ethic, ideological foundation of Vietnamese society, was greatly weakened during the period of French rule. Marxism-Leninism, combined with the Mandarin tradition of antiforeignism, cultural pride, and the force of modern nationalism, came to fill the ideological vacuum which had resulted from the breakdown of traditionalism. Communist ideology provided the Vietnamese extremists with an integrating, operational, and highly flexible basis for thought and action.

The Vietminh was successful in exploiting the "mystique" of the revolution—the Vietnamese tradition of opposition to foreign rule and the veneration for the charismatic leader—and in capitalizing upon the popular desires for independence and reform. It was only in 1950 that the Vietminh began to adopt more radical, more orthodox Communist strategies and policies.

ORGANIZATION OF THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT

VIETMINH: 1941–45

The Communist-dominated Vietminh underground movement was the best organized group working for revolution in Vietnam. It was in May 1941 that Ho Chi Minh organized a meeting of various Vietnamese refugees in the Chinese province of Kwangsi and formed the Viet-Nam Doc-Lap Dong Minh Hoi (League for the Independence of Vietnam) or the Vietminh, which claimed to represent the ICP and other small parties or groups of Vietnamese nationalists. At the same time the ICP Central Committee announced the following program: (1) to develop new organizations for a broad united front in northern Vietnam where none existed and to consolidate those in existence, (2) to expand the organization in the cities, (3) to expand the united front to non-Vietnamese minority areas where it

was weak, and (4) to form small guerrilla groups.[124] This organizational effort was not to be conducted under the auspices of the ICP but under the banner of the Vietminh.

The Communist leaders taught their cadres that it was all-important to develop broadly-based organizations for the political support of the Vietminh before moving into guerrilla organizations. In the Viet Bac, the mountainous region north and northeast of Hanoi, the first permanent Vietminh bases of operations were set up in 1942–43. Here underground cadres organized shadow governments; after these came to have considerable mass support they formed armed groups and guerrilla units. On December 22, 1944, the first units of the Vietminh Liberation Army were formed, although the first guerrilla units had been formed as early as September 1943.[125] Underground cadre teams, underground militarized teams, and armed shock teams gradually appeared. Vietminh committees at village level controlling these cadres had considerable power, and by 1945 were in a position to contest the incumbent regime in many areas.[126]

Each village had its Vietminh committee and above the village there was a committee on the communal echelon. Collective membership and individual membership in the Vietminh was permitted, the former comprising political parties and sections for women and youth. By the end of 1944 the Vietminh claimed a membership of five hundred thousand. Of this total two hundred thousand were in Tonkin, and Annam and Cochin China each had a membership of one hundred fifty thousand.[127]

The underground organization had developed to such an extent, from the village level through the provincial level up to the Vietminh Central Committee, that it represented a new power bloc and challenged the authority exercised first by the French and thereafter by the Japanese and the Bao Dai regimes. A paragovernment apparatus was thus established by the Vietminh throughout the northwest provinces of Tonkin and rural areas in south and central Vietnam between 1941 and 1945. Gradually the Vietminh became ready to make an open bid for power. By exercising political, military, and economic authority within the limited areas it controlled, the Vietminh had more or less replaced the political power of the recognized state and had established a habit of obedience from its supporters, the indifferent, and even the hostile.

According to Vo Nguyen Giap, before the Vietminh made their bid for national power in August 1945, the revolutionary

organization was the *de facto* government in many areas of northern Vietnam.

> There were regions in which the whole masses took part in organizations of national salvation, and the village Viet Minh Committees had, as a matter of course, full prestige among the masses as an underground organization of the revolutionary power.[128]

Giap ignored, for obvious reasons, the fact that non-Communist nationalist groups also held much of Tonkin. The extent of these non-Vietminh areas is shown by the maps in the monograph, *The Viet Minh Regime.*[129]

In areas securely held by the Vietminh guerrilla troops, special "revolutionary people's committees" were rapidly established, and in other localities similar tasks were delegated to "committees of liberation" and other Vietminh groups. On April 16, 1945, the Central Committee of the Vietminh directed that provisional organs of "revolutionary power," i.e., state power, be formed and headed by the National Committee of Liberation. Following this directive, committees of liberation were formed in factories, mines, barracks, and government offices, as well as in the villages. Every district, town, province, and each of the three regions of Vietnam (Tonkin, Annam, and Cochin China) reportedly had its own committee of liberation. The official duties of these groups were: the development of the national liberation movement; organization of supplies; the recruitment of armed units of defense and militia for action against Japanese occupation troops and the Bao Dai regime; and the safeguarding of life and property of citizens. In August 1945 they took part in mobilizing the nation for provisional government before the arrival of the Allied Powers.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM: 1945–46

After this Vietminh coup, which transpired between August 7 and September 2, 1945, the structure of the Vietminh led by Ho Chi Minh became the organizational matrix of the DRV, also headed by Ho. Following the seizure of power, in the North the erstwhile "committees of liberation" were reorganized into "people's committees" of villages, provinces, districts, and other administrative units [130] under the Ministry of Interior headed by Vo Nguyen Giap.

The situation in Cochin China and in southern Vietnam differed somewhat. There, a United National Front had been set up in mid-August following the directives of a Nationalist

Congress that had met in March. It was made up of various small groups such as the Cao Dai, Hoa Hao, Phuc Quôc, and the Trotskyites, and exercised power for a few days after the surrender of Japan. On August 25 the Vietminh made its bid for power in the south when it formed a Southern Executive Committee to serve as the southern arm of the Hanoi government of Ho Chi Minh. Because of its lack of a popular base the Vietminh had to negotiate with the United National Front, and on September 7, 1945, both the Vietminh and the United National Front organized into a Southern National Bloc Committee.[131]

After assuming power in the autumn of 1945, the revolutionary government of the DRV began a critical period of consolidation. It first tried to mobilize the existing social structure behind the Hanoi regime, and the same organs that had proved so successful in the previous stages of the revolution were incorporated into the consolidation effort. The national liberation front organizations were continued, but they were focused more on resistance to the returning French than on revolution. The Vietminh sought to prevent any rival nationalist organizations from usurping or challenging its leadership role and also sought to calm foreign fears of the reported Communist leadership of the newly established DRV. The high point of the latter effort, from the organizational point of view, came in November 1945 when the Communist leaders decided to dissolve the ICP. In the same month the DRV proclaimed that two categories of authority were to be instituted at the lowest level: people's councils and administrative committees, the former to be elected by the population at large through universal suffrage, the latter to be elected through a more detailed indirect system that ensured Vietminh control. Tenure in office for the councils was set at 6 months. This short tenure may be explained by the fact that the Vietminh did not wholly control all of the country and by an assumption that frequent routine elections would eliminate potential opposition and advance Vietminh goals.[132]

Besides trying to establish at least the semblance of a "popular" government at the local level, the DRV moved to improve its military posture, and by the end of September 1945 it had ten thousand well-organized and well-armed troops in its Liberation Army. Presumably this figure did not include the many quasi-guerrilla units;[133] it may have included a considerable number of troops belonging to the Bao Dai regime who had defected en masse to the DRV when Bao Dai abdicated in August 1945.[134]

Perhaps the most important aspect of the organizational activities of the DRV was psychological: the fact that they organized and administered the country and were the actual government north of the 16th parallel may have had no impact on the French Government and foreign opinion, but it was not lost on the individual Vietnamese. The organization of the DRV Government was quite thorough, and, as the "existing" government, it was responsible for the communications system, the justice, the police, the public health, the public utilities, and the home guard.[135]

REVOLUTIONARY WAR: DECEMBER 1946–JULY 1954

In March 1948 the DRV administrative areas set up in August–September 1945 and the military commands were merged into six interzones.* Each interzone was divided into provinces, then into districts and villages. At each administrative level a Committee of Resistance and Administration performed the joint task of directing the war effort and political-administrative activities.[136] The committee at the interzone level was headed by a military commander who was politically reliable and who had overriding authority.[137]

It should be noted that these territorial administrative committees had many of the same responsibilities and presumably the same personnel as did the Vietminh administrative units of the World War II period. The people's councils and the administrative committees of the 1945–46 period were now replaced for the most part by the Committees of Resistance and Administration as the real source of power[138] responsible for public administration. At the provincial level and below, all Committees of Resistance and Administration were ordered to recruit a local militia as well as local security units.[139]

The military units organized by the village committees were the so-called "popular troops," consisting of two groups: an auxiliary military group of persons of both sexes and all ages and a part-time combat group of men between the ages of 18 and 45. In addition, the villages had to produce porters for the regular army units. At the district, provincial, or interzone level there were larger and better armed units, almost battalion

*Prior to March 1948 Vietnam was divided administratively into 14 military zones, each headed by a military commander. These 14 zones were merged into 6 interzones (*liên-khu*) to coordinate military and civilian administrations more effectively.

size, known as regional troops. At the provincial level there was a complex known as "technical cells." These cells reported to the provincial military command on intelligence, special espionage, political affairs, propaganda, arms production, communications, and military administration.[140]

At the apex of the pyramid was the regular army known as the Liberation Army. After 1950 the regular army units were often increased at the expense of regional forces. The mission of the regular army was to participate in a "war of movement," or "mobile war" to use the term of Vo Nguyen Giap.

Regional troops served as a training school for recruits for the regular units, but their primary task was to protect the area and population. They launched small attacks and generally harassed the enemy; they were the "mature guerrillas" who kept the enemy off balance and ambushed his reinforcements. Local militia or "popular" troops served part-time, without interrupting their civilian tasks. The main responsibility of the auxiliary arm of the village popular troops was intelligence, but they also served as guards, built bases, repaired roads, fortified villages, and acted as porters. These troops undertook some guerrilla action but on a small scale.[141]

Seeking to absorb other nationalist elements after the beginning of the fighting, the Vietminh formed the Lien-Viet (Vietnamese United Front) to mobilize all shades of opinion behind an organization which proposed only "liberation," resistance to the French, and maintenance of independence. This organization of the entire population was made up of groups that have become known popularly as "parallel hierarchies." Each person was enrolled in the Liberation Front as a member of either a military group or of a social organization. The latter were developed according to various social functions for women, youth, writers, peasants, students, or religious sects. Everyone therefore became involved in the government's program. This organization was of the utmost importance in mobilizing the population in the revolutionary effort, and although the ICP was reconstituted in 1951 as the Lao Dong Party (Workers' Party), the Lien-Viet retained its role as the chief grouping of the Hanoi regime. If the Vietminh had failed to rally support behind them in this organization, success in the long revolutionary war might not have been possible.*

*Dr. Fall suggests that the Lien-Viet had neither the prestige nor the organizational ability of the Vietminh.

ORGANIZATIONAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH

The Vietminh's organization was always stronger in Tonkin and northern Annam than in the south. The leadership elite was based in the north (having been securely ensconced for several years in the highlands bordering China) where the geographic propinquity of the higher and lower echelons of its organizations enhanced facility of communication and permitted the Vietminh to exercise close control over the population. The international situation favored the consolidation of the Vietminh's power above the 16th parallel by delaying the return of effective French control to the north. The Vietminh's organizational weakness in the south can be explained in terms of geography, the revolutionary tradition of Cochin China, and an international situation favorable to the French.

The description in the preceding subsection of the military and administrative organization during the revolutionary war applies more accurately to the north and central regions than to the south. It was difficult for the Hanoi regime to maintain liaison with the Vietminh-affiliated guerrilla groups operating in the Mekong Delta region around Saigon. In 1947 the Vietminh organized a regular command in the south under Nguyen Binh. "But the long line of communications to the south and the apathetic and frankly unsympathetic attitude of much of the southern population made the task of the commander difficult, and the separate command was abolished in 1952."[142] Nguyen Binh, whom the French described as an able leader, may have had personal ambitions and apparently tried to engage in large-scale warfare before developing the necessary popular base. He died in 1950 under obscure circumstances, and is believed to have been liquidated.[143]

Summary

The greater part of the revolutionary effort was organized into the Vietminh, a broadly based nationalist front organization formed in China in 1941 and led by Communists. Vietminh cadres operated throughout World War II, recruiting and organizing the Vietnamese people so that by the time Vietnamese independence was declared in 1945 the Vietminh had an army and a popularly-supported political organization.

After hostilities broke out between the Vietminh and the French in 1946, the entire DRV Government apparatus was

transferred from Hanoi to mountain bases in northern Vietnam. The need to coordinate the fight against the French resulted in a strong concentration of power in the hands of the executive. On various administrative levels, from the small village to larger units, the Vietminh administered the areas not under French control through "Committees for Resistance and Administration," which tightly controlled all political, economic, and social activities of the Vietnamese population. This cellular structure of the government had the advantage of being decentralized and flexible while at the same time allowing decisions taken by the Central Committee to be rigidly enforced at all levels down to the smallest village. Social groups to help maintain control over individuals were organized and used effectively for purposes of indoctrination and propaganda.

The revolutionary army closely paralleled the political machinery, organized as it was on a local, regional, and national basis. There were irregular local guerrilla units, composed of peasants and other "civilians"; regional military units; and a hard core of well-disciplined and trained regular troops organized nationally. All three types coordinated their activities, and often the regional and regular units combined forces for large-scale military action, assisted by local guerrilla units. The system was flexible and efficient.

TECHNIQUES OF THE REVOLUTION

POLITICAL TECHNIQUES

The organization of the population into front groups for eventual recruitment into the Vietminh's paramilitary forces became the chief political technique employed during the revolution. The object was to mobilize and involve the entire Vietnamese people in support of the Vietminh. The first assignment for the Vietminh cadres organized in 1941–42 was to send propaganda teams into rural villages, particularly those located in areas far from centers of French and Japanese control and suitable for future guerrilla bases. The next step was to organize youth and women's groups according to special interest and age. After developing popular organizations controlled by its agents, the Vietminh began to form units in bases close to China. From these bases armed underground

cadre groups, called "armed propaganda units," or *dich van*, carried out attacks against selected targets. Mostly it appears that they were used to coerce the recalcitrants into supporting, or at least accepting, the Vietminh movement. After the Japanese coup of March 1945, the Vietminh tried to expand its control to other areas using the same technique: first it propagandized and organized the people under its control; then it affiliated these organizations with larger national liberation front groups; and finally it formed an armed force under its control. From the appointment of Bao Dai as Supreme Adviser to Ho Chi Minh to the utilization of peasant youth as porters in the logistics operations of the guerilla forces, the Vietminh provided a place for everyone to serve its goals.*

The Vietminh drive to gain popularity, mass support, and greater control over the population was greatly intensified after the Japanese withdrew their forces in August 1945. For the more than 15 months that the DRV exercised *de facto* control over northern Vietnam it made good use of the government machinery: it abolished the mandarinate and the councils of village notables, replacing these with people's committees controlled or at least influenced by the Vietminh; it legislated against the alcohol and opium monopolies; and it abolished unpopular taxes.[145] The Vietminh also derived immeasurable popularity from Bao Dai's voluntary abdication in favor of Ho Chi Minh's regime in late August, from the declaration Vietnam's independence on September 2, from the campaign to increase food production in the famine-stricken north, from the election of the National Assembly held in January 1946, and from the anti-illiteracy campaign. On November 11, 1945, the Communist leadership dissolved the ICP in order to allow its members to operate more freely as Vietminh nationalists and to attract non-Communist political support for the DRV.

The most notable examples of political measures employed by the Vietminh leaders which not only won them wide support but also increased the influence and control over the population were the anti-illiteracy campaign conducted in the middle forties and the land reform carried out after 1953. The Vietminh undertook the anti-illiteracy campaign immediately after the DRV came to power. It has been estimated that at that time approximately 80 percent of the Vietnamese population was illiterate. Following an order dated September 4,

* To attract indigenous Catholic support Monsignor Le Huu Tu, apostolic vicar for Phat-Diem, was also made a Supreme Adviser to Ho Chi Minh.[146]

1945, anyone over 8 years of age who could not read or write *quoc ngu** within 1 year after the campaign had begun was subject to a fine.[147] Through an elaborate but highly efficient use of cadres and teachers this program appears to have been successful. The Vietnamese felt indebted to the Vietminh for the increase in prestige attached to literacy, while the Vietminh controlled a channel for political indoctrination which was emphasized throughout the entire system of education.

The "land reform" campaign was used by the DRV to strengthen the position of the newly reconstituted Lao Dong (Communist) Party. In the process of confiscating privately-owned land for redistribution, Vietnamese landowners were sought out by the party, tried in People's Courts, and after being convicted were usually executed or at least imprisoned. Their lands were distributed to landless peasants with attendant publicity. Land reform thus made the peasants dependent on the Lao Dong Party for the acquisition of new lands and demonstrated the all-embracing power of the Communist regime.[148]

MILITARY TECHNIQUES

The Vietminh kept guerrilla operations to a minimum during World War II, realizing their extreme vulnerability to military and police action by the French and Japanese authorities. They used this period to recruit and train guerrilla fighters to be used at a later, more propitious time. Many of their recruits were Vietnamese soldiers of disbanded French colonial forces "who became the hard core of the Vietminh's nascent army and who are today the elite of the military cadres of the DRVN."[149]

When the Japanese moved against the French in March 1945, the Vietminh held back from a full-scale uprising, although there were some attacks by Vietminh guerrillas against Japanese supply dumps and some espionage and sabotage in the cities. In April and May the Vietminh expanded the revolutionary movement and unified all armed forces under the Liberation Army. In June the Vietminh established a "free zone" in northern Vietnam; this move had a great psychological impact on the Vietnamese population. In the summer of 1945 U.S. forces parachuted new weapons and communica-

* *Quoc ngu*, meaning "national language," refers to standard Vietnamese language as written in a modified Roman alphabet devised by Portugese missionaries in the 17th century.[18]

tions equipment into Indochina, the bulk of which went to Vietminh armed units who were to conduct guerrilla warfare against the Japanese occupation forces. The only major encounter between the Japanese and the guerrillas that has been recorded, however, occurred on July 17, 1945, when 500 Vietminh attack 40 Japanese gendarmes at the mountain resort of Tam Dao; the Japanese lost eight men.[150]

In August 1945 the Vietminh seized control from the Japanese in Vietnam in what was virtually a bloodless coup d'etat. It was only later when the French and British troops ejected the Vietminh from control of public buildings in Saigon that guerrilla operations got under way in Cochin China (during the fall of 1945). The Vietminh used their period of *de facto* control to suppress non-Communist nationalist parties such as the Dong Minh Hoi and VNQDD in the north and the Hoa Hao sect in the south. Prior to the outbreak of full-scale hostilities between the French and the DRV, there was a series of military incidents in Haiphong and Hanoi which preceded the Vietminh's surprise attack against the French on December 19, 1946.

In the 7-year course of the Vietnamese Revolution, from December of 1946 to July 1954, the Vietminh developed its military techniques from guerrilla warfare operations to a winning combination of guerrilla and regular warfare operations. During this time the DRV armed forces were commanded by Gen. Vo Nguyen Giap, a master tactician and the author of one of the best known works on guerrilla warfare. Giap's military doctrine called for the gradual development of regular army units to be supplemented and supported tactically and logistically by irregular troops when the final counteroffensive against the French should begin.[151]

During the attacks on French troops in Hanoi and other garrison towns throughout the country, the inferiority of Vietminh military training as compared with French training was revealed. This inferiority, however, was partly made up of firepower. It has been estimated that at the outbreak of hostilities late in 1946 the DRV armed forces numbered sixty thousand men equipped with some forty thousand rifles. In addition to individual arms the guerrillas also had 1,300 automatic weapons, 600 mortars, and over 70 cannons, along with 18 French and Japanese tanks.[152] By the spring of 1947 the Vietminh Government and part of its army had fled into the mountains north of Hanoi; a French military operation in the fall of 1947 almost succeeded in capturing Ho Chi Minh and destroying

the DRV Army. Full-scale hostilities broke out; as the Vietminh created its guerrilla zones impenetrable to French security forces, the war began to lose the characteristic of a "mopup operation" by "police action" and increasingly resembled a large-scale guerrilla war.

The inability of the French to crush the Vietminh organization in 1947 and the fact that the Vietminh forces were at that time unable to defeat the French Army in combat presaged a long and bitter war. The Vietminh recognized this earlier than the French, who continued to view the matter in the light of past experiences with Vietnamese nationalist insurrections, such as those in 1930 and 1940 when prompt military and police action had been sufficient to restore order. The Vietminh, on the other hand, found in Mao Tse-tung's concept of the protracted war a theory of warfare that conformed more closely to the realities of the situation. Thus, with the French in control of the cities and garrisoned at strategic points throughout the country, the Vietminh resorted to the age-old tactics of guerrilla warfare—ambush, jungle traps, and hit-and-run attacks. Its guerrillas were substantially aided by a sympathetic populace in intelligence and logistics support. They continued to harass and demoralize the French forces and began to transform their battalions into regiments and finally into ten-thousand-divisions. The Vietminh Army, described by Giap as the "military arm of the Vietminh Government," broke the French line on the Chinese border in 1950, captured the "Thai country" in 1953, and defeated the French forces at Dien Bien Phu in 1954.

Giap's three-phase plan to defeat the French Army was patterned late in 1950: it consisted of (1) a period of retreat and defense during which time the Vietminh forces were to be retrained and consolidated; (2) a period of equilibrium so as to reequip themselves with Communist China's aid and to eliminate the French-held posts in Vietminh areas; and (3) a period of general counteroffense which eventually was to bring the French to total defeat.

The Vietminh leaders regarded the guerrilla activities as a holding operation to buy time—time in which the DRV regular army could be trained and equipped for a counteroffensive and time for the political situation, in France, in Vietnam, and internationally, to become more favorable for the Vietminh's political objectives. The Vietminh leadership correctly reasoned that France would grow tired of a stalemated colonial war if pacification—and ultimate victory on French terms—

seemed nowhere in sight. But in order to bring French public opinion to this point, the Vietminh needed to inflict a series of military defeats on the French. Giap, as noted above, advocated the consolidation of the principal revolutionary forces for more and larger offensive actions in preparation for a general counteroffensive. The *guerre mobile* ("war of movement") which Giap called for in this phase was characterized chiefly "by the absence of fixed fronts and rear areas, quick concentration for action, and immediate disengagement after fighting." [153] The war of movement was one of attrition, "in the sense that all efforts, military and nonmilitary, were aimed at wearing down the French." [154] An essential part of this strategy was the multitude of tactical operations, carried out with speed and secrecy and resulting in most cases in defeat for the French.

Vietminh attacks on French outposts began in the fall of 1950 along the Chinese border. These scattered outposts were 300 miles from the main French line and were surrounded by Vietminh-held jungle. One by one the outposts fell to the Vietminh so that by January 1951 northern Vietnam, except for the Red River Delta which the French were desperately trying to hold, was controlled by the Vietminh. This sudden and successful offensive against French positions and outposts all along the Chinese frontier ensured permanent contact with the Chinese Communists.

Both Ho Chi Minh and Giap regarded 1951 as a decisive year in the Vietminh's military situation, and in January of that year readied their troops for a general counteroffensive that included the taking of Hanoi. With its regular army then numbering almost as many troops as the French forces, the Vietminh was developing an ability to concentrate and maneuver in major campaigns, and achieving tactical superiority because increasing numbers of French troops were tied to forts and bases. Further, the French were experiencing lack of reinforcements and logistics difficulties.

The Vietminh campaign to take control of the Red River Delta and thus drive the French out of northern Vietnam was set under way in January 1951 and interrupted only by the rainy seasons, generally from April to October. In their first encounters with the French the Vietminh troops employed positional or regular type warfare which proved unsuccessful and gave victory to the French. Giap, realizing his mistake, quickly reverted to guerrilla warfare techniques—hit-and-run attacks, ambushes, and assaults that had broken

the French line on the Chinese border. Here the French also experienced the Vietminh "human sea" attacks in which wave after wave of Vietminh soldiers threw themselves against the French lines. Attacks were usually planned weeks and sometimes months in advance. Peasants who acted as Vietminh agents kept their superiors informed on French military movements and the information was transmitted to the Vietminh military authorities.

"Second line" troops who were not as well equipped as the Vietminh main force and who operated from French-held soil were involved in minor skirmishes ranging from urban terrorism and ricefield warfare to hill, mountain, and jungle warfare. They "screened" for the main force offensives and infiltrated many important French-held areas. Their ability to disperse quickly and "blend into the landscape" made these units very elusive and difficult to capture.

To mobilize the population in support of their operations the Vietminh used "psychological techniques," which are applied more easily to organized groups. These techniques were used to control the minds of the masses by means of indoctrination and usually took the form of propaganda, rumors, meetings, discussions, pamphlets, radio programs, and plays. The "morale technique" of "self-criticism" was most effective; it is a form of confession, used popularly within Communist organizations, in which an individual verbally admits his weaknesses and expels heretical ideas before a group. During the campaigns of 1953 in northwest Vietnam, increased sessions of "self-criticism" helped maintain strict party discipline and restore the morale of soldiers and officers who might be thinking of deserting.

The French forces, commanded by Marshal de Lattre de Tassigny from 1950 to 1953, prepared for the Vietminh counteroffensive by recruiting French civilians into auxiliary units, thus liberating the military for combat duty, and by setting up defense units along the Vietminh approaches to the Red River Delta. The French had air superiority and the advantage of heavy guns. In a number of Vietminh attacks the French repelled the guerrillas with fighter bombers, transport planes carrying bombs, and heavy artillery. Airborne units were useful in screening the French forces in retreat as well as facing the Vietminh guerrillas in hand-to-hand combat.

During 1952–53 the French appear to have used two types of operations against the Vietminh. One was the "meat grinder" operation by which the French attempted to draw

and destroy the Vietminh's "hard core" regular units in one great battle. This operation was unsuccessful because Giap sacrificed some of his units trapped behind French lines rather than be baited into a large encounter with the French. The second type of operation was a brief counterattack launched either to destroy a Vietminh position in Vietminh territory or to cut off Vietminh units from northern bases. This operation met with some success, particularly at Hoa-Binh, a garrison 20 miles inside Vietminh territory.

While most of the French mobile forces were concentrated in the northern areas of Vietnam, French operations in southern Vietnam slowed down. It would seem likely that urban sabotage and terrorism would have increased and presented the French with serious local problems. The reverse was true, however, as successful antiterrorist operations conducted by Vietnamese authorities brought an end to terrorist activities. ". . . not one single major incident of terrorism" occurred in Saigon from the end of 1952 to the end of the fighting.[155]

The characteristics of the campaign during 1952–53, up until the airborne landing at Dien Bien Phu, could be summarized as follows: "The French forces were tied down in the defence of a series of fortified positions, whilst the rebels were free to move about the countryside as they liked, often in between the French outposts themselves. The position from December 1952 onwards was one of stalemate. The rebels were not able to dislodge the French from their positions, while the French could not bring the rebels to battle in any large numbers."[156] Although the French maintained numerical superiority throughout the campaign, their effectiveness was severely curtailed, as shown by the fact that in 1953, according to reliable estimates, "about 35,000 Vietminh were tying down three times their number of French forces in the Delta."[157] In view of the generally known tiedown ratio of 10 to 20 regular personnel to one irregular combatant, these figures speak for themselves. Furthermore, the Vietminh generally outnumbered the French in most single military encounters, and the larger percentage of noncombatant support personnel in the French forces reduced French combatant strength and firepower.[158] By 1954 the Vietminh's armed forces had been increased to an estimated three hundred thousand.

In 1953 Gen. Henri Navarre took over the French forces in Vietnam as commander in chief and found the situation stagnant. He reorganized the units so as to increase their mobility

and began a series of offensives which were designed to break the Communist forces by 1955. General Navarre involved his troops in too many encounters in many different areas too often and was never able to prepare himself for a large-scale operation at the proper time. In November 1953 he launched "Operation Castor" to cut off the Vietminh approach to Laos, and this finally led to the battle of Dien Bien Phu.

The operation began on the 20th when the first wave of two paratroop battalions were dropped on the site. Four months later the Vietminh began its series of attacks on the garrisons. They positioned themselves in the surrounding hills and let loose with a barrage of artillery fire combined with incessant Vietminh attacks. Soon the perimeter of the French garrison decreased. Most supplies airdropped to the French units were captured by the Vietminh, and when the monsoon weather curtailed French air activity in the spring of 1954, Dien Bien Phu was lost. "Basically, three errors were committed at Dien Bien Phu," writes an observer, "each at a different command echelon: (1) the choice of fighting such a decisive battle so far from the major French centers of strength; (2) the capital error in the underestimation of the enemy's capabilities; and (3) the positioning of forces within the fortress itself."[159]

Operations continued in the Red River Delta, estimated to have been a French stronghold. It was soon evident, however, that the Vietminh had infiltrated and neutralized the French forces in the area. The last French operation took place in June 1954. The loss of the French garrison at Dien Bien Phu, as much a psychological as a military defeat, and the underestimated strength of the Vietminh in the Delta paved the way for a cease-fire and the Geneva settlement of July 1954. Although the French had a total force of about five hundred thousand troops, the security of operating from firm bases, and the complete mastery of air operations, they were misled in their intelligence information and were unable to form effective defensive positions.

Summary

Within each phase of the Vietminh's total revolutionary war strategy, tactics developed and employed successfully by Communist organizations elsewhere were applied in Vietnam. First, mass support in the areas controlled by the Vietminh

was assured: a place for everyone regardless of political coloration was found; peoples' committees took over in the villages; unpopular taxes were repealed; an anti-illiteracy campaign was undertaken; and basic land reform was carried out. Working from established political bases, military tactics first consisted of continued sporadic hit-and-run attacks on French garrisons; at the same time they were training units of a regular army in the mountains of northern Vietnam and southwestern China. Military action in the later phase was made up of a winning combination of regular operations and guerrilla operations that eventually defeated the French at Dien Bien Phu and the Red River Delta. The combination of political and military techniques constitute a classic exercise in Communist takeover.

ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT OF FOREIGN POWERS

The substantial Chinese aid which the Vietminh regime received after 1950 and the diplomatic support from the Soviet bloc during the final phase of the conflict must be viewed in the perspective of a longstanding tradition of foreign participation in Vietnam's revolutionary movements. Early Vietnamese rebels against French rule looked to Japan for support, particularly following the Russo-Japanese war of 1905. After Sun Yat-sen's revolution in China (1911), that country, too, became a haven for anti-French conspirators and political exiles from Indochina. At both these times the foreign powers were motivated by their own national interest rather than by visionary theory or ideology, and, being hard-pressed by European commercial and diplomatic demands, China and Japan were in no position to give more than passive support to the Vietnamese. At various times since World War I both Chinese Nationalists and Communists actively supported various Vietnamese nationalist factions. Japan's occupation of Indochina during World War II gave the Japanese ample opportunity to support Vietnamese nationalism, both indirectly by discrediting the French and directly by installing a Vietnamese regime, as they did towards the end of their occupation period.

CHINA'S INVOLVEMENT DURING THE INTERWAR PERIOD (1920–40)

China provided Ho Chi Minh and other leaders of both the ICP and the Kuomintang-oriented VNQDD with a convenient sanctuary throughout the formative years of these revolu-

tionary organizations. As discussed earlier, the organizational forerunner of the ICP, the Revolutionary Youth League, was formed by Ho in Canton in 1925. In 1930 Ho formed the ICP itself in Hong Kong. The Comintern had its Asian headquarters in China during much of the twenties. After a wave of French repression, such as that of 1930–31, the Vietnamese revolutionary leaders would escape across the frontier into south China whence they attempted to smuggle propaganda into Vietnam to rally the ranks left behind. When the Communist Party was banned throughout the French empire in 1939 the Vietnamese Communist leadership fled as usual to China. China's central government and the Kuomintang (Nationalists) had opposed the Communists since 1927, but local officials and some warlords in south China were amenable to Communist influence, often because of bribery and promises of economic concessions in Vietnam freed from French domination.

JAPANESE OCCUPATION: 1940–45

The Japanese plan for the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere envisaged a political reconstruction of Asia from which European and U.S. influence would be totally expunged; but when the Japanese came to Indochina in 1940 their ideological sympathies for Asian nationalists were, for the time being, overruled by strategic interests. Faced with the necessity of a swift takeover in Southeast Asia, Japan needed a peaceful Indochina as a base of operations and staging area for the invasion of Malaya. The desire of the indigenous people for independence was to be respected and fulfilled but with certain restrictions compatible with Japanese hegemony. The ultimate goal of the Japanese called for the "autonomy of the Annamese" within 20 years, followed by "nationhood."[160] Until the successful completion of the war, however, French sovereignty was to be recognized. The Japanese policy proposed that:

> Although the self-government or the participation in politics of the Annamites will have to be recognized to some extent on some proper occasion in the future, for the present we shall not permit their independence movements, though we shall ask France to improve the position and welfare of the natives in general.[161]

Later, when Japan needed the support of Asians in the prosecution of the war, it began encouraging the nationalist move-

ment in Indochina. In February 1944 under the close surveillance and supervision of Japanese police, discussions between Japanese and Vietnamese leaders took place in Hanoi and Saigon. While recognizing the sovereignty of the French and ostensibly cooperating with them, the Japanese were at the same time negotiating with both the traditional mandarinate and the radical nationalist revolutionary movement.[162]

By early 1945 the Japanese had decided to "elevate and support" the independence of Vietnam whenever it might be appropriate for the conduct of the war.[163] Reacting to the threat posed by the continued advance of U.S. forces in the nearby Philippine Islands and doubting the willingness and ability of the French to cooperate in defending Indochina from an Allied invasion, the Japanese overthrew the French colonial regime on March 9, 1945. Two days later Emperor Bao Dai renounced all treaties with France and proclaimed the independence of Vietnam under Japanese protection.

By far the most significant Japanese contribution to the development of the Vietnamese revolution was the expulsion of the French colonial officials in March 1945 which destroyed the facade of French control over Vietnam. Psychologically, and from the standpoint of practical power politics, a return to the prewar status was henceforth impossible. Moreover, the Bao Dai regime which the Japanese set up was basically a puppet regime with no permanence or viability. Once the Japanese surrendered, the Bao Dai government was doomed because of its affiliation with the defeated power.

ALLIED INVOLVEMENT DURING WORLD WAR II PERIOD

When the Allies were ready to shift their main effort from Europe to the Far East for the final offensive against Japan, the issue of the political and strategic significance of Indochina came to the fore. Since 1942 the Free French had maintained military missions in China in the Yunnan Province and at the Nationalist capital of Chungking to contact anti-Vichyites in Indochina, organize them into an underground resistance movement, and then enlist Allied support for the liberation of Indochina from the Japanese and Vichy French.[164] In 1943 the Free French announced that after the war Indochina would have fiscal and customs autonomy and alluded to the possibility of more self-government but reaffirmed French sovereignty. The Vietnamese exile colony in south

China was called on to support the Free French. In reaction to this proclamation and to French activities in China, the Chungking government called for the deliverance of Indochina from both Japanese and French control through the Chinese Nationalists, and sought to enlist all Vietnamese revolutionaries into a Kuomintang-sponsored group known as the Dong Minh Hoi (DMH).* At the same time, the Chinese Nationalists set up along the border an elaborate system of espionage designed to prevent all communication between the French military mission and the interior of Indochina.[166]

The exact relationship between Ho Chi Minh and his Vietminh organization and the Chinese Nationalists during the period after 1941 is difficult to determine. After having afforded refuge to the Vietnamese Communists from 1939 to 1941 and having permitted the organization of the Vietminh on Chinese territory, Chungking officials arrested Ho in 1942 allegedly because of his Communist background. They released him a year later with the understanding that the Vietminh would cooperate with the DMH in operating a more effective espionage and intelligence network throughout northern Vietnam.[167] It was at this time that he adopted his famous alias, "Ho Chi Minh," so that his former Communist affiliation would be less conspicuous.** Relations between Chinese Nationalist officials and the Vietminh remained strained, with the Vietminh taking every opportunity to increase its power and influence under the inefficient and inconsistent auspices of the Chungking government. At the same time the Nationalist Government made it clear that China had designs on Vietnam in the postwar settlement and that a French return was definitely not acceptable.***

It was during 1944–45 that Ho Chi Minh made his first contacts with U.S. OSS agents in China, requesting aid and support for clandestine activities in northern Vietnam against the Japanese. Regardless of the amount of material aid

*The DMH was primarily backed by south China warlords (Lu-Han, Lung-Yon, Chiang Fa-kwei, and Sino-Wen) interested in gaining economic concessions in Tonkin after the war.[165]

**According to one account, Ho Chi Minh was released from prison by Chang Fa-kwei, the semi-independent warlord in Kwangsi Province. Chang reportedly had his own ideas about Indochina and hoped to use Ho and his Vietminh to further his own plans. Chang Fa-kwei was not one of the Whampoa clique in the Chungking government, and he ordered the release of Ho without telling Chiang Kai-shek, whereupon Ho, who had been jailed as Nguyen Ai Quoc, adopted the name of Ho Chi Minh in order to conceal his true identity from the chief of the Kuomintang police, Tai Li.[166]

***In a Chinese newspaper, as early as the summer of 1942, Dr. Chu Ko-ching, the President of the National Chekiang University, pointed out the importance of Indochina as an outlet to the sea for southwest China, as an area for mutually beneficial trade relations, and as a defensive outpost. At a future peace conference, he advised China to ask for the independence of Indochina and to offer to become its tutor. Dr. Chu concluded that China could not permit Indochina to lapse back into the hands of France, whose surrender in 1940 determined the fate of Singapore and Southeast Asia.[169]

given to Ho by the OSS, the main effect of his contact with them was psychological. The Vietminh could later claim that they had U.S. support and were part of the Allied effort against the Japanese and their Vietnamese puppet regime. The aid itself was not inconsequential. According to one observer, ". . . throughout the months before the Japanese capitulation, OSS officers and men operated behind Japanese lines, to arm, lead and train native guerrillas who were organized by the Vietminh."[170]

U.S. policy toward Indochina was indefinite with respect to military and strategic action in this region. In November 1944 Gen. Albert Wedemeyer, the Commanding General of U.S. forces in China, reported that the French were making an intensive effort with British help to recover their prewar position in Indochina, and for his guidance, Wedemeyer asked Washington for a definition of policy regarding Indochina. President Roosevelt indicated that the Indochina question was a matter for postwar settlement and that U.S. policy was not to be formulated until after consultation with the Allies at a forthcoming Combined Staff Conference. The President was against dealing with the French authorities "in such a way as to give French interests in the Far East official recognition."[171]

On March 24, 1945, Roosevelt told Ambassador Hurley and General Wedemeyer in Washington that no supplies were to be given to French forces operating out of China. In addition, the President said that the San Francisco Conference would set up a United Nations Trusteeship to make effective the right of a colonial people to choose the form of government under which they would live as soon as, in the opinion of the United Nations, they were qualified for independence. While cautioning his chief subordinates against French machinations in Indochina, Roosevelt indicated that purely military support of the French effort against Japan would be permitted.[172] This proved very difficult to carry out in view of the political implications of military aid. While this policy dashed French hopes of liberating Indochina,* it did not imply large-scale OSS aid for the Vietminh. It appears that U.S. help for both the French and the Vietminh was intended to be on such a low level as only to keep them both active in the anti-Japanese effort.

*The Joint Chiefs had decided that the military significance of the resistance groups in Indochina was of no great benefit to the United States and therefore did not warrant aid. At the same time it was agreed that the logistical effort for such a commitment was too expensive and would detract from other more important areas.[173]

Dynamics of Revolution

At approximately the same time (the early months of 1945), the issue of territorial responsibility for anti-Japanese activities in Indochina became a pressing one for the Allies, particularly as the British from the Southeast Asia Command (SEAC) in Ceylon had begun to fly air sorties in support of French guerrillas in Indochina. By unofficial agreement between Wedemeyer and Mountbatten, operations in Indochina came under the China Theater. U.S. officials in China, particularly Ambassador Hurley, were upset about the British air actions and the issue was carried to the Potsdam Conference in the summer of 1945. At that time the 16th parallel was agreed upon as the boundary between SEAC and China Theater operations. Active operations in Indochina were not anticipated by the Allies in the final war plan against Japan. Mountbatten was directed by the Combined Chiefs of Staff to liberate Malaya, maintain pressure on Japan across the Burma-Thai border, capture key areas of Thailand, and establish bridgeheads in Java and Sumatra.[174]

On August 14 Japan accepted the surrender terms, and on the same day Mountbatten was ordered to take over responsibility of the area of Indochina south of the 16th parallel. On the previous day he had been instructed that his primary tasks in the case of Japanese surrender would be to enforce the terms of the accord, the disarmament of Japanese forces, and the liberation of prisoners of war. He was specifically instructed to send a force to Saigon and take control of the Japanese southern armies whose headquarters was in this city.[175]

Responsibility for the surrender of Japanese troops north of the 16th parallel fell to the China Theater and Chiang Kai-shek. Thus, on the eve of the takeover by the Vietminh in August 1945, foreign involvement was a matter of crucial concern for the revolutionary leadership. Allied plans for the surrender of Japan indicated clearly to the Vietminh that if a seizure of power were to be successful it would have to take place before the arrival of the Allies. Precious little time was available in which to seize power and thus present the Allies with a *fait accompli*.

The Vietminh moved at a time when the Allies were not in a position to influence the situation directly. Mountbatten was overwhelmed by problems in Malaya, Burma, and Indonesia and was not able to take action in Indochina. Meanwhile the slowness of the Chinese Nationalists, the ominous intervention of the Soviet Union in Manchuria, and the ever-present problem of the Chinese Communists prevented the Chungking

regime from being in a position to influence events in the northern area of Vietnam.

For the Japanese the situation was different. On hearing of Japan's capitulation, Admiral Decoux, who was still in Indochina under Japanese arrest, urged the Japanese Commander in Vietnam, General Tsushibashi, to release him and all his interned troops so that they could reassert French control. He hoped to be able, with these troops, to regain control of the administration and prevent the triumph of the Vietminh. But Tsushibashi replied that without orders and direction from the Allies, Decoux would remain in captivity. The Japanese made no effort to aid the French in recapturing their position and did nothing to prevent the spread of Vietminh control.[176]

Between the time of their surrender (August 14) and the arrival of the Allies in mid-September, the Japanese released arms and equipment to the Vietminh. General Tsushibashi denied that official Japanese policy provided for the large-scale supply of Vietminh, and presumably the act was done on an unofficial basis. Nevertheless, this arming has been reported to be part of Japan's policy to provoke guerrilla warfare between the Vietnamese and the Allies which would last for years so that the French, or even the Chinese, would never adequately control the situation.[177]

The actual amount of aid received by the Vietminh from the Japanese is difficult to appraise. Most of the Vietminh arsenal at this time actually consisted of French arms which the Japanese had taken during the disarming of the colonial army in March. According to General Tsushibashi, these arms did not go directly to the Vietminh but had been issued to the troops of the puppet Bao Dai regime. When the Vietminh established its regime in August, it took over these troops and some eight thousand rifles.

According to the U.S. officer who arrived in Hanoi to accept the surrender of the Japanese, the latter had been quite generous to the Vietminh. He noted that there was ample opportunity for the Vietnamese to secure arms and ammunition both from the Japanese who opened their armories and supply dumps, and from French stocks captured by the Japanese in March.[178] In addition, he never saw any heavy weapons larger than an 81-mm. mortar among the equipment turned in by the Japanese to the Chinese occupation forces. The Japanese claimed that they had destroyed this equipment,[179] but Japanese armaments were later captured from the Vietminh forces.

Dynamics of Revolution

British Involvement South of 16th Parallel

By mid-September 1945, British forces arrived in Saigon to accept the surrender of the Japanese Army below the 16th parallel. They were gradually complemented by an increasing number of French military units. Almost immediately difficulties arose between Allied authorities and the Vietnamese revolutionary regime which had assumed power in late August in Saigon as the southern branch of the Hanoi government. It must be emphasized that during late August, before the arrival of Allied units, a series of Franco-British agreements had recognized French sovereignty in Indochina and provided that French forces would cooperate with Mountbatten as soon as they became available to carry out the terms of surrender below the 16th parallel.[180]

Maj. Gen. D. D. Gracey was appointed by Mountbatten to carry out occupation in Indochina for SEAC. He was given five tasks: to secure the area of Saigon; to maintain order; to rescue Allied POW's; to disarm the Japanese; and to liberate Allied territory. Allegedly to ensure the safety of his forces and of the French civilian population in Saigon, General Gracey asserted his authority and responsibility in the area and ignored the pretensions and activities of the local representations of the Vietminh regime. On September 23, French troops just released from internment acted on their own initiative and seized all government buildings and police stations in Saigon, removing them from the control of the Vietminh.[181] The latter retaliated with street fighting in Saigon and guerrilla warfare in the rural area. British forces helped to keep public utilities going and the interned Japanese provided the necessary labor support.

On September 24, Mountbatten reported the situation to London and suggested that two alternatives were available: actively to implement Gracey's assumption of authority, or to confine British responsibility to enforcing the surrender of the Japanese and maintaining order in Saigon alone, leaving the French with the responsibility for exercising authority elsewhere. The Chiefs of Staff replied that the "unavoidable delays" in the arrival of French troops made it necessary to widen Gracey's functions and to assist the French in maintaining order outside of Saigon. By October the French were firmly established in Saigon and the colonial High Commissioner returned at the end of the month. He was nominally under the operational command of General Gracey. British troops

never were called upon to assist in the reestablishment of French administration or the maintenance of order outside the "key areas" in Saigon. On January first the French had some thirty thousand troops in southern Vietnam, and they then assumed full responsibility from the British for law and order throughout the country south of the 16th parallel.*

Chinese Involvement in the North

North of the 16th parallel the situation was quite different for the French. They tried, without success, to obtain Chinese aid and recognition for the assertion of French sovereignty in northern Vietnam. By mid-September the Chinese Nationalist Army of Occupation, under General Lu-Han, arrived to carry out the stipulations of the Japanese surrender agreement; the Chinese recognized the DRV Government as the existing regime, responsible to General Lu-Han for administration. General Lu-Han announced to the people of Vietnam that the Chinese forces had come to effectuate the surrender, disarmament, and evacuation of the Japanese. To coordinate these efforts, he told them he would supervise the civil authority through "[their] present governmental officials and organization, so long as normal functions of government are carried out, and peace and order is assured at all times."[183] Lu-Han took his orders from Chiang Kai-shek, and according to U.S. observers in mid-September, the Chinese Nationalist policy seemed to be "coasting" by favoring neither the Vietnamese nor the French. Nevertheless, it was well known that Chiang Kai-shek favored Vietnam's independence.[184]

Between the surrender of Japan on August 14 and the advent of the Chinese Nationalists in mid-September various U.S. officials arrived in Hanoi. An OSS mission arrived on August 22, followed by a military government (G-5) section, and later on, a U.S. liaison mission, under the command of Brig. Gen. Philip E. Gallagher. By the end of September they all came under the command of General Gallagher.

Guidance on U.S. policy available to Gallagher and his staff was apparently based on the concept that Indochina would ultimately come under a United Nations' Trusteeship. Although in September 1945 the "existing government" established prior to Chinese occupation was recognized by U.S. officials in the area as responsible for administration, these officials acted on the understanding that the official status

* On January 28, 1946, the Allied Control Commission for Saigon was dissolved and General Gracey left the country. On March 4, 1946, all of Indochina was excluded from Mountbatten's SEAC operations.[185]

of Vietnam would not be decided until the world leaders met at the United Nations.[185] Chinese Nationalist antipathy toward the return of the French was indicated by the refusal of the Chungking government to allow some six thousand French troops who had fled across the border into China in March to return to Indochina in September. Late that month U.S. liaison officials in Hanoi were informed that, although the postwar settlement of Indochina through a United Nations Trusteeship had not been definitely dropped, the "Chinese were to facilitate the recovery of power by the French."

At approximately the same time that they were told to facilitate the return of the French, the Chinese Nationalists became interested in withdrawing their troops from Vietnam for use in Manchuria. In early October 1945 Sino-French talks began in China and in Hanoi in regard to the transfer of power.[186] While Chiang Kai-shek undoubtedly wanted to fish in the troubled waters of Indochina and definitely hoped to see an independent Vietnam develop, it seems that Manchurian affairs, combined with his suspicions about a U.N. trusteeship and about Ho Chi Minh's Vietminh regime, led him eventually to a settlement with the French. In Manchuria, the Chinese Communists had swiftly taken power after the defeat of the Japanese, and Chiang Kai-shek was eager to check the moves of Mao Tse-tung.

Sino-French discussions went on throughout the winter and finally, on February 28, 1946, a series of agreements were signed in which China affirmed its purpose to withdraw all troops by March 31, 1946. In return, France renounced all extraterritorial rights and commercial concessions in China, guaranteed exemption from customs and transit duties for Chinese merchandise shipped over the Haiphong-Kunming rail line, gave China ownership and management of the portion of railroad which was in China, and assured Chinese nationals living in Indochina the legal rights of French nationals.[187]

FOREIGN INVOLVEMENT IN THE COLD WAR PERIOD

It was not until January 1950 that the Vietminh regime received diplomatic recognition and any active international support from the Sino-Soviet bloc.* In the 1945–50 period not

*According to Dr. William C. Johnstone, who was present as an observer at the Asian Relations Conference in New Delhi in April 1947, there were 3 to 5 Vietminh representatives in attendance who had long meetings with Soviet representatives. Similar meetings occurred in 1948 at the Calcutta Youth Conference and at a meeting of the Indian Communist Party attended by Vietminh representatives.[188]

even the Communist Party in metropolitan France supported the Vietminh's demands for independence.[189] These were days when the principle of geographic contiguity with the Soviet bloc territory determined the bloc's active interest in a Communist-oriented revolutionary movement. Until the arrival of Mao Tse-tung's forces on the frontiers of Indochina, the Franco-Vietminh conflict did not take on the characteristics of a cold war confrontation between the Communist and non-Communist worlds. By May 1950, however, U.S. Secretary of State Dean Acheson announced that the United States would extend military and economic assistance to France and the Bao Dai regime.[190] The aid given the Vietminh by the Chinese Communists after 1950 has already been mentioned.

This aid and military assistance was the subject of a reported agreement between the DRV and the Chinese Communists.[191] Regardless of the exact nature of such an agreement, the total aspect of the revolution against the French was precipitately changed. The Chinese Communists wanted the Vietminh to remain in the fight, even if Peking was not fully committed to a policy of military victory for the Vietminh regime. According to a defector from the Vietminh, there was an agreement between the Peking and Hanoi regimes under which direct Chinese intervention would occur only in the event of a decisive Vietminh defeat.[192] Henceforth the Vietminh was "geographically linked to the socialist bloc."[193] The material and logistical support given the Vietminh by the Chinese Communists was significant in the final outcome of the conflict. In assessing the various factors which facilitated the success of the Vietminh, Giap recognizes the following: the revolutionary armed forces represented by his "Liberation Army," the United Front organization, the establishment of "people's power" in August of 1945, the leadership of the ICP, and the support of other Communist countries.[194]

Summary

The Vietnamese struggle against French rule saw a number of foreign powers actively involved in aiding one side or another. Because of its close proximity, China played the most important role officially and nonofficially by harboring Vietnamese exiles and allowing them to organize on its soil. Both the Nationalist Government and the Communist Government extended aid to the Vietnamese at various times. Japan also made a great contribution to the nationalist movement; its occupation forces encouraged the Vietnamese independence

movement during World War II and offered the movement a golden opportunity to establish itself when they brought the French colonial regime to an end before capitulating in 1945. Guerrilla warfare against the Japanese was encouraged by aid from Allied Powers, including the United States, and Chinese occupation forces in northern Vietnam dealt with the *de facto* administration of the Vietminh. British efforts to help France regain control were not encouraged in the immediate postwar period by other Allies. Vietnam became a battleground of the Cold War in 1950 when the Sino-Soviet bloc went to the Vietminh's assistance. The Franco-Vietnamese conflict was resolved by an international body at Geneva in 1954.

PART III
EPILOGUE

tive bureaucratic types. Finally, there is evidence of some unrest among the peasants. In 1956, for example, when the Communist bloc was beset by ideological disputes, a peasant revolt of major proportions occurred in Ho Chi Minh's native province of Nghe An, the same province which in 1930 had risen against the French.[196]

The Saigon regime in the south has been led by President Ngo Dinh Diem since October 1955. Diem, who had been Emperor Bao Dai's Prime Minister since shortly before the Geneva settlement, was elected to replace Bao Dai as Chief of State when the South Vietnamese voted for a republican form of government to replace the French reinstituted monarchical system. This government operates under a democratic constitution in theory, but the realities of South Vietnamese political life vary widely from the theoretical structure of the government.

Opposition to the Diem regime has had considerable difficulty in operating within the limits imposed by the government. The South Vietnamese Government tends to regard all political opposition to its policies as Communist-inspired and therefore subversive. This attitude, which is not unique to South Vietnam but shared by many anti-Communist governments, tends to force non-Communist opponents of Diem into the Communist camp and blurs the very real distinction between Communists and non-Communists in South Vietnam.[197]

The civil war in South Vietnam, which began almost immediately after the Geneva settlement, is led by a Communist-dominated guerrilla organization officially called the "Southern Liberation Front" but referred to by the Diem government as Viet Cong. The Viet Cong's leadership cadres were left behind on Communist orders when the regrouping of Communist forces north of the 17th parallel was effected in 1954–55; others have secretly crossed into the southern zone since that time. Capitalizing on societal unrest, particularly in rural areas, the Communist agitators have built up a guerrilla organization capable of mounting disruptive attacks on government forces and on elements of the population sympathetic to the Diem government. Since 1959 the Viet Cong's terrorist activities and paramilitary operations have increased in frequency and in intensity.

The government of South Vietnam has responded to Viet Cong guerrilla activity by undertaking an increasingly vigorous campaign of counterinsurgency operations and socioeconomic reforms. The United States has participated heavily in this

response by making available to the South Vietnamese Government forces large-scale economic and technical assistance in the form of commodities and U.S. advisory personnel. Recent developments in Southeast Asia point to a continued and deepening U.S. involvement in the Vietnamese conflict which has its roots in the revolutionary movement analyzed in the above study. Many observers feel that the prospects for political stability in South Vietnam are particularly bleak since the societal factors which contributed to the success of the Vietminh in the colonial period have, for the most part, not been changed.

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3. Archival Material. Deposited in the Army and Air Force Branch of the National Archives are the records of the Far Eastern International Military Tribunal (IMTFE) and the published intelligence reports of the Research and Analysis Branch of the Office of Strategic Services. These documents were of particular value in a study of the Indochinese situation during World War II. Because of the time factor that limited a thorough search and study of this material, only a small fraction of available OSS material was used for this study. Permission to use this material was arranged through Dr. E. Taylor Parks of the Historical Division of the State Department. Guidance and direction of the search effort was made by Mr. John Taylor of the National Archives. In addition, Mr. Wilber Nigh, Chief of the Reference Branch, World War II Records Division, and his staff were of assistance in the search of Army records pertaining to activities in northern Vietnam.

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TECHNICAL APPENDIX

INTRODUCTION

Three case studies were prepared on the Algerian (1954–62), Cuban (1953–59), and Vietnamese (1941–54) revolutions using a common conceptual framework and study procedures, in order to facilitate subsequent comparative analyses among the three. This appendix contains –

(1) A summary statement of the conceptual frame of reference underlying the studies;

(2) A general summary of the procedures used in preparation of the case studies.

At the same time, a case study of the situation in Guatemala between 1944 and 1954 is being prepared, using a different approach more suitable to that situation.

CONCEPTUAL FRAME OF REFERENCE

REVOLUTION DEFINED*

The word *revolution* is frequently used interchangeably with such terms as rebellion, coup d'etat, insurgency, and insurrection. Various writers, *Webster's Dictionary*, and the *Encyclopedia of Social Sciences* disagree on a precise meaning of the word. Except in the natural sciences, "revolution" usually refers to any sudden change with far-reaching consequences, but may sometimes refer to a gradual change which has suddenly been recognized as having had far-reaching consequences. The particular change is usually indicated by adjectives such as cultural, scientific, economic, industrial, and technological. Used without a qualifying adjective, the word most often describes political revolution; it is so used in these three case studies.

More precisely, in the case studies *revolution means the modification, or attempted modification, of an existing political order partially at least by illegal (or unconstitutional) force used primarily by persons under the jurisdiction of the political order.* The terms *revolutionary dynamics* and *revolutionary effort* are both used to refer to activities of all kinds of revolutionary actors and organizations. *Revolutionary movement* is used generically to refer to all the revolutionary actors and organi-

*This definition appears in a longer discussion of definitions in the *Casebook on Insurgency and Revolutionary Warfare: 23 Summary Accounts* (Washington: Special Operations Research Office, 1963).

zations operating against a government during defined time periods, unless specific organizations or actors are identified in the text. Finally, *revolutionary situation* refers to a continuum of tensions within a country in which revolutionary conflict has emerged as a major problem requiring direct allocation of resources and effort by a government.

GENERAL APPROACH

A general, heuristic study model with two basic premises was adopted. It was assumed, first, that a revolution is a complex interaction of socioeconomic-political factors (revolution-inducing factors) and organic factors of the revolutionary movement. It was also assumed that particular factors do not necessarily remain unchanged and that changes in the factors and in their interaction are significant.

On the basis of the previous SORO study of 23 revolutions and a review of other studies in the literature, a number of general and specific examples of these two kinds of factors were identified; they have been offered in the past by other writers as "explanations" of revolutionary phenomena, and they are discussed in the next two sections. All of these examples were treated as hypotheses for the three case studies and were tested for their applicability to each revolution. They were not judged *a priori* to be causes of revolutions. They were studied to determine their presence or absence in a revolution and to determine their operation in time. The latter determination was accomplished by submitting each factor to a crude trend analysis—that is, organizing the information relevant to each hypothesis through chronological periods.

A distinction between immediate causes of revolution and long-range causes is not relevant to this type of approach to the study of revolution. The importance of historical circumstance as a precipitant of revolution is not denied; it is simply not accorded the central role here that some students of revolution have attributed to it. The operation of historical circumstance is discussed in terms of revolution-inducing factors and revolutionary movement factors. The trend analysis records the development of situations in which the potential for revolutionary warfare may be latent, but not primarily dependent upon historical circumstances. Thus, historical necessity is not implied by the trend analysis approach—changes in both the socioeconomic-political environ-

ment and in the structure and function of revolutionary movements can occur depending upon the actors involved.

FACTORS INDUCING REVOLUTION

It is suggested that factors inducing revolution may be broadly categorized under three general hypotheses which may be descriptive of a prerevolutionary situation: economic maladjustment, social antagonism, and political weakness. While no attempt has been made to assign relative weights to these various factors in a positive numerical sense, it appeared initially that political weakness as defined should rate highest on any scale devised to measure the revolutionary potential of a society. However, such conceptual refinements must await further analysis and are not reflected in the three case studies.

In the discussion below, each factor (and subfactor) is discussed as a conditional hypothesis regardless of evidence available concerning its validity. The purpose of the discussion is to describe briefly the hypotheses as used in the study of the three cases. It will be noted that the hypotheses are stated broadly to allow identification of all the information unique to each revolution and, consequently, an evaluation of the hypotheses.

Economic Maladjustment

The economy of a country may be considered to be a situation of maladjustment when one or more of the following conditions is present: foreign control of economic life, concentration of land ownership and a large population of landless peasants, lack of a diversified economy, and chronic unemployment or underemployment. These conditions may have concomitants that provide revolutionary motivations. They may affect the economic standard of living of the population in general, the distribution of wealth, and the form of the social structure.

Foreign control over the economy of a colonial or so-called semicolonial* country may entail certain socioeconomic troubles for that country, even though, in a strictly economic sense, the relationship may appear to work to the country's advantage. Higher standards of living enjoyed by resident foreigners and by those natives who are affiliated with foreign economic

*Semicolonial countries are politically independent states which are economically dependent on industrialized countries, as some Latin American countries have been economic dependencies of the United States.

interests may have a powerful demonstrative effect on the native population; resultant dissatisfaction with their lower living standards and their frustration over foreign influences in the economic life of the country may produce social antagonisms directed against both foreigners and native beneficiaries of foreign interests. If a native middle class is deprived of full participation in the economic life of the country, foreign control may drive the social element best prepared to assume the role of a political opposition into a revolutionary movement.

A system of land tenure in which "landlordism" predominates may be fraught with revolutionary potential. The national economy may suffer as a whole from the inefficiency in agricultural production sometimes associated with a high concentration of land ownership. Often the wealthy landlord may be less interested in yields-per-acre than in rents and interest payments from his tenants and peasant debtors. The landless peasants may lack incentive to produce, since their experience may have suggested little connection between efforts and rewards. Thus, poverty and low productivity can perpetuate themselves in a cyclical process.

A low level of purchasing power in a country may hinder the development of local industry and reinforce economic dependence on one or two cash crops or mineral products for export. The economic position of raw-material-producing countries in relation to exporters of industrial goods has tended to deteriorate over recent decades due to world trade conditions. A more diversified economy has thus become a matter of economic necessity for most raw-material-exporting countries. The lack of a diversified economy may subject a country to the vagaries of world market conditions and threaten its economic stability; the socioeconomic effect usually is to narrow the range of economic opportunities, thus tending to perpetuate a paternalistic type of society.

Another condition indicative of economic maladjustment is chronic and widespread unemployment or underemployment. Such a situation may result from the impact of world market conditions on a single-crop economy or from the seasonal nature of the main cash crop. The socioeconomic effects of unemployment may be more likely to reach a critical point when those out of work are urban workers, or at least are living on a money economy rather than a subsistence economy. Generally, it can be hypothesized that the higher the level of industrialization the greater would be the revolutionary potential in a period of unemployment, for idle workers frequently make up

the mass following of revolutionary movements. Native middle-class and intellectual elements tend to blame periods of unemployment on foreign control of the economy and on the lack of a diversified economy; this type of agitation around economic issues may be used to rally broad mass support for the revolutionary movement.

Social Antagonism

Tensions within the social structure, a demise of a traditional way of life, and the marginality of intellectuals may be regarded as aspects of social antagonism which may be related to revolutions.

Tensions within the social structure may include conflicts between economic classes, clashes along ethnic, religious, cultural, and racial lines, and generational cleavages. Revolutionary potential may be greatest when those divisions happen to be superimposed on one another, as when one element of that population is defined along the same racial, religious, and economic lines. Such is the case in colonial territories and in some semicolonial countries in which a nonnative population element dominates economic life. Social tensions in racially homogeneous societies may take the form of a so-called "class struggle" between those in control of economic and political power and the out-groups. Economically underdeveloped areas may be particularly vulnerable to extreme social tensions between a dynamic and emergent new middle class and a static traditional elite. The introduction of Western education and modern mores into these areas may greatly exacerbate already existing generational cleavages.

The demise of traditional society, which many countries are experiencing as a result of urbanization and industrialization or of social and political revolution, may have important psychological implications for the growth of a revolutionary movement. Traditionally accepted social values and social attitudes which support the *status quo* tend to be undermined by such historical developments as decolonization, the emergence of new nationalisms, and the expansion of the Sino-Soviet power bloc. One function of the demise of traditional society has been the emergence of a new class of Western-educated intellectuals* to challenge the tradition-oriented older intellectual class.

*In the Sino-Soviet Bloc this new class is the Communist-educated class.

These new intellectuals, many of whom find themselves in a condition of social marginality, may be a critical factor in the revolutionary process. Marginality, in the sociological sense in which the term is used here, implies a state of being "incompletely assimilated and denied full social acceptance and participation by the dominant [political] group or groups in a society because of racial or cultural conflict."[1] The marginal intellectual may tend to become spiritually disenchanted with, or alienated from, the prevailing ethos of the socio-political system to which he is denied access. Students of revolution have noted a correlation between the alienation of intellectuals from the ruling elite and the development of a revolutionary movement.[2]

The term intellectual, when applied to underdeveloped areas, generally has broader application than it has in more advanced countries. In the Cuban case study, the term is used in a narrower sense and is applied only to those who have had university education, or to middle-class professional groups. In the Algerian and Vietnamese case studies, however, it applies to anyone with a secondary education or more.

> This is in no way condescension toward the new states. It is only an acknowledgment of the smaller degree of internal differentiation which has until now prevailed within the educated class in the new states, and to greater disjunction which marks that class off from the other sections of the society.[3]

Thus the emergent middle class in colonial and semicolonial societies may be regarded as an intellectual class, since the members of this group have some familiarity with Western values and modern economic methods and, most important of all, are politically conscious.

Political Weakness

Included under this general heading are factors of political imbalance, political fragmentation, and inefficiency of governmental machinery.

The political system of a country may be regarded as being in a state of imbalance when the mass of the population is deprived of representation and participation in the government. Thus, colonial institutions may have an inherent weakness because of their inevitable discrimination against the native population in favor of metropolitan interests. Native participation in the administration of colonial government without native political responsibility may intensify revolutionary potential. If for any reason a country's political institutions

fail to function as a clearinghouse for conflicting claims from all elements of society, then that country's political system may be in imbalance and a certain element of revolutionary potential may be present.

Political fragmentation, as the expression is employed here, refers to hostility among opposing elements in the political elite and the political opposition groups of such violent proportions that these elements are unable to operate within the normal channels of political compromise and coalition. The expression does not imply the type of loyal opposition that has been characteristic of Anglo-American political experience.

Governmental inefficiency may be regarded as a factor related to the development of a revolutionary movement and to the efficiency of the movement once started. It may not be enough for a governmental apparatus merely to maintain order and administer routine public services and utilities; perhaps it must function as an "honest broker" between conflicting elements in the society and the polity. Thus, political imbalance and fragmentation may seriously detract from the efficiency of a government, although on the surface it may appear to function quite efficiently. When normal administrative operations, such as police protection and communications services, become impaired, then the latent revolutionary potential generated by political imbalance and fragmentation may rise to critical proportions. The dynamics and timing of governmental response to the revolutionary movement may be of the utmost importance in the efficiency of that response, which may have to include political and institutional adjustment as well as restoration and maintenance of public order and governmental control.

ORGANIC FACTORS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT

For each revolution, historical and descriptive data have been collected under the following six aspects of revolutionary warfare: actors, strategy and goals, ideology and mystique, organization, techniques, and foreign influence. Within these categories data have generally been presented in chronological sequence. Since these are self-defining terms, it will only be necessary to point out some of the conceptual refinements and generalizations developed in the course of this study. A more elaborate delineation of these concepts must await further analysis.

Technical Appendix

Actors

The leadership cadre and the followers of that revolutionary organization which ultimately came into power in each situation is the group primarily treated under the category of actors. Thus, the actors of a revolutionary movement are defined by the results of the movement; the question of how one group of leaders gains control of a revolutionary movement to the exclusion of another group of revolutionists is not the main focus in this study, but does receive some attention. Revolutionary actors are discussed in terms of (1) the sociopolitical composition of the leadership and mass following, (2) the historical continuity of personnel and the effects of a revolutionary tradition, and (3) the impact of conditions in the world at the time of the revolution, or the effects of the so-called *Zeitgeist* (spirit of the times) on the revolutionary actors.

Overall Strategy and Goals

The category of strategy and goals is concerned with the overall manner in which the successful revolutionary organization attempts to secure its revolutionary objectives. Strategy, which seems to be flexible and highly variable in most revolutions, is discussed within the context of time and circumstances rather than in terms of consistency with doctrinaire principles. This approach permits changes in strategy to be directly related to situational factors. These factors may be dependent upon purely local developments, such as a change in the strategy and tactics of the security forces, or upon a major international development of a military, diplomatic, or political nature.

Revolutionary objectives, or goals, are discussed in terms of appeals for political change, socioeconomic reform, or a combination of these, often expressed in nationalist slogans—particularly in colonial revolutions. Where there are different appeals made to various segments of society, these are discussed and compared.

Ideology or Myth

It is generally accepted that an essential part of any revolutionary movement is its "social myth" or revolutionary ideology. Generally, ideology in a revolutionary situation functions as a synthesis embodying both a critique of prerevolutionary society and policy and a sociopolitical program for postrevolutionary development. In the discussion of ideology

in these studies, particular attention is paid to (1) national orientation, (2) international orientation, (3) socioeconomic emphasis, (4) religious emphasis, and (5) the "mystique." What has been termed the "mystique of a revolution" is similar in many respects to *esprit de corps*, and is composed of intangible elements such as the revolutionary tradition of the country, the charismatic quality of the leadership, and the revolutionary movement's prospects of success.

Organization

It appears from other studies that no specific organizational form is necessary to ensure the success of revolutionary movements. They have included paramilitary units, regular military and auxiliary organizations, clandestine cells or an underground movement, legal and illegal political parties, labor organizations, social organizations, paragovernmental organs of state power, governments-in-exile, or a combination of these. In each of the revolutions studied, attention has been focused on both the organizational and functional aspects of the above types of groups which made up the revolutionary organization ultimately coming to power.

Techniques

This category discusses the wide variety of techniques which revolutionists use, including psychological, diplomatic, economic, and political warfare; conventional military operations and unconventional paramilitary operations; terror, sabotage, propaganda, strikes, and demonstrations; and the recruitment and training of revolutionists. Because the specific techniques used by the revolutionists interact with the countertechniques used by the government or security forces, both are discussed within the same context.

Foreign Involvement

The question of foreign involvement is of crucial importance to the course of a revolution. Considerations related to this question may affect both the strategy and the techniques adopted by the revolutionary actors. For instance, the advantages for a revolutionary movement of a sanctuary and of diplomatic, economic, and military support from a foreign power are well known. The number of foreign powers in-

volved, the extent of the aid, political intervention by states or international organizations, and direct military intervention are discussed under this category.

GENERAL SUMMARY OF PROCEDURES

The procedures used to prepare the three case studies were straightforward and standard for each.

DEVELOPMENT OF CASE STUDY FORMAT

The first step, described in the previous section, consisted of the development of hypotheses and the preparation of a standard format for the organization of each case study.

IDENTIFICATION AND SELECTION OF SOURCES

As a second step, a systematic search for sources of information was conducted. This consisted of two parts: identification of the sources and selection of sources. To identify sources, the SORO open-library files and Library of Congress files were reviewed, available bibliographies perused, and knowledgeable persons consulted. Sources were selected on the basis of their relevance, in terms of the information they contained, to the hypotheses formulated and on the basis of recommendations of the subject experts consulted. Selection was limited to unclassified secondary sources. However, some use was made of primary materials, when readily available, to fill in gaps in coverage. In the selection of sources every effort was made to obtain a "balance" among known political viewpoints of those who have written on the subject revolution.

INFORMATION SYNTHESIS AND ANALYSIS: DRAFTING OF REPORT

Information relevant to each hypothesis was systematically culled from the various sources, synthesized, and put in the standardized case study format. Generally speaking, attempts were made to use only information which appeared in more than one source independently; in practice, this independence

was very difficult to ascertain. Conflicting or inconsistent information was resolved by checking for consistency with other sources considered reliable.

EXPERT REVIEWS AND REVISION

As a final check on the substance of each case study, it was submitted separately to a number (two to six) of subject experts. Each consultant reviewed the study in terms of factual accuracy and reasonableness of interpretation. Each study was then revised on the basis of a synthesis of the experts' comments. When conflicts in fact or interpretation could not be resolved through discussion, both viewpoints were presented in the text.

FOOTNOTES TO TECHNICAL APPENDIX

1. *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*, 1961, p. 514.
2. Crane Brinton, *The Anatomy of Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 1960), pp. 41–52.
3. Edward A. Shils, "The Intellectual in Political Development," in *Political Change in Underdeveloped Countries: Nationalism and Communism*, ed. John H. Kautsky (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1962), p. 199.

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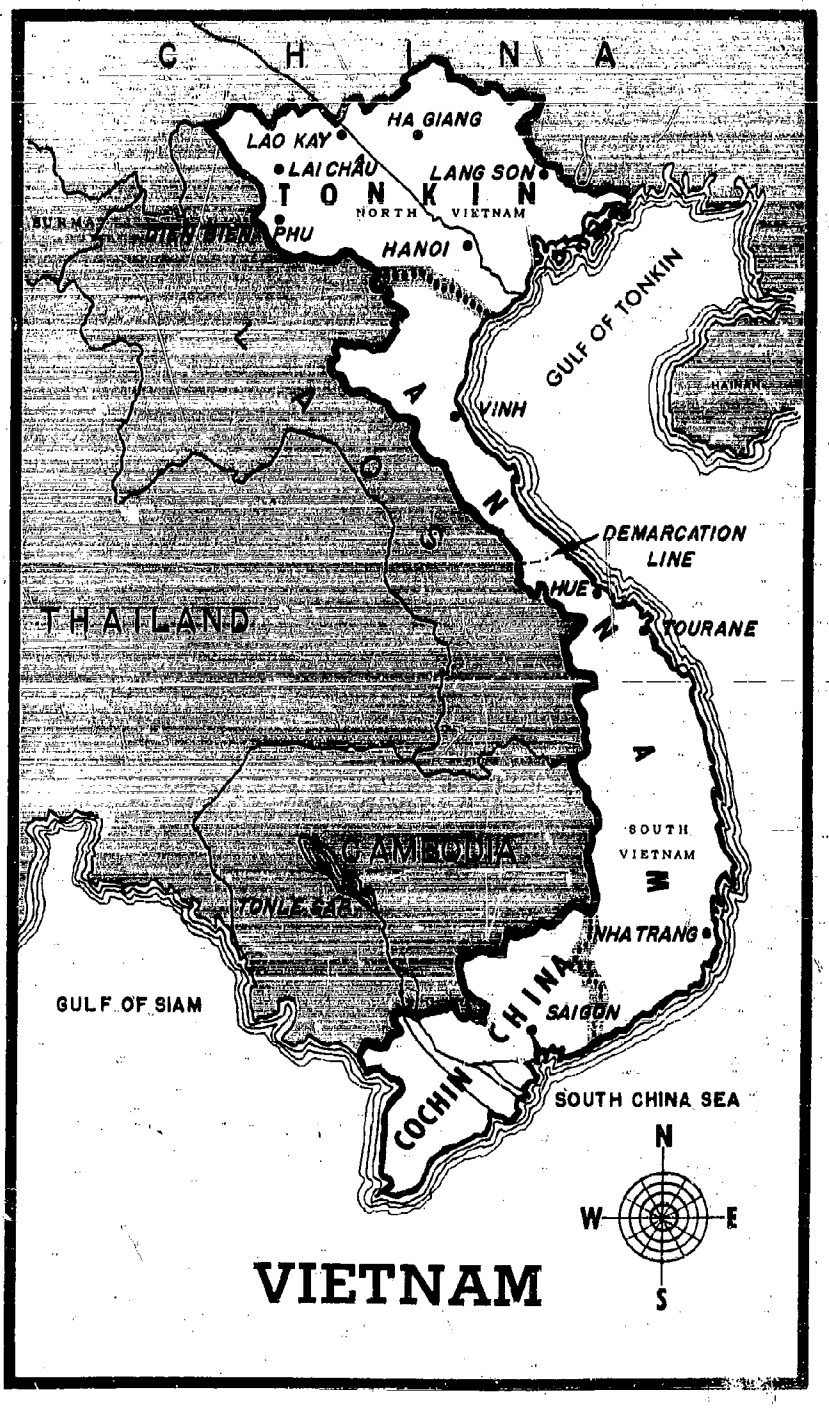
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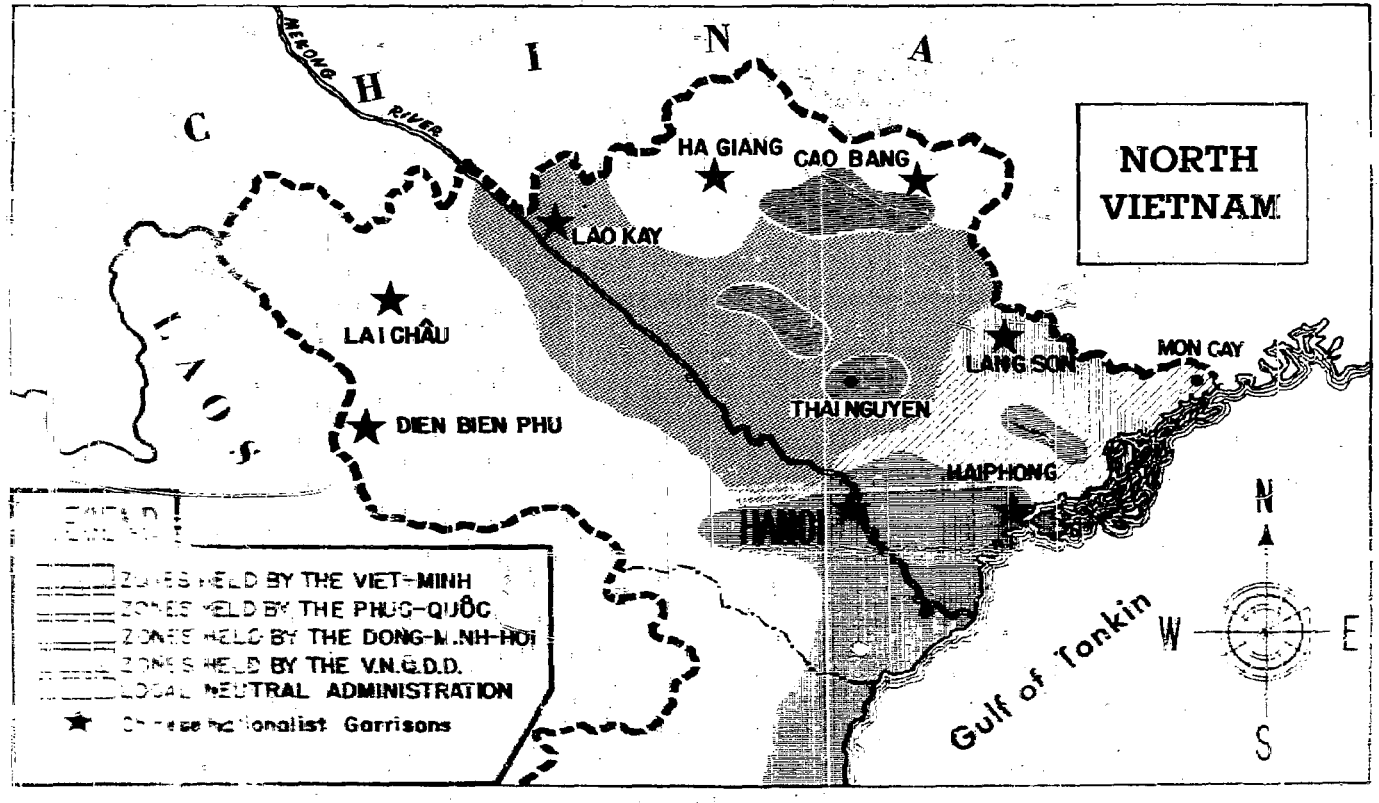

Map of the political situation in North Vietnam in September-October [illegible].