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POLITICAL MOTIVATION
OF THE VIET CONG:
THE VIETMINH REGROUPEES

J. J. Zasloff

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SANTA MONICA, CA. 90406

FOREWORD

This report is one of a series of Rand studies that examine the organization, operations, motivation, and morale of the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese forces that fought in South Vietnam.

Between August 1964 and December 1968 The Rand Corporation conducted approximately 2400 interviews with Vietnamese who were familiar with the activities of the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese army. Reports of those interviews, totaling some 62,000 pages, were reviewed and released to the public in June 1972. They can be obtained from the National Technical Information Service of the Department of Commerce.

The release of the interviews has made possible the declassification and release of some of the classified Rand reports derived from them. To remain consistent with the policy followed in reviewing the interviews, information that could lead to the identification of individual interviewees was deleted, along with a few specific references to sources that remain classified. In most cases, it was necessary to drop or to change only a word or two, and in some cases, a footnote. The meaning of a sentence or the intent of the author was not altered.

The reports contain information and interpretations relating to issues that are still being debated. It should be pointed out that there was substantive disagreement among the Rand researchers involved in Vietnam research at the time, and contrary points of view with totally different implications for U.S. operations can be found in the reports. This internal debate mirrored the debate that was then current throughout the nation.

A complete list of the Rand reports that have been released to the public is contained in the bibliography that follows.

(CRC, BJ: May 1975)

Bibliography of Related Rand Reports

For a description of the Viet Cong Motivation and Morale Project and interviewing process, the reader should first consult W. Phillips Davison, *User's Guide to the Rand Interviews in Vietnam*, R-1024-ARPA, March 1972.

These reports can be obtained from The Rand Corporation.

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RM-5462-1 A View of the VC: Elements of Cohesion in the Enemy Camp in 1966-1967, K. Kellen, November 1969.

RM-5486-1 Viet Cong Recruitment: Why and How Men Join, J. C. Donnell, December 1967.

RM-5487-1 The Viet Cong Style of Politics, N. Leites, May 1969.

RM-5522-1 Inducements and Deterrents to Defection: An Analysis of the Motives of 125 Defectors, L. Goure, August 1968.

RM-5533-1 The Insurgent Environment, R. M. Pearce, May 1969.

RM-5647 Volunteers for the Viet Cong, F. Denton, September 1968.

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PREFACE

Since July 1964, The RAND Corporation has been inquiring into the motivation, behavior, and morale of Viet Cong and North Vietnamese soldiers fighting in South Vietnam. A series of memoranda based mainly on interviews with prisoners and defectors has focused on both strengths and weaknesses of the Communist side, and include suggestions which might increase the effectiveness of the South Vietnamese and American war effort.

The present Memorandum draws mainly on 71 intensive interviews that RAND's field team conducted in 1964-1965 with captives and defectors among the "regroupees," the Southern Communist troops who were moved to North Vietnam after 1954 and were later trained and reinfilitrated in large numbers to serve as cadres in the current struggle. The study seeks to illustrate the thinking and the morale of these regroupees by quoting extensively from their own statements. The author, a RAND consultant, is a political scientist with special competence in Southeast Asia. He has spent much time in Vietnam in connection with the present project and earlier ones, and has helped conduct many of the interviews on which he has drawn.

This Memorandum was originally issued in August 1966.

SUMMARY

In 1954-1955, in observance of the Geneva Agreements, the Vietminh leadership moved to communist North Vietnam an estimated 90,000 of its troops from the South. Included in this number were some volunteers who, though too young to have fought with the Vietminh, were carried on the tide of its victory. The regroupment was understood to be for no more than two years, after which time the "free elections" called for in the Geneva accord were to decide the political future of a reunified Vietnam.

Since 1956, when President Diem vetoed the holding of elections and the Communists thereupon chose subversion and force as the means toward achieving control over the entire land, approximately 30,000 of the "regroupees" are believed to have been clandestinely returned to the South. Along with the Vietminh cadres who had never left the South, they have constituted the "steel frame" for the Viet Cong (VC) movement. The regroupees thus chosen for infiltration presumably included the most competent and politically reliable of the many who originally went north. They possessed assets that were unusually appropriate for their assignment: past combat experience; technical skills (in communications, demolition, medical aid, etc.) acquired during their stay in the North; familiarity with the people, the culture, and the geography of the South; resentment, nurtured by Northern propaganda, against a government that had not dealt kindly with those Vietminh who stayed behind; and, above all, the desire to go home and hasten the end of a war that still separated many of them from their families.

At first, only relatively few infiltrators were sent south, to serve chiefly as political organizers and liaison and intelligence agents for the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV). Since 1959, increasing numbers of regroup-ees have been assigned to Party posts in the Viet Cong organization, to propaganda and proselytizing functions, and, above all, to a major role in the staffing of the Communists' growing military force. In 1964 and 1965, regroup-ees provided part of the officer staff for the ethnic Northerners who were being sent to fight in the South in larger numbers. They were assigned to Northern units because they were familiar with the region and, as Southerners, could deal with the local population, thus reducing the possible friction that Northerners would cause.

Between August 1964 and September 1965, a group under the direction of members of RAND's Social Science Department interviewed seventy-one of the regroup-ees who had come under the jurisdiction of the Government of South Vietnam (GVN) either as prisoners or as defectors, and nine members of the Liberation Front who had never been to the North. The regroup-ees included 56 prisoners of war and 15 defectors; about 60 per cent of those interviewed had belonged to the Communist Party in either North or South Vietnam.

The present Memorandum attempts to distill from these interviews some of the respondents' political views, to assess the strength as well as the bases of their convictions, and to draw certain conclusions as to the motives that prompt men to suffer the hardships and dangers of

prolonged guerrilla life and those that cause some of them to lose their faith or their willingness to fight.

The regroupées were questioned about their reaction to three significant issues that arose early in their stay in the North and might well have shaken their morale. As to the first of these, the flight of about three-quarter million refugees from North to South Vietnam, they had largely accepted the propaganda line that the refugees were either Catholics obeying the orders of their hierarchy, or prosperous bourgeois afraid to lose their prerogatives under the equitable economic system of the North. The brutal land reform of 1955-1956, on the other hand, had shocked many of the regroupées, the more so as they became directly involved in its enforcement. Some were permanently disaffected as a result, but the majority recovered their loyalty to the communist cause through the DRV's "Rectification of Errors" program and a purposeful campaign of political indoctrination. With regard to the third issue, the elections scheduled for 1956 that were never held, the regroupées had been deeply aggrieved to learn that they could not return to the hoped-for peaceful life in the South. But the DRV leadership apparently succeeded in turning bitter disappointment to anger against "the Americans and Diem" and a zealous determination to join the fight against that hated regime.

Except for the handful who had come by sea, the regroupées retained painful memories of the length and

hardships of their journey to the South and talked about the arduous march through jungle, mountains, and well-organized infiltration corridors to the points where their integration into the National Liberation Front took place. There are indications that their assignment to positions of authority over Southern cadres caused some resentment and jealousy among the latter, but such friction as existed between the two groups seems not to have been serious enough to hamper the Front's operations.

In joining the struggle, the regroupees saw themselves as patriots come to free their country from the oppression of the American imperialists, the successors to the French colonial rulers and upholders of the feudalist and corrupt Diem regime. Hatred of Diem was heightened by what they had been told of his government's cruel treatment of the Vietminh cadres who had stayed behind and also, in many cases, of the regroupees' own families. Heavily indoctrinated with DRV and Front propaganda, they perceived little difference between Diem's regime and those of his successors, and blamed the Americans not only for their presence and their support of the Saigon government but also, increasingly, for what they believed to be wanton destruction of innocent villagers by air bombing and artillery. GVN soldiers were frequently described as mercenaries who fought for profit and lacked enthusiasm for their cause, though some of their accusers recommended forgiveness and re-education for the poor, whose actions they explained by the need to support families. Although Front propaganda emphasizes the "war of national liberation" in which all

classes are welcome, the Party's policy has shown it to be a class war as well. Numerous regroupees stated that the war was one of the poor against the well-off -- the landlords, the Saigon bourgeoisie, and the high government officials -- a view that seemed to them confirmed by the flight of the more prosperous inhabitants from Front-controlled areas to the cities.

Many respondents, in describing the Front's and their own aspirations, spoke in positive terms of democracy, unification, neutrality, an end to poverty and injustice, and, above all, peace. They made repeated reference to the struggle as a "just war," which would be won because it had the support of the people.

The Communist Party in North and South commanded the respect of the regroupees (including the nonmembers among them and defectors who were tired of the war or critical of the Hanoi regime), although Party membership demanded service and sacrifice and conferred few privileges. Even professed and ardent Communists were weak on ideology and largely unread in the traditional communist literature. However, while their indoctrination focused mainly on the local, nationalist aspects of their struggle, it also claimed the revolution would bring about the abolition of the exploiting classes as well as the achievement of economic equality and social justice. Regroupee opinion was divided on the question of who really controlled the insurgency; some respondents echoed Hanoi's line that direction lay with the Front, with assistance from the North, whereas others believed the DRV to be the controlling force.

Only four of the regroupees -- three prisoners and one defector -- could be questioned in detail about their reactions to the American bombing of the North. Two were hard-core Communists who, though admitting the possibility of great physical and economic damage, denied that the bombings could shake troop morale or deter the North from continuing its support of the Front. Another admitted that enlisted men with families in the North, though not demoralized, had been worried about their relatives' safety. The defector, however, maintained that the bombings would so damage the Northern economy as to cripple supplies to the South and cause "disastrous" harm to the Front.

In discussions about the character and likely outcome of the war, the respondents seemed to fall into three very broad categories: (1) the disaffected Viet Cong, who, by design or from conviction, would stress the villagers' dislike of the insurgents, the superiority of the Americans in men and weapons, and other factors that were demoralizing the Communists and hastening their defeat; (2) the loyal hard-core, whose faith seemed undiminished as they spoke of the "just cause," the support of the people, and ultimate victory; and (3) the very large group of the war-weary, the doubtful, and the cautious. Many in this last category said that an end to the fratricidal war must be negotiated and that each side will have to give way.

Analysis of fifteen interviews with defectors suggests that a combination of material hardships and personal dissatisfaction, together with opportunity, accounts for most defections. In Vietnam, weariness, hunger, the long separation from home and family, and fear of death and improper burial were the experiences that most commonly turned men's

thoughts to the possibility of rallying to the GVN. Once his morale had been thus lowered, the combatant was prone to justify his course of action by finding fault with the communist system; the most frequent personal complaints in defector interviews concerned the tiresome and often humiliating "criticism sessions," discrimination of the Northern authorities against the well-to-do; and the realization, as they came to observe actual economic and political conditions in the South, that Northern propaganda had deceived them, which caused some regroupes to reexamine their faith. Even those, however, who denounced the communist movement often betrayed a grudging respect for those who continued to serve it. Some seemed to feel guilty at their own inability to stand the hardships that their former comrades could face, others had been disillusioned by the GVN's rallier program.

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I. INTRODUCTION

THE REGROUPEES

The Geneva Agreements that grew out of the 1954 conference on Indochina provided, among other things, for the partition of Vietnam at the 17th Parallel, a voluntary exchange of civilians, and the "regroupment" of loyal government troops and communist Vietminh forces between North and South within three hundred days after the cease-fire. In keeping with this last provision, the Vietminh leadership ordered some 90,000 of its Southern troops to the North according to estimates of the U.S. Government.¹ Since 1954, approximately 30,000 of these "regroupees" are believed to have been sent back to South Vietnam by the communist leaders in Hanoi to train and fight with

¹U.S. Department of State, Aggression from the North, a "White Paper," Department of State Publication 7839, February 1965, p. 11. The figures given in the White Paper were updated by Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara in his press conference of April 26, 1965 (cf. OASD, Public Affairs News Release No. 261-265). Wilfred G. Burchett, an Australian Communist whose books on Indochina have been officially published in Hanoi, writes of the "withdrawal of the 140,000 Viet Minh and cadres to the North" in Vietnam, Inside Story of the Guerrilla War, International Publishers, New York, 1965, p. 128. Some U.S. sources speak of 40,000 civilians who went to the North at the same time as the 90,000 soldiers, thus bringing the U.S. estimate nearer that of Mr. Burchett. Apparently, 90,000 was the figure that French authorities reported to the United States. Though, conceivably, it is not accurate, it is the only estimate available from a reliable source and has been used widely in U.S. calculations. It has therefore been accepted for the purposes of this study.

the Southern insurgents.² They have played a crucial role in developing the insurgent movement to its present strength.

The Geneva Agreement had tied the provision for the temporary regroupment of troops to the stipulation that, in 1956, "free elections" were to determine the future of a reunified Vietnam. When President Ngo Dinh Diem refused to hold such elections because, he contended, they would not be "free" in the North, Hanoi clearly decided to achieve by force its objective of a unified Vietnam under communist rule. The regrouppees were part of the older generation of experienced revolutionaries. Along with the Vietminh cadres who had been left behind in the South in 1954, they became the "steel frame" for the growth of the Vietnamese Communist (Viet Cong) organization.

From 1956 to 1959, a small number of carefully selected regrouppees were infiltrated into South Vietnam, there to serve as political organizers as well as liaison and intelligence agents of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV), and to help prepare what younger Viet Cong members often call "the uprising" of 1960. After 1959, when Hanoi apparently decided to pursue its seizure of the South by every means possible, regrouppees were sent in larger numbers,³ and the scope of their activities was widened. Some moved into key posts in the Southern Party

²See p. 11 for an elaboration on the number of regrouppees who returned to the South.

³During 1959 and 1960, according to the U.S. Department of State publication cited above, 1,800 confirmed infiltrators, and possibly 2,700 more, came to South Vietnam from the North (p. 3).

organization; others directed propaganda and proselyting activities. But the largest number of regroupedees were assigned as encadrement for the growing Viet Cong military forces being recruited in the South. Since many of them had fought against the French, and all had received additional training in the North, they were generally well equipped to train and lead the younger Southern troops. Also, they included technically-trained personnel -- communication experts, demolition cadres, artillery officers, medical-aid men, to mention only a few -- with skills learned in the DRV which the insurgent organization in the South had been unable to develop within its limited facilities.

Not only were the regroupedees the professional military backbone for the expanding VC fighting forces, but they also provided the hard-core political cadres who carried the communist ideological message and helped sustain the morale of the insurgents. As trained, disciplined Communists who served in key posts with the Viet Cong, the regroupedee cadres were an important link through which Hanoi maintained its control of the Southern organization. Most recently, it appears, regroupedees have also provided part of the officer force (mainly as political officers and in staff positions) for some units of ethnic Northerners infiltrated to the South in 1964 and 1965. These assignments to Northern units were made because regroupedees were familiar with the region and, as Southerners, were better suited to dealing with the local population than Northerners and more likely, therefore, to avoid friction.

It is probable that few combat-effective regroupees are left in the North for future assignment to the South. Of the estimated 90,000 originally in the North, some are bound not to have been competent or politically reliable from the outset, and those who earlier might have been fit for assignment to the South have suffered attrition through illness and "old age." The U.S. estimate that 75 per cent of those infiltrated in 1964 and 1965 were ethnic Northerners, including young draftees of brief training, reinforces the probability that the supply of reliable combatants among the regroupees has been seriously depleted.⁴

An apparent scarcity of replacements should not obscure the fact that regroupees already in the South continue to fulfill important military and political functions in the Viet Cong. Many key posts at the district level and above -- where attrition through casualties is much less significant than in combat assignments -- are known to be held by regroupees. However, as their supply dwindles, the important question to be answered will be whether competent leadership, equal to that which the regroupees have provided, can be developed among the younger Southern cadres and among the ethnic Northerners.

FOCUS OF THE STUDY

The present study deals with the political motivation of seventy-one regroupees. It traces their careers

⁴See p. 11 for a discussion of these figures.

chronologically and tries to show, by quoting freely from their own words, how experience and indoctrination together have shaped their attitudes about the war.

Political motivation is, of course, only a part of the broader question of what makes men willing to fight. Studies of other armies have shown that the importance of political beliefs to combat motivation varies widely in different national contexts.⁵ In their study of the German Wehrmacht in World War II, Shils and Janowitz concluded that "the unity of the German Army was in fact sustained only to a very slight extent by the National Socialist political convictions of its members, and that more important in the motivation of the determined resistance of the German soldiers was the steady satisfaction of certain primary personality demands afforded by the social organization of the army." The authors maintained that the German soldier's ability to resist

⁵ For studies dealing with combat motivation and morale in various national armies see the following: Edward A. Shils and Morris Janowitz, "Cohesion and Disintegration in the Wehrmacht in World War II," Public Opinion Quarterly, Summer 1948, pp. 280-315; Henry V. Dicks and Edward A. Shils, with the collaboration of Herbert S. Dinerstein, Service Conditions and Morale in the Soviet Armed Forces: A Pilot Study, Vol. 1, The Soviet Army, R-213, The RAND Corporation, August 25, 1951; Samuel A. Stouffer and Associates, The American Soldier, Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J., 1949; Roger W. Little, "Buddy Relations and Combat Performance" (in the U.S. Army in Korea), in Morris Janowitz (ed.), The New Military, Russell Sage Foundation, New York, 1964, pp. 195-223; Lucian W. Pye, Guerrilla Communism in Malaya, Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J., 1956; and A. L. George, "The Chinese Soldier in the Korean War," June 1965, in manuscript.

was fundamentally related to his relationship with his primary group, the squad or section to which he belonged.⁶ In the primary groups of the Wehrmacht, essentially apolitical NCOs, many of them pre-Nazi veterans, provided solid professional military leadership.

A. L. George, on the other hand, in his study of the Chinese soldier in Korea, found the role of politically indoctrinated cadres to have been a key factor in the high morale and fighting effectiveness of the Chinese Communist army. This is how he describes the Chinese military model:

The organizational model utilized by the CCF authorities called for a military cadre structure that would be thoroughly politicized from top to bottom. Ideally, every officer and non-commissioned officer in the military command hierarchy down to and including the sub-squad level, at which "groups" of three were organized, was supposed to be a well-indoctrinated Party member. To the extent that the model was achieved, therefore, all members of the

⁶The authors write: "For the ordinary German soldier the decisive fact was that he was a member of a squad or section which maintained its structural integrity and which coincided roughly with the social unit which satisfied some of his major primary needs. He was likely to go on fighting, provided he had the necessary weapons, as long as the group possessed leadership with which he could identify himself, and as long as he gave affection to and received affection from other members of his squad or platoon. In other words, as long as he felt himself to be a member of his primary group and therefore bound by the expectations and demands of its other members, his soldierly achievement was likely to be good." ("Cohesion and Disintegration," p. 284.)

military command structure would also be members of the political organization. In this fashion the CCF goal of a unified political-military leadership was to be achieved at all levels, down to squad and sub-squad organizational levels.⁷

Explaining the importance of political indoctrination in the Chinese Communist Forces (CCF), George points out that the purpose of basic training was to produce not simply a "good soldier" but a "good communist soldier."⁸ Even within the primary groups, the relationships were suffused with political content:

What is novel and intriguing about the CCF model of military organization is . . . the fact that in contrast to other modern armies the CCF continued to insist that comradely ties among the men have an explicit political -- i.e., communist -- content. It was not enough, as in other modern armies, that informal comradely ties among the men should cement their military loyalty. Rather, the small groups which the CCF attempted to build were to be closely knit in a special way. A communist culture and way of life was to be created within these small military groups which should generate political loyalties, and these were to be amalgamated with the military loyalty generated by informal comradely ties. The Chinese Communist military model was imbued with a missionary flavor, appreciably stronger than that typical in the Soviet Army in recent times. As a result, the type of

⁷George, The Chinese Soldier, p. 30.

⁸Ibid., p. 42.

small group life the CCF tried to establish recalls in some ways the closely knit military-religious orders of the past.⁹

Though our data do not permit us to construct a precise model of the role of political cadres in the VC table of organization, the latter has much in common with the Chinese Communist military organization described by George. Like the Chinese, the Vietnamese Communist leaders attach crucial importance to the "revolutionary" political attitudes of their cadres in maintaining the morale and fighting effectiveness of the Liberation Front army. Small-group relations and the controls of the Vietnamese Communist organization -- the Party, criticism sessions (kiem thao), the three-man cells, and the political officers -- are additional factors, intertwined with political motivation, in the Viet Cong's combat effectiveness. It is not possible to separate political motivation from these other factors, or to specify its comparative importance, except to recognize that it is fundamental.

Another comment is in order regarding the scope of this study. The insurgents' political attitudes, especially their views about the course and outcome of the war (cf. Chapter VI), doubtless have an important influence upon their will to fight. But attitudes do not necessarily determine behavior. An insurgent may believe that his side will lose, and may yet perform his duties

⁹ Ibid., pp. 33-34.

acceptably; conversely, he may believe in the ultimate victory of his cause and still, under conditions of severe stress, may surrender, desert, or defect. A larger study of the regroupees' morale and combat motivation, therefore, would have to consider the "organizational and situational variables" that affect each regroupee as a member of his particular unit and help determine his behavior.¹⁰ Weaknesses in the Viet Cong, and operational suggestions, especially in the field of propaganda, that emerge from this study of regroupees and an examination of other Front cadres, have been dealt with in another RAND Memorandum, and will not be included here.

THE INTERVIEW SAMPLE

The basic data for this study are drawn from interviews with seventy-one regroupees.¹¹ Fifty-four of these, including eleven defectors, were interviewed between August and the end of December 1964. Twenty-six interviews with regroupees, seven of whom were defectors, were completed

¹⁰ See the discussion of the "Approaches to the Study of Military Morale" in George, The Chinese Soldier, p. 339.

¹¹ Interviews with nine Front members who gave information relevant to the regroupees, but who were not themselves regroupees, have also been used in this study. The Appendix contains a biographical summary of each interviewee. The parenthetical number or letter at the end of each interview excerpt quoted in this study identifies the biographical listing in the Appendix: regroupees are numbered from 1 to 71; non-regroupees are designated by letters a to i. These interviews in turn were taken from a larger number of interviews with varying categories of Viet Cong.

between December 1964 and late September 1965. Nine of the regroupees interviewed in the second period had already been interviewed in the first. Thus, of the seventy-one regroupees in the total sample -- fifty-six of them prisoners and fifteen defectors -- some were interviewed on at least two occasions. A series of tables in the following pages show their numerical distribution according to several basic categories: The ages of the regroupees at the time of defection or capture; the years of infiltration and the years of capture or defection; provinces of birth and provinces of operation in the Front; the social class of the regroupees' parents; education of the regroupees; their occupations before entry into the Vietminh; years of entry into the Vietminh; Party membership; length of service in the Front; and rank or function in the Front at the time of capture or defection.

Regroupees' Age at Time of
Capture or Defection

<u>Age</u>	<u>Number of Regroupees</u>
20-25	1
26-30	18
31-35	25
36-40	15
41-45	7
46-50	4
unknown	1
Total	<u>71</u>

Years of Regroupees' Infiltration
and of Their Capture or Defection

	<u>1960</u>	<u>1961</u>	<u>1962</u>	<u>1963</u>	<u>1964</u>	<u>1965</u>	<u>Total</u>
No. who were infiltrated*	6	14	17	17	17	--	71
No. who defected or were captured	--	1	4	14	44	8	71

*The following official U.S. estimates of total infiltration from the North are given in Department of State, Aggression from the North, p. 3, as follows:

	<u>1959-60</u>	<u>1961</u>	<u>1962</u>	<u>1963</u>	<u>1964</u>	<u>Total</u>
No. of infiltrators	1,800	3,700	5,400	4,200	4,400	19,500

Rounding the total figure to the nearest thousand, the White Paper states that 20,000 infiltrators are known to have come from the North since 1959 and that there are probably 17,000 more, or a likely total of 37,000 probable infiltrators. In his press conference of April 26, 1965, Secretary McNamara increased the estimated total to 39,000, and stated that, according to new evidence, possibly as many as 10,000 personnel had been infiltrated in 1964, and that approximately 75 per cent of those infiltrated were natives of North Vietnam. (Public Affairs News Release No. 261-265.)

According to U.S. reports, 1964 was the first year that ethnic Northerners were introduced into South Vietnam in large groups, as compared to earlier years, when only individual Northerners were sent to the South for such specialized tasks as political liaison and intelligence collection. If therefore, say, 7,500 to 10,000 of the 39,000 men estimated by Secretary McNamara to have been infiltrated since 1959 were ethnic Northerners, that would leave from 29,000 to 31,500 infiltrators (rounded off to 30,000 for our purpose) who were regroupees.

Provinces of Birth and Operation

	<u>Province</u>	<u>Number born there</u>	<u>Number oper- ating there</u>
Central Lowlands of South Vietnam	Quang Nam	13	8
	Binh Dinh	11	4
	Quang Tri	9	4
	Quang Ngai	8	17
	Phu Yen	6	2
	Thua Thien	7	11
	Quang Tin	2	
	Khanh Hoa	1	
Central Highlands	Darlac	2	4
	Kontum		5
	Lam Dong		1
South of South Vietnam	Gia Dinh	3	
	Kien Phong	2	
	Phong Dinh	2	
	Vinh Long	2	
	Long An	1	
	Dinh Tuong	2	2
	Tay Ninh		4
	Bien Hoa		3
	An Xuyen		1
	Totals	<u>71</u>	<u>66*</u>

* Of the five not accounted for in this column, one had defected in the course of his infiltration journey, two had been captured during the trip, another was assigned to sea liaison duty, and the area of still another was not known.

The heavy representation in the sample of regroupees from Central Vietnam is consistent with reports that the largest segment of Vietminh troops who went north in 1954 came from the coastal provinces of Central Vietnam. Fifty-eight of the 66 regroupees shown as having operated in specific provinces were men who had returned to the general region of their birth (the Central Highlands,

Central Lowlands, or the south of South Vietnam), though not necessarily to their home provinces.

Social Class of Parents*

	<u>Prisoners</u>	<u>Defectors</u>
Poor farmer	27	6
Middle farmer	12	2
Rich farmer	5	3
Poor fisherman	1	-
Middle fisherman	1	-
Poor worker	3	2
Small trader	4	-
Petit bourgeois	3	-
Well-off trader	-	2
Totals	<u>56</u>	<u>15</u>

*Information supplied by the interviewees, reflecting, in most cases, their official classification by the communist authorities.

The regroupees from social categories higher than "poor" often complained that their class had made it more difficult for them to achieve Party membership, promotion, and general integration in the movement. In some cases, their dissatisfaction contributed to the decision to defect (see Chapter VII). Of the eight rich farmers' sons in our sample, three were defectors, as were the two who described their fathers as well-off traders.

The categories of "poor," "middle," and "rich" farmer must be interpreted in the Vietnamese context. The precise criteria by which the Communists arrive at these categories were not available to this author at the time of writing, but some general guidelines can be offered. In some areas, a farmer would be designated as

"poor" if he owned neither land nor tools and had only his labor to sell, while a "middle" farmer would be one who owned a small parcel of land, perhaps two to five "mau" (acres). A man would be classified as "rich" in such an area if he owned more than ten "mau" of riceland. These classifications of the Communists will vary from region to region. Thus, a "middle" farmer in the barren agricultural areas of the Central Lowlands and of North Vietnam would be classed as "poor" by the standards of the more prosperous Southern Delta.

Education

No school	11
Some elementary school	53
Some secondary school	3
University	1
Unknown	3
Total	<u>71</u>

By and large, the amount of schooling that a regrouped had received was in keeping with his social classification, but a number of those who rated themselves as poor peasants and in fact had little or no education when they entered the Vietminh had gained several years of schooling through "cultural training" in the Northern army.

Occupations Prior to Entry into Vietminh

Farmer	41
Student	11
Laborer	7
Trader	5
Fisherman	3
Servant	2
Teacher	1
Weaver	1
Total	<u>71</u>

The above listing confirms other indications that the Vietminh drew the bulk of their membership from among the young of the peasantry, as the Viet Cong are doing today.

Years of Regroupees' Entry into Vietminh

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Number</u>
1945	14	1950	2
1946	3	1951	4
1947	10	1952	4
1948	3	1953	8
1949	11	1954	12

Party Membership

Party members	43
Members of Communist Youth Group but not of Party	4
Members of no communist organization	20
Unknown	4

In a communist system, membership in the Party is generally a mark of political reliability. The fact that the majority in our sample were Party members adds weight to other evidence derived from our interviews that the regroupees selected for assignment to the South were well indoctrinated and regarded as politically reliable.

Length of Service in Liberation Front
Prior to Capture or Defection

	<u>Prisoners</u>	<u>Defectors</u>
less than 6 months	17	4
7 months to 1 year	9	8
1 to 1½ years	7	-
1½ to 2 years	6	1
2 to 2½ years	2	1
2½ to 3 years	9	-
3 to 3½ years	3	-
3½ to 4 years	3	1

Rank or Function in Front
at Capture or Defection*

Military rank

Captain (sr. captain, aspirant)	4
Lieutenant (lt., 2d lt., aspirant)	13
Platoon leader	3
Adjutant (warrant officer)	3
Chief of artillery section	1
Sergeant (sgt.-major, sr. sgt., master sgt., sgt.)	13
Chief of armed propaganda group	2
Cadres in armed propaganda group	6
Squad leader	2
Radio telegrapher	1
Corporal	4
Private	5

Nonmilitary function

Physician	1
Chief of District Financial Section	1
Member of District Military Affairs Committee	1
Province-level cadre in transport administration	1
Chief of production group	1
Cell chief	2
Liaison agent (seaborne)	1
Agricultural production worker	6

*The seventy-one regroupees who constitute our sample were middle-level and low-level cadres. Although the Army of the National Liberation Front (referred to hereafter as the Front, or VC) has no formal ranks but only designates a man's function, every regroupee who had served in the Northern People's Army of Vietnam (PAVN), with its traditional military grades, carried a rank, which is included in the above listing. Those without military rank are categorized by their functions in the Front.

The highest military rank among our regroupees was senior captain (there were three); the highest political function, membership on a province Party committee. Though most of the regroupees may be described as cadre members, a number of them were privates or performed low-level functions, such as agricultural production work and simple laboring tasks, that entailed little responsibility.

INTERPRETATION OF THE INTERVIEWS

The aim of this study is to throw light upon the attitudes and beliefs of the regroupees at the time when they were still combatants in the Liberation Front. The author has attempted to extract from each interview whatever is relevant to this aim, and, further, to examine the interview in the context of the total sample. However, the interviewee has been treated primarily as an individual informant, whose statements are to be analyzed for their value and reliability, rather than as a "respondent" in the survey-research sense of that term. Also, though we are using the word "sample" to refer to the body of interviews analyzed, this obviously is not, and could not be, a selection representative of the totality of regroupees, those still fighting with the National Liberation Front or those who have deserted or died. And since the interviews are not a mathematically representative sample of the Front at any given period, any attempt at a rigorously statistical analysis of the attitudes expressed in them would have little value. Therefore, we have tried to indicate the frequent recurrence of a given attitude by such qualifying terms

as "most interviewees stated that" rather than in percentages.

Models of two "extreme" categories of VC respondents are presented below as an aid to understanding certain prevalent characteristics revealed in the interview excerpts that will be cited. These two categories are: (1) the hard-core, sometimes fanatic, loyal Communists, and (2) the disaffected, or disloyal, former Viet Cong. Since many of the regroupees interviewed conformed to one of the models on some questions and diverged on others, it would be inappropriate to try to classify them numerically as to how many conformed to each model and on what points.

(1) The "hard-core," loyal Viet Cong characteristically give predictable Party-line responses to questions with political content. These show the extent of the political indoctrination they have undergone, for the memorized responses are recited almost as if the interviewer had pressed a button on a communist computer, and no personal choice or discrimination is evident. The answers often bespeak an almost heroic faith in the righteousness of the VC cause. Though the principal explanation for these categorical responses lies in the fact that most of the regroupees have lived in a communist environment for an average of eight to ten years and have been profoundly indoctrinated, other factors contribute to this uncompromising set of mind. Rigidity of thought appears to increase in some prisoners who have "settled down" in prison, and is probably reinforced by a communist organization within the prison. Those who judge that they are at the end of their prison journey feel that their

situation, though grievous, is somehow stabilized, and that they are no longer threatened by the whims of the enemy authorities. At that point, there often appears to be a resurgence of revolutionary zeal. In some such cases, the prisoner attempts to convince his interviewer of the justice of the Front cause; in others, selective forgetting is evident. Removed from the tensions and hardships of life in the Front, the prisoner recalls the more noble aspects of the revolutionary ideology, and loses sight of the discrepancies between propaganda and reality that he may have perceived earlier. Moreover, it is reassuring to the prisoner's sense of dignity to be expressing his loyalty to the cause for which he is in prison.

This attitude may well be encouraged by the very style of the interview. Every respondent was informed at the outset that the interview was part of a research effort of the academic type aimed at an understanding of social revolution in Vietnam, and that his answers would do him no harm, though they could do him no good. He was also encouraged to speak his mind frankly, even if that meant making comments critical of the GVN or favorable to the Front.

(2) The model of the disaffected, or disloyal, former Viet Cong is reflected most often in the attitude of two types of respondents, whom we might call the "self-serving defector" and the "fearful prisoner." In its extreme form, their characteristic style is to repeat GVN propaganda slogans and denounce the Communists' political aims. The respondent depicts VC indoctrination and propaganda as dishonest and deceitful, and often

blames it for having ensnared him, and he also will stress the vindictiveness and cruelty of the Viet Cong in punishing those who refuse to conform. Just as the rigid, "hard-core" type insists on the evil of the "American imperialists and their puppets," so the respondents in this category emphasize the cunning of the Communists. The more subtle in this class of respondents will couch their statements in cautious terms which conform to what they believe their interviewers would like to hear.¹²

Defectors have a number of reasons for responding as they do. They have a natural desire to justify their having abandoned the Viet Cong and sought safety with the government by proving to themselves that the VC cause is unworthy. Many, especially those who have been in GVN hands some time before being interviewed, have standard responses ready that are calculated to please their captors. Some defectors are eagerly striving for favorable treatment, especially employment, from GVN authorities, and anyone interviewing them presents them with a welcome opportunity to display their opposition to Communism and their loyalty to the government.

Prisoners who give anti-Viet Cong responses of this type often do so for some of the same reasons, and other factors contribute to this attitude. Newly-captured

¹²It is worth noting, however, that even as they denounce the Communists, many of the defectors, especially those who believe themselves to be relatively secure, reveal some respect, even admiration, for the stubborn, self-sacrificing qualities of the Front cadres. Several of the defectors we interviewed showed wistfulness and a sense of guilt at the fact that they themselves lacked the endurance to withstand what the cadres "out there" were still facing.

prisoners, especially among uneducated, low-level Viet Cong, are often the most fearful about their fate. They have been told stories to the effect that the GVN tortures, "exploits" (interrogates), and then kills all VC prisoners. In addition, they are frequently shaken by recent battle experience, capture, and field interrogation. Under such strains, these fearful prisoners tend to respond to questions, especially those with political implications, in ways that will not offend the GVN authorities. The interviewer's assurance that questions and answers are part of an objective academic study is either incomprehensible or incredible.

It is difficult to judge the sincerity of either kind of respondent. As for the hard-core Viet Cong, though the above-mentioned non-ideological reasons for their Party-line responses must be considered, the strength of their political conviction should not thereby be obscured. The VC indoctrination system, drawing heavily on the Chinese and Soviet models, implants firm revolutionary attitudes, and it would not be unusual for these men to believe fervently what they have been taught. Nevertheless, the interview situation already described, combined with the realization of their relative security as captives, may lead some of them to exaggerate to the enemy interviewer their belief in the righteousness of their own cause. The sincerity of the disaffected interviewees is perhaps more suspect, since they, unlike the hard core, are more likely to be currying favor with their captors. Yet many doubtless are truly disillusioned with the VC cause, and find in the interview an appropriate opportunity to denounce it.

Not all defectors, of course, can be labeled as self-serving; some appear to be more objective, less calculating, in presenting their view of the VC movement. But even the most extreme among both the hard-core and the disaffected Viet Cong reveal a wealth of valuable data. They provide descriptions of life in the Front, combat operations, the content of training and indoctrination, day-to-day events, and innumerable facts which they would have no reason to color. Interviews with VC prisoners and defectors who respond with neither the fervent avowal of faith of the hard core nor the denunciations of the disaffected provide further perspectives for our understanding of the VC movement and organization.

The following account quotes extensively from our interviews with regroupes, in an attempt to present events and attitudes as nearly as possible in the way the Viet Cong saw and expressed them. Generally, quotations are introduced by some biographical information on the speaker, part of the fuller data on the respondents that are given in the Appendix.

Part One

THE REGROUPEES IN THE NORTH

II. REGROUPMENT AND INITIAL ATTITUDES
TOWARD THE MOVE

It may be useful to speculate on the expectations and plans of DRV leaders at the time that 90,000 Southern troops were ordered to the North for what then promised to be no more than a two-year stay. They were certain of victory in the elections that they hoped would take place in 1956, but they also found it necessary to prepare for the contingency that these elections would not be held. In this case, they must have thought, it would be helpful to have available a reserve of Southern troops which, if necessary, could achieve by military means the goal of communist domination of all Vietnam.

Since the DRV leadership had no reason to count on the goodwill of the French, still the authority in the South, nor on that of their "Vietnamese puppets," they must have reasoned that any Vietminh troops demobilized and left in South Vietnam would be exposed to great danger from the Southern authorities. By contrast, the political cadres, who by training and experience were better able than the military to hide their identity and purpose, could more safely be left in the South, where they were needed to carry on the Communists' propaganda and organizational activities.

From the point of view of Hanoi, therefore, it was a wise move to take most of the Southern fighting forces to the North, select the best of them for special training in the DRV's new professional army, "the People's Army of Vietnam" (PAVN), and assign those unsuitable for the professional army to helping develop the state economy.

Those of the Vietminh who were left behind to be demobilized could be recalled into service in the South if ever this were judged necessary.

There were other advantages to bringing the Southern army to the North. The Party leaders needed a strong professional army to help them consolidate the new nation north of the 17th Parallel and implement its programs. Not only did they fear the military threat from the South, but they looked upon a strong army as a useful instrument in the maintenance of public order, for they were not sure what would be the people's reaction to the implementation of their communist program. (As we shall see, they found Southern soldiers most useful in enforcing the brutal land reform of 1955-1956 because, coming from a different region, the regroupees had few sentimental ties with the local populace.)

To the author's knowledge, there has been little analysis of the makeup of the regroupees -- referred to simply as "troops" in most of the official documents -- and it is therefore worthwhile to look in our interviews for accounts of the kind of personnel who went north in 1954. The majority were the Vietminh combat troops who had fought in the South. According to our respondents, the general order was for Vietminh political cadres to remain at their posts in the South, while the military personnel were instructed to embark for regroupment in the North. Besides the troops, however, a large number of youths with no previous military training volunteered, or were persuaded by recruiting cadres, to accompany the Vietminh forces. (They were called "soldiers of Geneva" by the older men in a mildly derisive manner.)

A Vietminh soldier who had fought against the French, and who later rose to the rank of senior captain in the DRV intelligence service, has given us a record of his experience, entitled Regroupment Diary, in which he tells of the reorganization of his unit after it was temporarily settled in the North. The following excerpts from his memoirs provide a glimpse at the makeup of at least one unit of regroupees:

One day, after a regiment-level meeting, our battalion staff informed us that all units from the South had to go through preliminary reorganization. This was for two reasons: (1) What was called the regrouped army from the South was not really an army. The regroupees were made up of guerrillas, security agents, administrative clerks, etc. They had been signed in as troops for the regroupment, and therefore the number was very high; but, in reality, the combat troops comprised only about two-thirds of the number. Now there had to be a reorganization to pull out those who were not soldiers in order to give them work commensurate with their ability. . . .

After studying the order for preliminary reorganization, our unit began to reorganize. Cadres or personnel who were not soldiers or guerrillas, such as administrative or Front personnel, were taken out and sent to the Ministry of the Interior to receive new assignments. There were no reactions to this. The troops would be used for fighting, as they should be; the others hoped for assignments more suitable for them than those in the army. (22., Regroupment Diary, Chapter 3.)

The youths who signed on with the Vietminh forces going North, the "soldiers of Geneva," did so from a mixture of motives. Many of them had lived in Vietminh-controlled villages and were carried along by the enthusiasm of the victors. Some felt clearly identified with the Vietminh movement because members of their

families had been involved in it, and they were fearful about what would happen to them if they remained in the South. Also, there was adventure in traveling to the North, especially since the young men were told that it would only be for two years, until the elections of 1956, which would bring reunification. For some, the North meant promise of new opportunity, especially education. Vietminh recruiting cadres worked on these fears and aspirations in persuading youths to join the forces going north.

A Southern peasant lad, who in 1954 had been a seventeen-year-old in the fifth grade of a Vietminh village school in Quang Tri Province, told the following story of his regroupment:

I wanted to continue my studies; I would regret the interruption of my studies if I stayed in the village. Also, I was certain of being able to return after two years in the North. Five or six young men from the hamlet left with me. Counting all the people leaving from the village, there were seventeen.

Q: Why do you say that you couldn't continue your studies in the village?

The Vietminh cadres told us that the French would seek out former Resistants, that they would let the people stay ignorant. If we stayed, we would be tracked down by them and we would not be able to continue the studies I valued very much. I believed these threats because I had seen with my own eyes the atrocities committed by the French, particularly the Moroccans. From that, I decided that the Vietminh were right. My mother didn't want me to leave, but when I said that I would be back in about two years, she accepted it. (27.)

Another Quang Tri youth, born in 1933 and orphaned in 1945, worked as a servant in his landlord's house, where he was treated badly ("but as a servant, what else could I expect?"), and later took a job as a hired laborer. He reported: "In the fall of 1954, the Vietminh said anyone who wanted to go north to study could do so. I was alone and interested in that." (12.) In the North he joined the army and completed his studies through the South Vietnamese equivalent of the fourth grade while a soldier.

Our interviews confirm the assumption that among the regroupees were highlanders (also called "montagnards"). A 32-year-old member of the Rhadé tribe, who had been captured in January 1964, was one of two montagnards in our sample. He had achieved a fifth-grade education in the DRV, and spoke Vietnamese competently enough to tell the following story of his recruitment by the Vietminh when they took over his village in 1952:

The Vietminh came to the village at night. They summoned the villagers to a meeting and picked out the young men to go with them.

I do not know why the Vietminh chose me. I think because I was the only young man in the village at that time. Of course, there were other young men in the village, but they had all been married, and I was the only one without a family. (62.)

Following his selection by the Vietminh, he was sent off to Phu Yen Province with three to four hundred other highlanders -- Jarai, Rhadé, Stet, Mnong, and Na Thua -- for "cultural training," after which he was assigned to a battalion as a soldier. On August 5, 1954, his unit

was given orders to regroup to the North. In the North he was assigned to a battalion of Regiment 120, called the Regiment of Independent Western Highlanders. Though most of the leaders of this regiment, including its commander, were highlanders, he reported, "plains people" (Vietnamese) filled certain posts in communication and served as quartermasters and cooks. The respondent himself was a cook in his unit in the North, and from 1958 to 1961 he also attended "cultural" classes. In June 1962, after fifteen days of special training, he infiltrated to the South with fifteen western highlanders and ten Vietnamese.

In addition to the seasoned troops and newly-recruited young men, the Vietminh regrouped children in the North. According to one source, 10,000 children between the ages of seven and seventeen were sent to North Vietnam in 1954.¹³ From 1956 on, the informant reported, thirty highland children were marched each year from their homes in the mountain regions of South Vietnam to a school site at Dan Toc, on the northern bank of the Red River near

¹³The source is a Viet Cong lieutenant colonel who had visited North Vietnam in 1955, 1956, and 1958. He was engaged in intelligence activities in South Vietnam beginning in 1956, serving as field commander of the VC Research Bureau since its establishment in the South. He was captured in Saigon in November 1961 and held in prison until he was transferred to the National Interrogation Center (NIC) on March 25, 1964. In 1954, as a cadre of the 5th Subzone, with three daughters who could not yet read, he interested himself in the Party's efforts to care for the children of VC cadres. His dossier points out that two of his daughters were later educated in Germany and the USSR. (From Report 204/64 of the Saigon Interrogation Center.)

Hanoi. Fourteen elementary and high schools were reserved for these Southern children in the DRV, and all children attending the schools were boarded there.

According to the same source, Pham Hung, a member of the Politburo and Vice Premier of the DRV, announced during the Third Party Congress, in 1960: "The Party has tried to develop 10,000 teenage children regrouped from the RVN into a cohesive group of engineers, doctors, professors, and other specialists for the future. This is proof that the Party has looked out for the welfare of the South Vietnamese, too." In the informant's opinion, the DRV's intention for the future of these regrouped children was not to conscript professors, students, or other technically qualified persons for military service, but to let them pursue their professional careers and thereby serve the ends of the government. He reported that a four-day conference was held in 1961 to establish a plan for the utilization of regrouped teenagers who had been graduated and qualified. The last of the regrouped children were to have completed their high school education by the end of 1965. Until the time of his capture, in November 1961, the informant had not heard of a single case in which such a youngster had been drafted.

The two prisoners in our sample with children who had been regrouped to the North tended to confirm the information cited above. One of them, whose activity among revolutionary cadres dated back to the 1930's, told us that, though he himself received orders to remain in the South after the Geneva Agreement of 1954, he sent his seven-year-old daughter to the DRV. At the time of his interview, in 1965, she was seventeen and due to complete

her high school education at the end of the academic year. The father told the interviewer that he received word from her from time to time on a radio program from Hanoi that sent personal news. (d.)

Another cadre, who had joined the Resistance in 1945, sent his seven-year-old daughter to the North in 1954 at the same time that he himself was regrouped. As his conversation with the interviewer reveals, he was pleased with the care she was getting from the DRV government:

My daughter was a little schoolgirl in 1954 and she regrouped with a lot of other kids in my village. The government in the North has been looking after her since. The groups of students were taken care of very carefully: they had a manager, a managing board, teachers to educate them . . . they lived together in organized centers.

Q: Why would the Vietminh let a seven-year-old girl go north without her mother?

A lot of these girls regrouped. They went away together in order to get an education. They were organized into groups. There were people who looked after them. Besides, at that time, regrouping was just for two years, just to get an education. That was why these little children were allowed by their families to go away.

Q: Why could they not go to school down here?

We thought that the government in South Vietnam would not provide them with an education. It might have been the same for them if they had stayed. But they were assured of an education in the North and we thought they would stay in the North only two years.

Q: Did you not think it important for a young girl to be with her mother?

Many other girls went with my daughter. These girls formed organized groups. She would have been frustrated if we had forced her to stay home while her friends all went north. Her friends comforted her when she was away from her mother; we knew she would miss her mother, but her friends were around her to keep her happy. Twenty children went north from my village to get an education. (24.)

Later in the conversation, sounding both wistful and proud, he volunteered these additional comments:

[My daughter] is still going to school. She must be in the university now. The government is looking after her. There are separate quarters for boys and girls who regrouped to the North in 1954. They all got a free education.

Lots of engineers were formed out of the fourteen-, fifteen-year-old regroupes. They were sometimes educated in China or Russia. Most were trained in the DRV itself. . . . It was a really smart thing those people did, taking all those kids to the North in 1954 and 1955. (24.)

Reactions to the order for regroupment varied. Some members of the Vietminh, particularly the younger, unmarried, adventurous ones, were pleased at the opportunity to see the northern half of their country. Others, who had hoped to go home, were greatly disturbed by the order. Many were torn between their duty to the Party and their disappointment at being unable to rejoin their families. Though the Party reassuringly pointed out that the Northern assignment would be temporary, and that after the 1956 elections and reunification they would all return to their families in the South, the diversity of attitudes toward the northern journey is reflected in the statements cited below.

The same respondent who had told us at length about his daughter stressed the voluntary nature of the regroupment and pointed out the danger to Vietminh cadres who remained in the South:

Those who did regroup did it voluntarily, after realizing that it was the thing to do. They did it to protect themselves from being arrested by the authorities in the South. They were afraid of being charged with having participated in the Resistance before.

All cadres were afraid of future persecution by the South Vietnamese authorities; they all wanted to regroup; even the "little" cadres -- the sub-hamlet cadres, the small cell leaders -- asked to be regrouped. They were afraid. Their fears were justified, because even these "tiny" cadres were arrested by the South Vietnamese authorities later. (24.)

A different account came from a farmer who had enlisted in the Vietminh only in January 1954, at the age of twenty, and had participated in one battle before the cease-fire. He recalled his reaction to the regroupment order:

At that time, I didn't like it at all. I couldn't stand the cold in the North. What's more, my comrades said that in the North people didn't have enough to eat. And besides, I missed my family and wanted to visit them, but I wasn't allowed to go. So I escaped while in Qui Nhon, but I was caught halfway home. (57.)

The youth remained in the army in the North, joined the Communist Party, and had earned the rank of sergeant-major by the time he was ordered to infiltrate to the South, in 1962, to serve as a deputy platoon leader.

The aforementioned senior captain and author of the Regroupment Diary describes the ambivalence of many of the cadres about going north and leaving friends and family behind. Many were worried, "with the soldiers gone how the French would treat people in the Resistance area," while some expressed doubts that reunification would take place as promised. He recounts an anecdote about a sardonic cadre in his unit who tauntingly bet his comrades that "three to ten, the country won't be reunified in two years," causing the political officers to preach the following sermon:

1. Have confidence in the leadership of the Central Committee. In two years, the country will be reunified, because that was the decision of an international body, which gives us reason to trust it. This does not mean that we should be too trustful, but we must continue to struggle.
2. The Party will never abandon the people of the South who will stay to fight; when the time comes, they will be led.
3. Those who go north should feel happy in their duties. Those who remain behind should carry out the glorious missions entrusted to them by the Party, standing side by side with the people in every situation of struggle.
4. In family relations, don't let emotion lead you away from your duties. Cadres should be leaders of their own units. (22., Regroupment Diary, Chapter 2.)

The excerpts from other interviews quoted below illustrate some of the expectations of the Vietminh troops at the time of regroupment, the diversity of their reactions to the order, as well as the general belief that they would return home in two years:

Q: Were you a volunteer for regroupment?

At the time it was said that we were volunteers. In reality, they took measures to make sure that everyone left.

At the time of regroupment, we had to go. If I had remained, I would have been arrested. I believed that I would remain in the North two years. (49.)

* * *

I was a political officer. I went to the North just like all the other combatants in my unit.

I believed, at the time, that regroupment was only temporary, because from the study sessions on the Geneva Agreement we drew the conclusion that we could return to the South after the general elections. (51.)

* * *

[Our political officer] explained that the communist policy had been successful. Vietnam is small and weak, but we beat the French. Because we triumphed at Dien Bien Phu, the French were obliged to depart. We were granted Vietnam north of the 17th Parallel now, but in 1956 there would be a general election and we would regain the South and be reunited with our families.

Because of interest and curiosity and the opportunity to travel, everyone was happy. They thought they would be there in the North only two years and then would be able to return to their homes. (41.)

* * *

At that time, we were told that we would come back in two years. The Geneva Conference had provided for a general election in two years. Then we would be able to come back and see our families. (31.)

Q. What were your feelings on the subject of regroupment?

I did my duty as a soldier. (34.)

III. POLITICAL ATTITUDES WHILE IN THE DRV

INDOCTRINATION AND ACCULTURATION

Before we describe significant political attitudes of Vietminh regroupes during their stay in the North, a word of caution is in order. Those who expressed these attitudes had long been subjected to communist propaganda and indoctrination: throughout their service in the Vietminh prior to 1954, during the six to ten years they spent in the DRV, and, subsequently, while they served in the Front. Their political lessons and most of their news came from communist sources, and it is no wonder, therefore, that the vast majority, including defectors who denounced the communist policies, saw events through communist-tinted glasses. Though our interviewers had a measure of success in encouraging respondents to recapture some of their spontaneous feelings about significant developments in the DRV and the Front at the time they experienced them, many of these recollections were no doubt reinterpreted by the respondent himself in light of the political lessons he had since received in his service in the North and with the Front.

The fact that political attitudes may be derived largely from indoctrination does not, of course, rule out their being held with deep conviction. Many interviewees, including the better-educated, when asked their opinion about certain problems and events of political significance, would begin by saying, "We were taught that" Asked whether they believed what they were taught, most respondents answered in the affirmative. Defectors

frequently pointed out that only subsequent experience and observation had led them to doubt their lessons and change their minds.

Formal political lessons, however, were not the only influences that shaped the political philosophies of our regroupee respondents. Attitudes were formed in everyday life, informal contacts, and the day-to-day exposure to events. In a candid and thoughtful discussion of the development of his own, frankly Marxist, philosophy, a VC physician summed up the impact of his communist environment:

I lived in the Resistance for eight years, and eight or nine years in the DRV, in a socialist world. It is not a political book which influenced me and formed my political ideas. I think that they grew in me from day to day. Each day a small quantity of socialist ideas entered me. (26.)

THE IMPACT OF THREE SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

During the first two years of the regroupees' stay in the DRV, three issues arose which seriously affected the course of Vietnamese history in both North and South: the flight of some three-quarter million Northerners to the South in 1954; the DRV land reform of 1955-1956; and the announcement that the elections for the reunification of Vietnam, scheduled for 1956 under the Geneva Agreement, would not be held. These important developments, and the manner in which the DRV leadership handled the issues, might well have undermined the confidence of the newly-regrouped cadres in their communist leaders. The reaction to them among our respondents will therefore be explored in some detail.

1. Flight of the Refugees (1954)

A South Vietnamese soldier who believed he was fighting for a movement which had the broad support of the people might have been greatly disturbed to learn of the flight south of vast numbers of Northerners, most of them simple peasants and fishermen, though intellectuals and bourgeois were also among them. He had been told, of course, that most of the refugees were Catholics, who were being encouraged by their priests to leave. Nevertheless, in the light of the DRV leadership's constant assurance that there was freedom of religion in the North, the escape of so many frightened people bore witness to a fear of communism among a large part of the populace.

In fact, however, our interview data suggest that the flight of the refugees did not seriously disturb the regroupees. Although we lack reliable statistics, it is unlikely that more than a few of the regroupees were Catholics, and their direct concern about the refugees was thus minimal. Told by DRV propaganda that the Catholics were ordered to leave by their hierarchy and were led by village priests, and that the bourgeois refugees were fleeing because they feared to lose by the more equitable distribution of wealth in the DRV, the majority of regroupees seem to have accepted these explanations, although the communist leaders apparently had misjudged the magnitude of the exodus. The following excerpts from interviews show how two loyal Communists interpreted the refugees' departure:

The physician quoted earlier gave this explanation:

There are two points of view to explain this flight: one reason is the natural reason. The functionaries and military people, the people with resources, wanted an easier material life; they did not want a modest life in a socialist regime.

Another reason for this flight south was the religious obligation of the peasants and Catholics who were gathered together by their priests to go south. I see in the flight south a very profound and important political aim. I see someone who ordered this flight of Catholics to the South to serve a political aim -- and this person was Ngo Dinh Diem.

Q: Diem couldn't have done that at that time. He didn't have enough authority and prestige with the people.

Oh yes. There were always close relations between Diem, who aimed for the presidency, and his brother Thuc, who led the Catholics. The flight of Catholics was a unique fact. All the Catholics above the 17th Parallel fled en masse to the South. That is why I believe this to have been a supreme command.

Q: What was Diem's political aim?

To have the people believe that the Vietminh regime was an atrocious one, without religion, etc.

Q: The Catholics were right to fear the communist ideology, weren't they? A true Marxist or Socialist is against the Catholic religion. So the Church was afraid of losing its flock. The people went south voluntarily, didn't they?

Not at all. The volunteers were the priests. The peasants did not go voluntarily, but followed the priests who said that in the North God existed no longer. That is why they left their families and their homes to flee south. But certain ones did not abandon their native villages so easily. The Vietminh cadres came to the villages to persuade the people to stay, and the peasants stayed, with their religion.
(26.)

A cadre who had just told the interviewer of the warm reception which the regroupees had received from the Northern population was challenged by the apparent paradox that, at that very moment, almost three-quarter million North Vietnamese were fleeing southward in fear and misery. He said:

I heard about that when I got to the North. But those people were Catholics who believed the propaganda that, in the North, socialism was going to abolish all religion. They thought they would not be allowed to practice their religion if they stayed in the North.

The cadres explained to them why they should remain in their homes, why they should not listen to false propaganda. They were not going to lose their God if they remained in the North; they received assistance from the government in their worship: cathedrals which had been destroyed during the Resistance were reconstructed with government money. The big cathedral of Ninh Dinh was rebuilt completely.

Some people were really fooled by false propaganda that their God went south and that they were losing Him if they stayed in the North. When they were persuaded by our cadres and did remain in their homes, they received special assistance in their living. Others who did not listen to us sold their houses, brought their newborn babies with them down south, died on the way down. . . . Some really suffered and were willing to die to follow their God just because they were fools.

Q: You must know communist doctrine well enough to know its opposition to organized religion. Any good communist regime must regard the Church as a vestige of feudalism.

Socialism and communism proclaim all that, but out there [in the North], freedom of religion of the people is respected. There is a special policy toward religion; a question of religion is given special

attention. People's faith, what they believe in voluntarily, is one of their interests. People's interests should be supported. How can you force people to believe in something when in their own mind and in their heart they believe something else? (24.)

Later in the interview, while the respondent was relaxing over a beer and only the interpreter was present to hear him, he volunteered the following additional comments:

The damn Catholic fathers and fanatics were really fooling people. They put on shows for people: they had a little boy climb up the altar and tell the masses in church that God had fled south, that the people should follow their God.

Our job, the ones who regrouped in 1954, was to tell these people who were ruining themselves, who would brave death and misery to go south to follow their lost God, that God was still with them everywhere and that they had been fooled.

The ones who remained in the North received special privileges from the authorities. The processions that the Catholics organized for their saints and their God were really big affairs. Catholics were allowed to worship their God as they pleased and they were really delirious. The noise they made in their processions must have reached the heavens. . . . (24.)

2. Agrarian Reform (1955-1956)

The agrarian reform was potentially even more threatening to the regrouped's loyalty to the DRV, since, by the regime's own admission, it led to widespread excesses and injustice. It imitated the violent land reform carried out earlier in Communist China, down to the classification of the entire population and the categorization of landlords according to various levels of evil. Southern military units, probably because they had no strong ties with

the local people and could therefore be counted on to enforce this unpopular program with the fewest misgivings, were entrusted with much of its implementation.

The author of Regroupment Diary devotes one chapter to his unit's role in the land reform. Entitled "Nightmarish Indoctrination Sessions," it is an excellent description of the brutality of this program. He shows how political cadres incited both the peasants and the troops to denounce the landlords, many of whom were totally innocent of the charges leveled at them. Like avalanches, the denunciations often acquired a momentum beyond the control and intention of even the most vindictive cadres. In a series of anecdotes from his experiences, the captain brings to life the details of the brutal program, concluding with this summary of typical proceedings:

That was how the drive to motivate the populace to enforce land reform was conducted; and this drive ended in each hamlet with the trial of the landlord by a people's tribunal [Toa An Nhan Dan]. Guilty as well as innocent people were tried. Before the people's tribunal the accused had no one to defend them. They could only bow their heads and listen to the enumeration of their crimes; they could not utter one word. The prosecutor was a man or a woman belonging to the land reform unit; the presiding judge was also from the land reform unit. The audience only knew to applaud and to shout "Down with. . . ." The death sentence had been decided upon in advance. After the denunciations had all been made, the presiding judge pulled the death sentence statement out of his pocket and read it. Then the prisoners were immediately executed, about 100 meters away from the tribunal. (22., Regroupment Diary, Chapter 4.)

The writer expressed anguish at this corruption of the ideals for which he had fought in the Southern Resistance:

Alas, the whole program was a process which turned society upside down, the like of which had never been witnessed in history. Where were the patriots, the cadres who had achieved merit in the prolonged anti-imperialist struggle? They had been exterminated, imprisoned, eliminated, and besieged economically and politically. Their human dignity had been trodden upon. Was this the effect of a wheel turning in reverse and grinding them to pieces? (Ibid.)

In discussing the approach of July 20, 1956, the date on which elections for reunification were to be held, the captain again spoke of his deep dismay at the DRV land reform program. He claimed that not only his confidence but that of many other honest revolutionaries in his battalion had been severely shaken. So badly disturbed was he by what he had witnessed that he even expressed doubts as to the desirability of reunification, if unity were to bring an equally horrible land reform for the South. He writes:

During the initial part of their stay in the North, the Southern units had experienced many new things. But the thing which was inscribed in the minds of the Southern soldiers was what we heard and saw for ourselves during the application of land reform. We had gone through nightmarish indoctrination sessions on agrarian reform; each soldier or cadre had more or less witnessed the drive to motivate the populace in the struggle for land reform, the denunciations, arrests, imprisonment, forcible classification of people's backgrounds, unfair trials, public denunciations and insults from the people's tribunal, the arbitrary actions of the all-powerful land reform units. All this made us wonder what had happened to human nature.

If the country were reunified, how would land reform be carried out in the South? How would the denunciations be conducted? In fact, we all looked forward to the day when the country would be reunified, but we also feared national reunification. We all wanted to see the country reunified because of our love for our families. We wanted national reunification so that we would be reunited with our families, and also because of the tense and unbearable atmosphere in the North which we could escape with national reunification. But we feared national reunification, for when this took place, the South would have to go through all the sufferings due to land reform which the people in the North had had to endure. How would we be able to stand such a sight? (Ibid.)¹⁴

Another cadre who had participated in the Northern land reform program confirmed the account given by the captain, though he did not share the latter's pessimism about the danger that its excesses would be repeated in the South. Following are excerpts from his detailed description of how the program was carried out:

The landlords were classified into categories:

1. The dishonest and ferocious landlords [dia chu gian ac] were those who mistreated the peasants, who worked for the French, who oppressed the poor people. These landlords were punished according to the gravity of the charges against them. All their land was confiscated.

2. The average, normal landlords [dia chu thuong] were still landlords, but they did not oppress the peasants. They were ordered to cede part of their land to the poor peasants.

¹⁴ For another account of the land reform program in North Vietnam, which generally confirms the description given by the author of the Diary, see Hoang Van Chi, From Colonialism to Communism, Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., New York, N.Y., 1964.

3. The landlords who had participated in the Resistance, who were patriots, were just asked to give some land to the people. They gave whatever they judged was proper. But those darn "very poor peasants" really messed up the redistribution of the land. The average landlords were "promoted" to ferocious landlords; and the government cadres who knew the right policies of the authorities did not dare to say anything. We had to sit there and watch them [the very poor peasants] confiscate every landlord's property, even if the landlord was a good one. Later there came the "rectification of errors" and I participated in this also. . . .

Some of the former Resistants who came back to their village and to their properties were denounced as "landlords" by the peasants. The peasants promoted everybody up the landlord ladder: Nonlandlords to landlords; good landlords, former Resistants, to average or even cruel landlords; average landlords to cruel landlords; cruel landlords to very inhumann landlords deserving a death sentence.

Too many of these excesses ruined the land reform. The Rectification of Errors was mostly carried out by competent cadres who had to remain silent in the earlier denunciation sessions, and also by the old cadres from the Resistance who were mistreated during the land reform of 1956. These old cadres from the Resistance had seen their land confiscated or perhaps they had been physically mistreated, too. But they had patiently waited for the Rectification of Errors to come. When it did come, they rose up to remove the incompetent peasants from the government organizations in the villages and districts.

How could we be so rude to the landlords when Mr. Dong [Pham Van Dong], Mr. Giap [Vo Nguyen Giap], and Mr. Chinh [Truong Chinh] were landlords too? (24.)

This respondent, however, like many of those we interviewed, was confident that the mistakes of the land reform in the North would not be repeated in the South.

He was almost indignant at the suggestion of such a possibility:

How could they be? How could it happen again?

The popular movement to fight for freedom and democracy, to let people realize their mistakes themselves, was hurried along too much. It didn't work. The peasants, and especially the very poor peasants, were given importance. They took advantage of the favored positions they were in to commit excesses; and the government cadres did not dare say anything because they would be accused of not defending a firm position about the classes.

But the superior levels have corrected these errors already. The South already has the lesson of the North before its eyes.

The land reform in the North has been reexamined, and the committees and organizations who committed the excesses, and the old cadres who were "in there" with the peasants, were all removed. Understanding cadres were sent to the villages to correct errors and the results have been satisfactory. After having made the mistake once, how could they do it again? At that time, the situation was difficult; the land reform was copied from the big one in China. . . .

For Vietnam as a whole, landlords are few and not extremely wealthy. The land reform in the North was carried out based on the Chinese model; it was not accomplished according to the conditions in Vietnam. The mistakes have been corrected. It is impossible that the South would commit the same errors as the North did. If the other side [the Front] won, the land problem would be solved with balance. There are landlords in the South, but not many. (24.)

The VC physician in our sample also was sure that the land reform mistakes would not be repeated in the South:

My conviction is that, if a thorn pricks you on a path and you bleed, that is not a reason to discontinue; it is a lesson for avoiding future thorns.

Grave faults in agrarian reform were admitted before everyone. That is more of a reason for showing that the North will benefit from the lesson.

The policy of the Front is that, if the Front wins, the agrarian reform will not be carried out like the agrarian reform in the North. The state will not confiscate the land. The state will buy the properties from the landowners to distribute them to the peasants. For the landowners, immoral and terrible denunciations will be avoided. (26.)¹⁵

Although the comments of VC members show that most regroupees remained loyal to the DRV leadership, several respondents said that the land reform program had caused them to lose confidence in the Party. At least three of these claimed that they defected, as soon as they were back in the South and had the opportunity to do so, because of what they had suffered under the program in the DRV. An especially bitter story was told by a cadre who now works for the Chieu Hoi (defector) organization of the South Vietnamese Government. He had been placed, along with nine others in his company, in the category of dia chu (a category of landowners who allegedly had committed "abusive acts" on the land, made collections on the farms, and "collaborated with feudalists"). He described the denunciation session to which he was subjected:

I was denounced from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. I was beaten the least, because I was most docile. They

¹⁵For statements by other Southerners who participated in the land reform program see p. 159.

said that in 1954 (this denunciation was in 1955) I had returned late from leave, that I had argued about the studies, that I had treated a superior cadre who didn't speak fluently as if he were not only uneducated but stupid, that I criticized superiors, that I had class feeling, that I voluntarily joined up with undesirable elements who had deserted. . . .

The buildup for these sessions was very carefully done. A superior cadre called me over, spoke to me very nicely, slowly. He didn't say I was going to be denounced, but only that I was being evaluated and criticized [kiem thao]. He told me: "The Party," he said, "doesn't want to cut off your arms and legs since you are a Party member," but the aim of kiem thao is to convert me, to rebuild me.

When someone is already denounced, he must cut off all relations with his family, in three ways: economically (for fear that the family, informed, will sell his things before the denunciation to save the most they can), politically, and emotionally. This was a general measure. All the denounced cadres like the dia chu owe a debt of blood to the peasants; and we must write a "letter with the blood of our hearts" to cut off all relations with our families. I found this denunciation system really inhuman.

In 1957, in the rectification campaign, they decided that these denunciations harmed the forces for fighting; that's why they were stopped in the South.

When I was denounced, I lost confidence in the other Party members and people. In general when the people know someone is a Party member, they believe that everything he says is from the thoughts of the Party and the Uncle [Ho]. They admire him.

At the time of the denunciation, the people approached the Party members to try to find out who would soon be denounced, and took certain measures to save the possessions of the victims. Some Party members used this situation to take revenge. (50.)

Another defector, who also was working for the GVN's Chieu Hoi organization, was equally critical of the DRV land reform program, of which he, too, had had personal experience:

In North Vietnam, we had fought famine, flood, typhoons, we had attended indoctrination courses, but the worst of all was the land reform. I had attended public accusation sessions in which landowners were brought to popular trial. I was in charge of keeping order during these sessions, and I felt much pity for those landowners who had known an easy life and who were then brought to trial.

The Communists picked up the very poor peasants to do the accusing because the very poor peasants are the foundation of the Party. For instance, the Communists chose about fifteen very poor peasants in a village and brought to trial three rich people. The property of the rich was confiscated because, according to the Communists, it was people's labor which had earned them this property.

When I saw all this cruelty I sat there and sighed with my other comrades from the South. We said that our own parents would have to undergo all this if it happened in the South. All those whose parents belonged to the middle-farmer category were very worried and saddened by this. Sometime afterward, the Communists assured us that they would adopt a different policy toward the landowners and the rich people of the South. But I have seen no difference with the Revolution in South Vietnam. (69.)

Although the agrarian reform left deeper scars on the political loyalty of the regroupees than did the flight of the refugees, the Rectification of Errors program and a heavy political indoctrination campaign helped the DRV regain the support of most -- though not all -- of those whose loyalty may have wavered.

3. The Geneva Agreement and the Elections of 1956

The Geneva Agreement of 1954, in ending the armed struggle against the French, brought welcome relief to the Vietminh fighting forces. On the other hand, there was disappointment at the partition of the country and the regroupment of the Vietminh troops. DRV leaders, in an attempt to relieve this anxiety, instructed the political cadres to stress the temporary nature of the partition and the prospect of the return home after the general elections of 1956.

A "hard-core" propaganda cadre gave an interpretation of the Geneva accord to his interviewer which revealed what the troops were taught:

We emerged victorious from that war [with the French]. The enemy [the French] was conquered, but his forces had not been completely destroyed. That is why we had to sign the Treaty of Geneva.

Our purpose in signing the Geneva Treaty was to oblige the enemy to recognize publicly [before world opinion] our authority over the whole territory of Vietnam, and to withdraw his armed forces from it. We accepted the temporary division of our country in order to facilitate the withdrawal of the French forces, because if our forces had stayed where they were in the South, movements of enemy forces would have provoked incidents which would have threatened the peace desired by our people.

We were to withdraw all our soldiers and cadres to the North and a temporary government would be set up in the South. During the period of two years allowed to the French to withdraw their armed forces from Vietnam, the people had to continue their struggle to guard the advantages which they had gained [the division of the country under the Vietminh regime], to force the temporary government to improve the conditions of national life, and to prepare for the voting called for by the Geneva Treaty. (30.)

When the deadline of July 20, 1956, passed without general elections, the regroupees in the North were disappointed and angry. The great majority of our respondents recalled that in 1956 they blamed "the Americans and Diem" for the failure to hold elections. A 34-year-old senior sergeant, a loyal Party member from Thua Tien Province, put it this way:

Everybody was extremely angry against the South Vietnamese regime which, obeying the orders of the Americans, refused to organize the general elections. The regroupees, at that time, were confused. (64.)

A defector, though normally critical of the DRV, admitted having held the same view:

In the North, I believed that the fault [that elections were not held in 1956] lay with Diem and the Americans. (49.)

Our respondents recalled most clearly their terrible disappointment at the news that they would not be re-joining their families, and many spoke of their anger at the Americans and Diem. Their inclination to blame only one side was reinforced by careful indoctrination on this subject provided by political cadres in the DRV. The author of Regroupment Diary, who shows an unusual ability to cut through the heavy crust of propaganda and still remain loyal to the Vietminh's revolutionary ideals, writes of dissatisfaction among Southerners and contends that this discontent was turned against the Northern regime and seriously demoralized Southern units of the PAVN. It may be worthwhile to quote at length from the relevant passage in the captain's diary:

The date of July 20, 1956, which we all looked forward to, finally arrived. At that time, the people in the North were no longer interested in this date because they were suffering a great deal, and their minds were preoccupied with more realistic thoughts, such as how to end their present suffering. National reunification meant nothing to them because they had nothing to gain from it, and because it would not reduce their suffering. So why should they look forward to it? As for us, the Southern troops, we looked forward to national reunification which would deliver us from the sight of suffering which we had to face every day. But July 20, 1956, arrived noiselessly. Nothing stirred.

We were worried and watchful; we asked for explanations when the higher echelon ordered a "struggle to demand that the South observe the Geneva Agreement." There were demonstrations, slogans were shouted, and then Prime Minister Pham Van Dong sent a message to the International Control Commission demanding the application of the clause in the Geneva accord which provided for national reunification. The situation flared up for a few days and then quieted down. We waited and became desperate. We were sad and confused; we no longer believed in anything. Many of my comrades during indoctrination sessions frankly expressed their lack of confidence. They were told by the higher echelon: "We must be patient in our struggle, and we must believe in the Central Committee's line of struggle to achieve national reunification. We should increase our efforts to wage the struggle so that the Southern government, like a big rock lying in the middle of the road to block the people's path, would be rolled over by the continuous effort of the people." . . .

Sadness and discouragement spread throughout the unit. We met in groups of five or six to drink tea and talk about national reunification. We confessed our discouragement to each other, our nostalgia, our despair over the prospect of an indefinite separation from our families. Many soldiers became discouraged and lost all interest in army life. They applied for transfer to another field, so that they would be discharged and earn their living. Others did not want to accept the transfers handed down by the convalescent section. They

did not want to be discharged, to become simple citizens, to organize production groups, or to set up shops, restaurants, refreshment stands . . . which they would leave behind to return to the South when national reunification was achieved through negotiations. (22.)

The captain goes on to describe individual cadres of his acquaintance who were so demoralized that they lost interest in their army service. Several, he writes, professed their disgust with life in the North and attempted an escape to the South by boat. They were caught, arrested, and sentenced to three years in jail.

A defector now employed in the Chieu Hoi organization confirmed the captain's judgment on the shaken morale of the regroupees in 1956. He said:

At the departure [for the North] in 1954, all of us, without exception, were firmly convinced that we would return to the South in two years. There was great disappointment when, in 1956, the general elections didn't take place. I then took a course at the E.M.G. (Propaganda, Information and Liaison Service). A great majority of Southerners felt the same way. Some went to the E.M.G. with their packs to ask for a return home; many asked to leave the army; some went over the line of demarcation.

Those who stayed showed their weariness by spending their time at games and drinking. You know the psychology of the Southerners. They speak frankly and can't endure a hard life. They have seen the poverty of the Northern peasants; they are afraid of the Tonkin cold; they had an easier life in the South. The Party had to send some cadres to give explanations, to calm the men. I should tell you that in 1956, 1957, the North met many difficulties, as much from the postponement of the general elections as the backwash of the agrarian reform. (39.)

Another respondent also confirmed the unrest among the regroupees after they realized that elections would

not be held and their prospects for returning home looked dim. As a loyal Communist cadre, he attributed the regroupées' disquiet largely to the oppression under Diem in the South of which they had learned, rather than to any disgruntlement at their own position in the North:

In 1957, when the unrest among the regroupées was strong, the authorities had to do something about them. Diem was heard to be quite barbaric in oppressing the people in the South, especially the former Resistants. The regroupées could not stand to let people in their native villages suffer under Diem's rule. Someone had to talk to them during a whole night to try to calm them down, and he did not succeed at all -- or accomplished little. The regroupées wanted to go very desperately. They would just have to be sent south. When they were finally allowed to go south, they were exuberant. Those who were promised a trip south were very nervous during the waiting. They wanted to go home to their district, to their villages very much. Some died on the way south. Some who were so sick that they could not be sent south were extremely disappointed. Sometimes the latter insisted on a trip south and gave up their lives in the mountains. (24.)

Though the morale of the regroupées obviously was badly shaken when elections were not held and their journey home was, at best, considerably postponed, the communist leaders appear to have largely succeeded in turning disappointment into anger at the "Americans and Diem," and, through effective indoctrination, channeling this anger into a revolutionary commitment against the Saigon regime. Thus, while a relatively few of the Southern regroupées were permanently disaffected, the majority remained loyal to the DRV.

ADJUSTMENT TO THE NORTH

1. Problems of Regionalism

Personal problems of the Southerners' adjustment to life in the North were important in the development of their political attitudes. The regroupees were generally impressed by the warm reception they received from the Northern population upon their arrival in 1954. The DRV government had obviously arranged for demonstrations of enthusiasm from the population, but there was a spontaneous warmth too, as the following account suggests:

The Northerners really welcomed us with joy. They had organized a welcoming crowd to take care of us as soon as we disembarked. There were flags, crowds, cheers . . . they surrounded us and led each of us to their homes.

Everywhere we went in the streets, they came out to embrace us and then take us home with them to give us food and drink. . . .

They knew that we had suffered in the nine years of resistance; and they loved us because we were Southerners who left our homes to regroup in the North to help them work for a living, to help them in their production work. (24.)

The Southerners who settled in the North confronted the many problems of adjustment to the peculiarities of an unfamiliar region: the differences in climate, dialect, and local custom, Northern concepts of interpersonal relations, and the appearance and behavior of women. Some of these inevitably caused friction, but none apparently to the point of serious political detriment to the DRV. Excerpts from the interviewees' recollections of their reactions to the North suggest the range and the kind of human problems that arose:

At first, I did not like girls with blackened teeth. In Thanh Hoa, almost all the girls have blackened teeth. But farther north there were many girls with white teeth. (46.)

* * *

People from the South were more frank; if they didn't like something, they told you right to your face. The Northerners were more subtle, more polite.

Q: Were there any misunderstandings between people from the three sections of the country?

No, not in my unit, but there were the local characteristics. The Northerners stayed with Northerners, the Southerners with Southerners. They didn't mingle easily. (42.)

* * *

We Southerners are more spontaneous, talk more easily; we say what we think; we try to speak from the heart. The Northerners speak more cleverly, and the Centrists are more sly, deceitful, stingy, and are flatterers. From all this come differences in behavior, in a way of life. I have seen some small trouble between Southerners on the one hand and Northerners and Centrists on the other, as well as between Northerners and Centrists. Sometimes some Southerners drinking tea break up when they see a Centrist or Northerner come. The Party, several times, had to make an appeal to their sentiments and solidarity. (39.)

* * *

We lived with the population of the North, three or four in a family. We slept there during the night, but we took our meals elsewhere together. Clothes were distributed by the government. We went to many locations; at each location we remained one, two, or three months. We helped the population.

Q: What was the attitude of the population?

Good, kind; they helped us. (49.)

* * *

At the beginning, regroupees mixed only among themselves. After a while, relations developed. The Tonkinese had a tendency to mix with Tonkinese and the Annamese with Annamese. But the Tonkinese and the Annamese get along more easily than [they do with] the Cochin Chinese. The Cochin Chinese . . . have a different character. They spend everything they earn. (50.)

* * *

There was a fight once between regroupees in Ha Dong and the Northern students. This was in 1958 or 1959. It was important, because the whole school of regroupees participated in it. I think that the reason for this disagreement had to do with love affairs and jealousy. After one student got into trouble the whole school stood behind him. That's why the dispute enlarged. The other incidents were only incidental disputes that involved a few persons. In the student dispute, the police were sent for. But the police were also beaten by the students. Finally, President Ho Chi Minh talked to them over a public address system. (54.)

* * *

Outwardly there was no difference, but deep inside there was segregation between soldiers coming from different parts of the country. The Southerners didn't think much of the Northerners and the people from the Center. In a mixed unit the Northerners were always isolated; the Southerners and the Central people would be on the same side. (48.)

* * *

In general there was no conflict between the people from the North and those from the Center. There were conflicts between the Southerners and the Northerners. But that was only conflict dealing with the daily life. (44.)

The greatest problem of the regroupees was loneliness, and most of them told us how they missed their families and their own villages. Several in our sample had married in the North, but the greater number either had left their wives in the South, or they were bachelors who lacked both the financial means and the official encouragement to marry and, probably most important, had no family intermediaries to arrange a marriage for them. A senior sergeant described his loneliness with an expression that was used also by several others:

I did not have any news of my family. We used to tell each other "Northern days, Southern nights" [Ngay Bac, Bem Nam]. Everybody in Company 82 was from the South. In the daytime we worked in the North and we did not have any time to think about our families in the South. But at night, when we lay down, we could not help thinking about how our families were getting along. We talked to each other about our lives in the South. (33.)

In Vietnamese society, with its strong tradition of family solidarity, it is not surprising that this prolonged separation was to prove a major cause of defection.

Even though the Southerners' problems of acclimatization did no serious political harm to the DRV regime, the regroupees were not fully integrated with their Northern compatriots. Our respondents clearly regarded themselves as Southerners; they lived separately in an environment where they did not feel securely at home.

2. Reactions to the DRV Regime

The majority of those interviewed spoke favorably of the Northern political system. Some expressed gratitude to the "Party and Revolution" for affording them

personal opportunities which, they believed, would never have been open to them in the South under either the French or the Diem regime. Several who came of poor families but had obvious intellectual talent were particularly grateful for the education they had received. Through a program of "cultural training," available to military personnel, the ambitious could rise to the equivalent of a full high school education. The author of Regroupment Diary, a man of unusual intellectual ability and literary talent, had had less than two years of village schooling before he was regrouped. While in the army in the North, he completed the equivalent of a primary school education in his home district.

Those who in the Northern army had risen in grade to levels of responsibility were explicitly or implicitly grateful to the DRV system; they knew that poor peasants with little education -- in other words, the bulk of the Vietminh and Viet Cong -- do not enjoy similar opportunities in the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN). Some mentioned the fact, for example, that the requirement for an officer in the ARVN includes a high school education, which in the South is accessible only to the well-off.

Some of the regroupees felt closely identified with the DRV regime as the successor of the Vietminh movement, to which they owed their sense of "dignity." By its victory over the French, the revolutionary movement had

dispelled the humiliation of colonial domination, supplanting feelings of inferiority with a sense of achievement. And the pride at having won national independence was evident also in a new self-confidence on the part of the individuals who had participated in the revolution. Even the more uncomfortable and unpopular political measures of the DRV could not easily efface this dedication to a revolutionary movement. If there was serious unhappiness among the regroupées, it was due less to the political regime than to other, personal, problems of adjustment: the separation from family and village, the greater hardships of life in a poorer part of the country, and the temperamental differences between the Southerners and the more straitlaced Northerners. A few, as we have shown, became disaffected for political reasons, especially those caught in the meat grinder of the agrarian reform program. But the attitudes of the great majority of our respondents -- including, curiously enough, the defectors -- ranged from neutrality to a strong pro-Northern commitment.

The physician quoted earlier is an example of the intellectual among regroupées. Although relatively flexible and open-minded, and professing himself an advocate of "democracy," he was a loyal supporter of the DRV government. When his interviewer (the present author) pointed out to him that the DRV government permitted neither freedom of opposition nor freedom of expression, the doctor said:

While I lived in the North, the South said that life in the North was going only in one direction and no opposition was permitted. That is not true. There is often opposition in the North. The opposition is written up in the newspapers . . . there are often polemical poems or articles frankly opposing the government. But opposition in the North is only permitted in a certain amount. Opposition cannot be so well organized that it would be in a state of overthrowing the government. But there is enough opposition. . . .

Q: You have two pairs of glasses to see things, it seems -- one pair of rose-colored glasses to see the DRV, and one pair tinted black to see the facts here [in the GVN].

What you say is rather exaggerated. I see nothing rosy about the faults committed during agrarian reform in the North. Even in the present life in the North, there are faults committed. We saw them. But when we are on this side, we try to correct them. Daily, in the hospital services, in the organization of the hospitals, I always said, and I'll say it again, that everything is not perfect. It is not an easy thing to reorganize a country ravaged by war.

But the essential thing is that the faults must be understood in order to be corrected. Several people in the South have told me I see life as rosy in the North.

The ignorant peasants can be indoctrinated; but for me, life in the North is not yet an ideal life.

Before my departure for the South, the North had very great economic difficulties. The country must be rebuilt independently of other socialist countries. I have seen faults in the North. But the faults can be corrected. (26.)

A senior sergeant who said that he had disliked life in the North and had defected at the first opportunity once he was back in the South, grudgingly affirmed that "the North has the support of the people," adding:

When somebody from the South is sent into the North, he is caught right away, after four or five days, because people have confidence in the government of the North; the people arrest the spy and bring him to the government. (33.)

(If this was indeed how the Northerners behaved toward infiltrators from the South, their conduct might equally well have been explained by the people's fear of punishment by the police, or by the attractiveness of rewards in a poor country.)

A mountaineer of the Rhadé tribe was enthusiastic in his appraisal of the DRV regime:

Life in the North was very wonderful compared to the previous years. There have been many changes in the North. The living conditions of the people were getting better and better every day. The people were well off. They had enough to eat. They were able to attend school. They were free with no oppression from anyone. There were no imperialist foreigners in the North. They had land to work on and buffaloes to help them plow the land. There were no more cruel landlords to lord it over them. (62.)

Possibly, the life that this Rhadé saw in the North seemed rich and abundant compared to what he had known in the mountains as a boy. His views, moreover, reflect heavy communist indoctrination, as did the statements of other respondents who similarly praised the Northern system. Though still others were less enthusiastic, only a small minority of the regroupees interviewed were openly hostile.

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Part Two

THE REGROUPEES IN THE FRONT

IV. RETURN TO THE SOUTH

ASSIGNMENT TO THE SOUTH

In late 1959 Hanoi apparently decided to open its clandestine offensive aimed at bringing down the Southern government through violence and ultimately to achieve unification under Northern control. The communist organization in the South was ordered to step up both its recruitment and its program for subverting the government in the rural areas. Whereas previously Hanoi had sent relatively few agents into the South for liaison, intelligence, and organizational activities with the Southern communist apparatus, regroupees now were trained in larger numbers¹⁶ to serve in the expanding Southern revolutionary movement, most of them as military cadres.

Because of their familiarity with local dialects, custom, and terrain, these Southern soldiers from the North had obvious advantages over Northerners when it came to sending personnel for the ranks of the insurgents. Perhaps the most important reason for choosing Southerners over Northern troops was that it made it easier for Hanoi to camouflage its involvement in the insurgency and thereby reduced the danger of retaliation against North Vietnam. Besides, most regroupees were eager to return to their homes in the South, and this gave them a strong incentive to fight for a victory of the Viet Cong that would make it possible for them to go back to their villages and live in peace. So long as the GVN retained control of the

¹⁶ According to the U.S. White Paper, 1,800 infiltrators came South during 1959 and 1960. (see p. 11, above.)

South, the regroupees could not safely return; the Diem government's treatment of those who had participated in the Vietminh Resistance precluded the possibility that a man whose regroupment in the North had obviously identified him with the hostile communist regime could come home to live in peace. From Hanoi's point of view, this was all to the good, as it reduced the danger of defection among regroupees who were infiltrated to the South.

Many regroupees, battle-seasoned in the war against the French, made good soldiers for the "Second Resistance," as did some of the Southern youths without combat experience who had received their military training in the Northern army. From this pool the DRV leadership selected those most suitable for service in the South. Not all the regroupees were found appropriate for such assignment. The best elements of those chosen, most of them members of the Communist Party, were singled out for positions of responsibility and authority in the Southern insurgency. The less capable, including those who had performed civilian tasks in the North, were drafted into the army and given special training for lesser tasks. A key criterion in the process of selection was political reliability. As shown earlier, time had generally strengthened political loyalty to the DRV. Service in the Vietminh prior to 1954, followed by five to ten years of life in the North, had exposed most of the regroupees to heavy doses of political indoctrination. The less reliable were now weeded out, and those selected for infiltration to the South received further political training, no matter what their assignment.

Though this pool of regroupées represented a great asset to Hanoi, the original figure of 90,000 may tempt one to overestimate it. By no means all the regroupées were of leadership caliber. A sizable number had no army experience or even army training. Some lacked the intelligence, and others the physical fitness, for the arduous assignments in the South. Men who at the time of regroupment, in 1954, had been in their thirties or forties were likely by now to be too old -- by Vietnamese standards -- for difficult service in the field. There was the danger, too, that the prolonged separation from their families -- our interviewees frequently called it "absence of sentiment" -- had affected the morale, and hence the reliability, of some regroupées. On being sent close to home, these lonesome men would be tempted to give up the revolutionary struggle to rejoin their families.

ATTITUDES TOWARD RETURN

In selecting possible infiltrators from among the regrouped civilians, the DRV authorities approached men they considered "reliable and patriotic," preferably those with some education or skill, and urged them to "volunteer" for Southern duty.

One such case was that of a 46-year-old cadre interviewed in January 1965, whose education had taken him through the "cours supérieur" at a Qui Nhon high school. He had joined the Resistance movement in his home province as early as 1945, out of patriotic sentiments, and had gone to the North on May 15, 1955, the "deadline" for

the voluntary population exchange provided by the Geneva Agreement. From 1955 to June 1960, he was in charge of accounting at the DRV Ministry of Reconstruction. Asked whether he had volunteered to go south, he said:

Yes, I did volunteer. In 1957-1958 national reunification was sabotaged. All the regroupees in the North were homesick. They often met to talk about going back to South Vietnam to help liberate their compatriots. The communist authorities learned of this general aspiration and contacted the regroupees, who all volunteered to go south. (30.)

In the South, he was a propaganda specialist who, until his capture, performed functions of middle-level responsibility: proselyting among the Banar Cham highland people; establishing training programs for Viet Cong recruits; and proselyting among religious groups.

The physician mentioned earlier, who had been practicing in a hospital in Haiphong, told of being asked to work among the Hrê mountain people in South Vietnam, but claimed that he had the option to refuse the assignment. He said about his recruitment:

I was told in the North that in the liberated zones of the South there was a group of montagnards who lived without medical care. They said my task would be difficult, with malaria, hunger, technical privations, lack of instruments and tools. I was asked to discuss this with my wife for a while. . . .

I have some colleagues who refused to go south by saying that they were not healthy, that they could not stand the climate of the jungles, that they had their families in the North. . . .

When I heard that there was a liberated region in the South where the population was not cared for, and I was asked to aid this population, I said "yes," because I thought I could accomplish my task. I had lived in the jungles. I knew the montagnards. (26.)

A 39-year-old regroupee from Binh Dinh Province had worked in the North for the Reunification Committee, a committee manned largely by Southern cadres. Among his duties was the supervision of all civilian Southern cadres in the North. Unfortunately, he was extremely guarded in his responses, and the brief interview with him did not reveal much concerning the important work of the Reunification Committee. He did say that the committee kept personnel files and that he had to follow up all activities of its cadres. He also mentioned that the committee was responsible for the education of the cadres' children and for sending the cadres back to the South. Asked whether they volunteered or were ordered to the South, he said:

The Reunification Committee decided about that. Some of the cadres requested to be sent back, but they could only go when necessary clearance was given. As for me, I was designated by the Committee. . . .

Everybody was enthusiastic about going. No one refused. (61.)

Although to the regrouped civilians the voluntary nature of service in the South may indeed have been emphasized, army personnel were not so coddled, but were given their military assignments in more routine fashion. But most of those who had been thus ordered to go told interviewers that they had not been reluctant; many even said they were enthusiastic about the assignment. Some of the interviewees, especially the typically hard-core who are given to citing political slogans, stressed their satisfaction at the opportunity to help liberate their countrymen in the South from American imperialism. Others

candidly stated that in returning to the South they hoped to rejoin their families. Many of them were bitterly angry at the Diem government's treatment of the families of regroupes, and they were looking for a chance to punish the evil authorities.¹⁷ These are samples of various responses:

I was joyous to learn of my assignment to go south. I was eager to see my home village, to see my family, to get in contact with my wife. (41.)

* * *

I returned to South Vietnam in February 1962. When I received my orders to go south it was the happiest moment of my life, for I would fight, suffer, and win with the people. . . .

My return to the South is the duty of all Vietnamese. I had to come south to help liberate the people. I was not ordered by the North to do so. I applied to go back to the South, but if I had not wanted to go, the North could not force me to do so. (29.)

* * *

The Party ordered me to join the Front in September of 1962 [approximately]. I left right away, filled with enthusiasm for two reasons: I could participate in the liberation of my compatriots in the South, and I could return to my family and village. (25.)

* * *

¹⁷ Though the information they received in the North concerning the treatment of regroupes families in the South was exaggerated by the communist authorities in the North, there is no doubt that many of these families suffered persecution.

I was ordered by my superiors to go [south].

Why should I be dissatisfied? I was going south to help liberate the country from the imperialists and to unify the fatherland. (12.)

* * *

When we just started the march, we were very enthusiastic, because we had learned of Diem's dictatorial Party rule, and of his massacres of innocent people. We were all eager to go south and liberate the population. Before we left the North, we were told that the South Vietnamese population's revolutionary strength was great, and needed only leadership.

Q: Did you have the opportunity to meet other groups of infiltrators who arrived at a later date?

Yes, they were all very enthusiastic and in great earnest. But upon reaching the South, they became weary; however, their revolutionary fervor did not diminish. (51.)

* * *

We were told that a third of the South had been liberated, that production had to be increased to feed the liberation troops, and that we were being sent to the South for this purpose. The infiltration movement began in 1961 with the regroupees chosen from among the more vigorous. My cell chief, Do Thun, left with the first contingent. My turn came later because I am weak. (47.)

An occasional respondent, generally a defector, would speak of recalcitrance among regroupees about going south to fight. A 30-year-old defector, who stressed his own disgruntlement at the Viet Cong, was one of those who maintained that few wished to return to the South. This senior sergeant (who, incidentally, represented a minority point of view in our sample) had worked as a

porter in a mountain station of the infiltration route carrying supplies from North Vietnam to the South. He had this to say on the subject:

I think everybody was forced to go south. In 1960 and 1961 people volunteered to work for the Liberation Front. But from 1962 on, people were forced to go south even if they did not want to. One fellow had a mistress in the North and pretended to be sick so they would not take him south; but when the doctor found out he was not ill he was forced to go. . . .

I think there were extremely few volunteers. We did not like to live in the high mountains, [but] we knew we would have to live in the mountains, because we could not live in the plains where the ARVN is. The mountains are far from civilization; transportation is difficult there. We told ourselves, "we will surely die in the South." But we did not dare tell our officers. We would rather have stayed alive to see the country united and then see our families again than come down south at that time and risk getting killed. Besides, we would not be able to see our families when we came south to work for the Liberation Front. (33.)

TRAINING FOR THE RETURN

Those selected for service in the South were then assigned to special training programs lasting from a few weeks to several months. The most important Northern training school for service in the South, at least in the early period after 1960, was Xuan Mai. Emphasis was placed on political training, in particular upon indoctrination concerning recent developments and conditions in the South. Some regroupes reported that as much as two-thirds of the total training time was devoted to political instruction.

The central theme of their indoctrination was the regrouped's duty to return south to help their compatriots expel the American imperialists. By 1963, cadres in training were being told that the Front occupied two-thirds of the land in South Vietnam and controlled half the population. (Several defectors said later that these exaggerated claims had led them to feel, when faced with actual conditions in the South, that they had been deceived.) "Peace, neutrality, and reunification" were said to be the Front's policies. One respondent described still other important themes of training:

The first line was the land policy. Once an area had been liberated, the land of the landowners who were not present in the village or those who followed the Nationalist government should be distributed to those who lacked land. In addition, the communal land should be given to the landless and to the people who did not have enough land to sustain their families. As for the village which had no absentee landowners and no communal land, we should mobilize the landowners to share their land with the less fortunate populace.

The second line of the Front was the troop proselytizing policy, the mobilization of government soldiers' families to call their sons back. In the field, the wounded enemy should be given equal medical care and be released right away. As for the captured, educate them for a few hours, then release them.

As far as the strategic hamlets were concerned, we were told that they were prison camps where people were not allowed to work after 4:00 p.m. and at night people were not allowed to go anywhere. (16.)

The propaganda specialist mentioned earlier made a lengthy statement on the course that prepared cadres for the return to the South. As he was a dedicated Communist and Party member, his description carried the substance and the tone of his political indoctrination and is therefore quoted here in full:

Situation in the South: A temporary government was set up by Diem and his clique. Representing the big landlords and capitalists, who were counterrevolutionary, the government was wholly in the pay of the Americans. The government's aim was to avoid applying the clauses of the Geneva Treaty, under the pretext that South Vietnam was not a signatory to it. They wanted to transform South Vietnam into a new form of American colony.

Transformation of social classes: The poor peasants were herded into the "Land Development Centers." Propaganda asserted that there they would become small landholders, but in reality they were forced to work there in the status of coolies. Thus the class of poor peasants was transformed into a "coolie class." A tiny party of the well-to-do peasants became rich, thanks to their servile obedience to the authorities. But the majority, especially those who had worked in the Resistance or those who had children or brothers sent to the North, were badly maltreated by the local authorities and the rich landlords who avenged themselves for the land reform under the Vietminh regime. Their property and their fortunes were confiscated by the Diem government. Thus the class of well-to-do landholders was changed into a class of poor peasants. A completely new class was created out of whole cloth by the Americans in the cities. This class comprised the slaves of the financiers. They lived an easy life, like that of the capitalists, but in reality they had nothing for themselves. Also this new class was linked forever to the Americans.

Development of the revolutionary spirit: The revolutionary spirit of the workers rose higher and higher, and from day to day gained new converts. The majority of the well-to-do landholders and the intellectuals turned in favor of the Revolution. That state of affairs forced the Diem government to promulgate the decree of October 1959 calling for capital punishment for the revolutionaries. That law forced the revolutionaries in the South to adopt a new form of struggle; political struggle accompanied the armed struggle. Activities of the cadres thus fell under three principal types: political struggle,

armed struggle, and "military proselyting." Military proselyting [i.e., winning over the enemy soldier by propaganda] was in principle part of the political struggle, but since military proselyting could bring us victory without spilling any blood, it constituted an essential point in itself. (30.)

THE JOURNEY

Following the training, the regroupees began their infiltration into the South, some in groups as small as 40 to 50, others in larger groups ranging from 200 to 400. Each of our respondents spoke at some length of his long, hard hike to the South. In only a few cases was there infiltration by sea or by the short land journey over the Ben Hai River that separates North and South Vietnam. In most cases, the regroupee was transported through North Vietnam by truck and, upon reaching Laos, would begin the long trek to the South on foot. The journey generally took at least two-and-a-half months (usually more), and was extremely arduous, leading as it did through dense jungle, streams, and thick underbrush and over steep mountains. However, the infiltration corridors, though rudimentary, were quite well organized. A local guide would meet a group at a position halfway between two posts, and guide it halfway past his own post. After an evening's bivouac, a guide from the next station would take the group to a point beyond the next post, and so forth. The journey generally carried the group through the Laos corridor into the highland region of South Vietnam. For those going farther south, similar paths within Vietnam led from one infiltration post to the next, to the final destination. Strict instructions governed the maintenance

of camouflage and discipline within the corridor, including smoke regulations for cooking, and a prohibition against asking questions of the permanent corridor personnel. Those who fell ill along the way (and many were suffering from malaria) were treated at the post if their illnesses were minor, and then continued the journey with their own infiltration group. If their illness required a longer rest period, they would stay at the post until they could join a later infiltration group.

INTEGRATION INTO THE FRONT

The well-indoctrinated regroupees added strength to the Front by providing experienced leadership, especially at the middle-cadre level, where they did much to bolster the morale of the younger Southern insurgents. One regroupee, who had arrived in the South in winter 1963 and was captured in the fall of 1964, showed great pride in his comrades as he spoke of their impact on Front fighters:

[The regroupees] have a very high combat spirit. They have received an intensive training. They can put up with all the material difficulties and they believe firmly in the final victory of the Front. On the other hand, a large part of the Southern youths who have left their families to join the Front have insufficient training. When they live for a long time in the forest and mountains, they are susceptible to illness, hunger, and cold, which badly lowers their morale. They do not believe firmly in the victory of the Front. There are some among these who wish to defect, but the regroupee political cadres can propagandize and control them. (18.)

A 30-year-old Southern cadre who had not lived in the North testified to the superior quality of the regroupee cadres from experience in his own unit. He had served in the Front from 1961 on and risen to the rank of platoon leader in a main force unit, until he defected in 1964. He said:

In comparison with the fighters and cadres in South Vietnam, the regroupees were militarily and politically better, and also they were the ones who trained the local fighters and cadres. (f.)

We probed in our interviews for possible friction between regroupees and Southerners, particularly cadres, who had never been to the North. In a country where the historic divisions between North, Center, and South have produced genuine differences in dialect, custom, and attitudes, it seemed likely that regional antagonism would show itself somewhere. Men who had fought and suffered in the South might be expected to resent those coming from a secure life in the North and moving into positions of command. However, the regroupees in our sample said that there was no such conflict. One explanation for this claim may be that the communist movement in Vietnam, both North and South, regards regional conflict as backward and puts great pressure on its members not to succumb to it. A 29-year-old defector, a first lieutenant who had joined the Party in the North in 1956, commented on the relations between regroupees and native Northerners, and revealed the Party's attitude on the subject:

There was no conflict between the Northerners and the regroupees. Army life has very stringent disciplines. The self-criticism session insured that there was no conflict. I speak only for my unit -- I do not

know about other units. In my unit, the question of conflict between regroupees and Northerners was very seldom raised in self-criticism sessions, perhaps once in several months or even a year. Northerners and regroupees maintained very good friendships. (54.)

Similar comments were made by regroupees regarding the relationship of Southerners fighting with the Front. One of them said:

It is true that those fighting in the South had suffered a great deal. However, those in the North had suffered very much during the French period and those in the South realized this. Also, those coming from the North suffered their long journey coming to join the Southern revolutionaries. There was good feeling between them. (41.)

It seems evident that, quite apart from the Party's disapproval of petty regionalism, the regroupees earned genuine respect from the younger Southerners for their experience and professional capability.

"AUTUMN" AND "WINTER" CADRES

Though the regroupees themselves did not acknowledge it, the few interviews with Southerners who had not been in the North -- particularly with defectors who had served in the Front several years -- showed that the regroupees' role in the Front did cause some friction.

One sign of this friction was a set of terms, discovered by an especially perceptive interviewer, which members of the Viet Cong used to distinguish between regroupees and those who had not gone to the North. The interviewer had asked his subject, a young Southern defector with more than three years' combat experience in the Front army, if there was anything about the Viet Cong

army which he disliked. The respondent, who had not been to the North, said:

There was discrimination between "autumn combatants" and "winter combatants." The autumn combatants were more favored. . . .

They are called so in view of the time of the year when they joined the army. Autumn combatants are regrouped soldiers, who had lived and had been trained in the North. There were differences in treatment with respect to rank, promotions, and living conditions. The autumn combatants behaved loftily, being proud of having been to the North. Soldiers of the two seasons were in casual brawls but did not fight one another. (b.)

Another young Southern defector who, like the aforementioned soldier, had served more than three years as a combat soldier for the Front, expressed a similar view of the "winter" cadres:

I, myself, was considered a "winter" cadre by some people, though I was not really a cadre. Autumn cadres meant those people who had gone to the North and returned [regroupees]. Winter cadres meant those who had come, like us, from Zone 8 or 9.

I didn't consider myself a winter cadre, but I was considered a winter recruit by some of the women attached to us.

Q: Did these women like the autumn cadres?

Many of these autumn cadres had gone to the North unmarried. They stayed unmarried in the North for 9 or 10 years and now they had returned to the South. Most of them were 40 or more. They wanted to get married. These women were very proud to have them for husbands. They were proud to have husbands who were officers. We new recruits, we didn't want to get married -- and they weren't interested in us.

Q: What did you and the winter recruits think of the autumn cadres?

Those who had returned from the North were all cadres and had high positions. We were only soldiers. If they mixed with us and liked us, we would like them too. If they despised us, we would hate them. Most of them looked down on us. Most of us hated them and thought they were haughty.

Q: Why should they feel that way?

They were haughty because they thought they were returning from the North and they knew everything, and we knew nothing. They thought that anything they told us we should obey, whether it was right or wrong. In fact, we had to obey. But some of us who knew the leadership policy well dared to oppose them. Some of us did answer back. (c.)

A 25-year-old assistant platoon leader in a regional force unit, a Party member since January 1963, who had served with the Front from 1959 until his defection in April 1965, showed his resentment of the regrouped:

The regrouped thought they had made important contributions to the movement; and, because they had just returned from the North, they despised the recruits in the South. The majority of them were individual heroes. Therefore, there was conflict between us and the regrouped. We were not close to them. (h.)

A 28-year-old district-level propaganda and training cadre, who had joined the Front in 1960, was admitted to the Party in 1961, and defected in March 1965, also revealed hostility toward the regrouped:

The Front lauded them to the skies and trusted them more than the Southern cadres. They were often assigned to steering committees.

They behaved badly toward their Southern comrades, whom they despised, thus destroying the unity of the Front. They didn't reveal it, but everybody knew that complex.

The Southern cadres and fighters endured hardships for years, while they were enjoying themselves in the North where peace prevailed. And now, when the struggle had already started in the South, they came to command and showed themselves to be overbearing, etc., thus bringing division into the Front ranks. (g.)

Another propaganda specialist was a 34-year-old defector, who had served four years with the Vietminh but had quit in 1953, though he claimed later to have directed a staff of 120 persons in Viet Cong propaganda activity. He said of the regroupes:

Cadres recruited in the South are dissatisfied with their leaders for having assigned regroupes to replace them. The cadres recruited here are not well enough educated to assume positions of leadership. These cadres complained that during the period when they were persecuted and imprisoned in the South, and when the war was at its deadliest peak, the regroupes enjoyed a peaceful life in the North. Now, suddenly, these regroupes jumped on the scene and became fathers of the movement. (e.)

It is not surprising that Southern cadres, especially after several years' service with the Front, should have felt resentful when newly-arrived regroupes were placed above them and given positions and prestige formerly reserved for the senior Southerners. In our sample, however, this resentment was limited largely to defectors, who, for obvious reasons, tended to be more critical of the Front than were the prisoners. Among the more severe critics were several who seemed more than ordinarily ambitious; they might therefore be expected to be jealous

of the regroupees who were brought in from outside and placed in positions of authority. But whatever antagonism there may have been between Southern cadres and regroup-ees, it does not appear to have been serious enough to reduce the effectiveness of Front operations.

V. POLITICAL ATTITUDES OF REGROUPEES
IN THE FRONT

WHAT THEY ARE FIGHTING AGAINST

1. American Imperialism

To the regroupees, the primary enemy was American imperialism. The theme that the Americans had replaced the French as the imperialist power in South Vietnam and that they were using Diem and his successors as puppets was strongly impressed on them in the political indoctrination sessions and by DRV propaganda in general. Interviews with prisoners and defectors alike show that Hanoi had succeeded in convincing the regroupees that America was the principal enemy. Thus, one defector (the senior sergeant whose disgruntled views of the DRV and the Front have been cited earlier) told the interviewer what he and the majority of his comrades believed to be the chief goal in the struggle:

I thought that the South must be liberated. I did not know anything about the government of Vietnam except what they [the communist cadres] told me. The foreign powers are exploiting Vietnam; that is why the South must be liberated. But thinking that is not enough. Action must be taken. That is why the North is sending troops out to unify the country. (33.)

And a 31-year-old former laborer, a prisoner, said:

I am a citizen of Vietnam -- the son of the people. I don't want any foreigner to dominate our country politically and militarily. I wish the country to be ruled by the Vietnamese people. (12.)

To the regroupees, the labeling of the Americans as the major enemy of the Vietnamese revolution was plausible. They were ready to hold the Americans, as the chief foreign supporters of the Diem government, responsible for the fact that they had not been allowed to return to the South as promised. Having been prevented from rejoining their families and villages since they first fought against the French only reinforced their sense of being involved in a single long war, in which the Americans had merely replaced the French as the colonial power. Excerpts from interviews reveal the prevalence of this attitude:

From our point of view, the Americans replaced the French in 1954, after the French defeat. The pro-American government in the South let the Americans turn the South into a military base in order to fight the spread of socialism. (36.)

The French before and the Americans at present have the same goal -- to invade Vietnam, enslave the people, and exploit human labor and resources to enrich the totalitarian capitalists in their own country. They have the same goal, but their methods differ. The French sought outright enslavement and exploitation of the people, heavy taxes, etc. . . . The Americans are more subtle. They say their aid is a proof of friendliness. (30.)

* * *

The French invaded Vietnam under the pretext of being asked by Nguyen Anh, who wished to reestablish his personal position; before that, the French had already intended to annex Vietnam, and Bishop D'Adran was only a spy. American aid is just as artificial. Although I have not yet seen the aid given by the

Americans, I understand that it is only an artifice. The products the Americans offer to the government of the South are proportionately very little in comparison with the bombs, the arms they offer to our compatriots, to the women and children of the people of the South. Before, Gia Long took the initiative in inviting the French to come here; today, the Americans voluntarily annex the South, because the government of the South is created by the Americans. The proof is that a man like Diem came from the U.S.; the U.S. sent him here to form the government. (37.)

The suspicion of colonialism, or "neo-colonialism," is a common phenomenon in the emerging nations. The Communists in North Vietnam and the Front, in particular, have a strong antipathy toward anything that suggests foreign domination, since, from their point of view, the Vietnamese revolution that was to have expelled the foreigners has been achieved in only one-half of the country. To explain the American presence in Vietnam, the Communists use Lenin's doctrine of imperialism, which states that the capitalist nations seek colonies as a source of cheap raw materials for their industry and as captive markets for their products. In addition, they cite America's political and military motives of containing the spread of Communism. Our data indicate that these themes are both pervasive and enduring. When asked to discuss U.S. interests in Vietnam, the majority of our group, including some defectors, repeated them. One defector said:

We must understand the true nature of our enemies in order to combat them. I find that the Americans are more pragmatic, stronger than the French were during the Resistance [1946-1954]. Their method of conquest of Vietnam is also different. Their principal objective is the economy. They are more clever and more subtle than the French, who only saw the military side. The Americans, to distinguish them from the French, did not construct an administrative apparatus in the South. They did not separate the governors from the governed. American economic aid, far from developing the abundant resources of the South, is aimed solely at subordinating the Southern economy to the American economy. America doesn't bring what we lack; she brings what she has a surplus of. On the other hand, the aid in munitions and in jet airplanes takes precedence over aid and food and economic equipment. Another point to mention is that everywhere one finds the American presence, a flagrant sign of intervention in Vietnamese affairs. (39.)

Following is the view of a 44-year-old unreconstructed regroupee, a prisoner, who had joined the Vietminh in 1946 and become a Communist Party member in 1947:

As I see it, the Americans will turn South Vietnam into one of their bases, their colonies, and cut off the unification of Vietnam. From the political point of view, it will help them to stop the flow of communism into the South, because if communism can't spread into the South, it can't spread to Southeast Asia. From an economic point of view, they will have the best of conditions in which to sell their products and buy raw materials. (36.)

An intelligence officer, also a prisoner, and equally "hard-core" in his attitudes, said almost the same thing:

According to my knowledge and people's understanding, the United States Government wants to turn South Vietnam into its colony, a market or a military base. But this is only their immediate aim. What they want most is to use South Vietnam as the gate to enter Southeast Asia. South Vietnam is already an

American colony. A rich person will never be satisfied with what he has. The richer he becomes the more he wants. Americans sell their products in Western Europe, but Western Europe is not enough. The Americans want more markets. But to say that the Americans want to sell their products here is to simplify things. There are politics involved. (29.)

Concerning U.S. military policy in Vietnam, the Vietnamese Communists maintained, at least until the end of 1964, that the Americans were conducting a "special" war and were using Vietnam as a testing-ground for a new type of counterinsurgent warfare. A communist propaganda specialist was articulate on this point in an interview in January 1965:

In my personal opinion, the Americans (and I mean by Americans the totalitarian capitalists in the U.S. who are controlling the government) are invading Vietnam and experimenting with this special kind of warfare which is raging here. This war has influence over the U.S. colonies in Southeast Asia and also in the world. So the American imperialists have to defeat this nationalist liberation movement. The world situation at present is such that the actions of the American imperialists could easily plunge the world into a third world war or a regional war, so they have to apply a limited warfare within the confines of a single country which cannot degenerate into a third world war. The American imperialists are experimenting with this kind of warfare here against the national liberation movement. (30.)

The Communists have adapted their interpretation of American policy in Vietnam to the changing conditions. Prior to America's recent troop increase and more active and direct involvement, the role of the American adviser was presented as a means by which the Americans could control their "puppets" without a large expenditure of men. A 34-year-old second lieutenant, who had served in

the Northern army and was captured in June 1964 while on an espionage operation across the 17th Parallel, explained the role of American advisers in the manner typical also of those regroupees who had learned their political lessons:

Earlier, in the North, I heard it said that South Vietnam was almost under American domination. Vietnamese officers were subordinate to the orders of American military officers. The dependence is not simply military but also political and economic. All of the Vietnamese army is in the hands of the Americans. Control is carried out by the procedure of American "advisers" at all echelons. In my opinion that's a new form of colonialism. (i.)

The official communist argument went on to present the American advisory effort as a clever, diabolical design for making Vietnamese fight Vietnamese.

2. The Feudalism of Diem

Since most of the regroupees lived in the North during the better part of Diem's ten-year rule, they had to rely principally on communist news sources for their perception of his "feudalist" regime, the fight against which became intertwined with the struggle against American imperialism. The regroupees had little reason or opportunity to doubt the lessons they were taught about Diem as the "puppet" of the American imperialists. One respondent, whose views are the epitome of Party policy, spoke as follows about Diem and his refusal to hold elections in 1956:

I think this is because the government in the South did not want to reunite the country. They wanted to keep the South as their own. In 1956 Ngo Dinh Diem made known his desire to drive toward

the North. Ngo Dinh Diem did not want to unite the country because he knew that he was unpopular in the country. The people would vote against him in an election. That is the reason he refused to hold an election.

Ngo Dinh Diem was very greedy. He wanted to keep the South under his control. In 1956, he wanted to drive to the North and take revenge against all the old fighters. He established prisons in South Vietnam. The most famous of these prisons was Phu Loi. Ngo Dinh Diem forbade communications with the North. The 17th Parallel was supposed to be only a temporary military demarcation line. However, Diem used it to forbid communication between North and South. (37.)

This statement was typical of the regroupees' deep anger at Diem, whom they often referred to as "My-Diem"; (literally, the "Americans and Diem," it has become an expletive used to denounce the enemy). In joining the Front, they saw themselves as Southern patriots returning home to free their country from the oppression of the Americans and the Diem regime. One regroupee was indignant when his interviewer, a South Vietnamese functionary, charged him and the other regroupees with being aggressors who had brought "weapons, ammunition, and soldiers to South Vietnam to wage war." He replied testily:

I don't think it is right to call us the aggressors. We are infiltrators, not aggressors. We are returnees who came to overthrow the dictatorial regime of Ngo Dinh Diem. (46.)

Many of these regroupees, being former Vietminh, believed that those of the South Vietnamese people who recalled the Resistance were grateful to them for returning to bring the revolutionary movement to its final fruition. One dedicated Resistance fighter, a 34-year-old

senior sergeant, a prisoner, who had fought in the Front from 1961 to 1964, spoke for the large segment of regroupes whose revolutionary ardor had not cooled. Speaking on what motivated people to become active in the Front, he said:

They joined the Front because they understood what a right cause is. During the eight- or nine-year period of peace, the GVN didn't treat them right, so they joined the Front. The ARVN and the government said they were protecting the freedom and happiness of the people. But in their actions they are only concerned with their own interests and pay no attention to the people. Every day, the people are accused of being pro-communist. They have lived through the Resistance, and they can see for themselves that life under the Resistance government was completely different from life in the period of peace under the GVN. The difference lies in the fact that, under the Resistance, government people enjoyed freedom from every point of view. During the period of peace, the families whose sons had regrouped to the North were constantly watched by the GVN. They had to bribe the officials to be left alone. (64.)

An issue which caused great resentment among the regroupes was their belief that the Diem regime was arresting and mistreating not only former Vietminh members who had remained in the South but also the families of those who had regrouped to the North. A regrouped prisoner who had joined the Vietminh movement in 1946, when he was 25 years old, spoke at length of his anger and gave his reasons for it as follows:

The Diem government murdered many people whom they considered Vietminh. During the period between 1955 and 1957, 300 former Resistance members were murdered by Ngo Dinh Diem and buried in Go Vang. These victims were from My Ha, My Hiep, and My Trung hamlets (Phu My District, Binh Dinh Province).

Under the Diem regime, the behavior of GVN cadres contrasted with that of Resistance cadres. The GVN cadres liked to insult and beat up the villagers, and also they suspected everybody. They had a "feudal" attitude. They liked to maintain class distinctions. The high-ranking officials were haughty and their subordinates were obsequious, and they thereby destroyed the spirit of service in the people. The atmosphere in the countryside was similar to that existing in the feudal period. . . .

Most of the people in the countryside had relatives who had regrouped to the North or were more or less involved in the Resistance movement, and for this reason they were often suspected by the GVN, arrested and beaten, or taken away to attend educational courses.

In general, the suspects had to attend these courses for three days every month, but the length of time depended also on their denunciation by other villagers. Three days spent like that meant they lost three days' work.

These classes were conducted by the hamlet chief, or by the assistant hamlet chief. Those families whose members had returned from the North [the regroupes] and were staying in the neighborhood [neighboring mountain areas] were all forced to take the courses. The families whose members were still in the North were not forced to attend the classes.

There were about ten families in my village whose members were regroupes who had returned south, but these ten families were also related to at least 20 or 30 other families. (36.)

It should be noted that the prisoner, captured in September 1964, had been infiltrated to the South only in September 1962, and so had not been in South Vietnam during the period he described. His account and his anger were matched, with different details, by many of those interviewed.

In view of the prevalence of these beliefs, many regroupees naturally thought that the Front was doing a great service to the Vietnamese people by overthrowing Diem and even more so by putting an end to the reign of his venal local officials. A propaganda specialist, who had infiltrated in September 1960 and was captured in August 1964, gave this long account of the overthrow of Diemist officials in a Central Vietnam province:

The officials in the hamlet under Diem were cruel toward the people. They liked to threaten them, and they accepted bribes from the people they falsely accused as VC. They did so deliberately to force the accused person to pay them. They rented the public rice fields, which they should have distributed to the people, and pocketed the rent. When the strategic hamlet was set up, they forced all villagers, young and old, to cut down trees and get wood and build a length of the fence -- some very old people were forced to do this hard labor. The majority of the Council [the village governing body] members were Catholic.

After the overthrow of Diem, the people automatically demanded that these village officials be punished. They also made a formal protest to the GVN denouncing their crimes. The village Council members were angered by the protests and demands and reacted by throwing grenades at the people. Fortunately, they did not explode. The Council then called in the militia and arrested a few villagers whom they sent to jails in the district. But the villagers went to the district and demanded that their neighbors be released -- and the GVN had to comply with their wishes.

The villagers' strong opposition drove the Council members out of the hamlet and they fled to Qui Nhon. The GVN appointed another village Council. The members of the new Council were much nicer than the old ones. They were afraid of the people and complied with all the people's wishes.

As the people's strength grew, the Front decided to send cadres to the hamlet to propagandize and educate the villagers. The purpose of the Front was to call on the people to rise up and destroy the strategic hamlet. The people wanted to destroy the hamlet, but they were afraid of GVN reprisals. The cadres pushed them to destroy the hamlet, saying that it would be difficult for the GVN to punish them when it is presented with a fait accompli. Then the cadres told them how to go about destroying the hamlet. The Front sent a squad of guerrillas to the hamlet to help them carry out their plan. The villagers and the VC then burnt down the fence surrounding the hamlet. All the GVN officials fled from the hamlet. After the incident, I went to the hamlet to set up the agent affairs section which became the administrative organ in the hamlet. (30.)

A considerable number of the regroupees interviewed further justified their hatred of Diem and the Americans by blaming them for wanton attacks on innocent villagers by air bombing and artillery. The physician who had worked with the Hré mountain people told about his discussion of this issue with an ARVN officer after his capture:

Once I exchanged words with an ARVN officer as cannon fire was heard in the distance. I asked him if the cannons came from the U.S. He said yes. Then I told him that the Americans are supposed to come to the aid of the people. These cannons don't aim at the VC; they aim at the inhabitants. The officer answered with a Vietnamese proverb which says, "When two buffaloes fight it is the flies who die." I find this war unjust. I am a combatant and you can do with me what you want, but the people are the people. (26.)

It was understood by the regroupees that the principal aim of the Front was to overthrow the hated "My-Diem" regime and to "liberate" South Vietnam. This was explained

by a senior captain in the Viet Cong, who had been a member of the Province Party Committee before his defection, and who described to his interviewer the methods of the Front at the time he came south to join it:

The immediate purpose was to develop our forces on all fronts, political, military, and economic, leading to the overthrow of the Diem regime and to the liberation of the South Vietnamese people.

The methods used to achieve this aim were:

- a. to initiate an ideological campaign among the masses to instill hatred of the My-Diem regime, and to bring about a breakdown between the population and the My-Diem regime;
- b. to develop our armed forces by inducing the people into joining our ranks;
- c. to motivate the people to increase production and to supply food to the army. . . .

[In our political activities] our main purpose would be: to propagandize the people, to enlighten them on all matters. First of all, we made the people lose all confidence in the GVN and become demoralized. We then worked on this general demoralization and built up their revolutionary spirit. We brought about their self-awakening and caused them to participate voluntarily in various Front organizations (such as Students for National Salvation, Women's League for National Salvation, etc.). If we did not carry out our activities in a legal manner, we would resort to illegal means, such as distributing leaflets, raising the flags, or making the people oppose GVN policy and prolong all work beyond the time limit prescribed by the GVN and sending information to the Front. (51.)

3. Successors to the Diem Regime

The fundamental attitude of the regroupees in our sample toward the regimes that succeeded Diem's was much the same as toward the previous rulers. According to the propaganda line of the Front, the popular opposition to Diem had obliged the Americans to replace him with a succession of military dictators, all subservient to the American imperialists. Those regroupees in our sample who were still with the Front after the fall of the Diem regime perceived no actual change in the local situation except, in several cases, an expansion of VC control immediately following the downfall of Diem. They had no evidence or other reason to question the Front's position concerning the successor regimes.

A member of a main force armed propaganda team, a 34-year-old senior sergeant who had joined the Vietminh in 1949 and was a Party member, told of the argument with which his team won over many peasants in contested areas after the November 1 revolution which overthrew Ngo Dinh Diem:

After the revolution, the Americans replaced Diem with another man. We told the people that Diem's stubbornness and the strong opposition of the people had forced the Americans to change their cards, saying that it was a revolution. When we considered the matter closely, the content of the GVN was still the same: the GVN still maintained the policy of new-life hamlets and was still under the command of the Americans. Everything was supplied by the Americans, from the clothes to the weapons of the ARVN; therefore we could not call the new government revolutionary. Under the French colonialists we had Bao Dai; now we have another man under the command of the Americans. Only the master has changed (from French to American), but the people should not let themselves be taken in by the GVN. (64.)

Another loyal VC member, a regroupee who served as an adjutant in the Front until he was taken prisoner in April 1964, gave this opinion on the Diem regime and its successors:

As for Diem, even the persons of the GVN say that he was a dictator; he had a family system. I believe that that was true. The government of Diem and of Minh were the same, ruled by the Americans. The Diem government was anti-communist with a neutralist tendency; the government was against the Communists and against neutralism.

The Americans saw that Diem was no longer advantageous because of his repression of the population and the dictatorship. Also, they thought that it was necessary to replace him with another government, more faithful to the Americans. The people rose up against Diem. The new chief is more clever. The policy of Khanh is more subtle, more adept. (2.)

The aforementioned physician interpreted the fall of the Diem regime as follows:

The Front was sure that one day Diem would be dethroned. I don't know the program of the Front after the fall of Diem; perhaps some strategic viewpoints were changed. Diem's fall was a good thing for the Front, because the aim of the Front was to overthrow the Diem government, which was full of nepotism and oppression. Diem's fall proved that what we said was just. It proved even more that the Front was right. The population became more disposed to listen to Front propaganda. (42.)

The interviewer asked the doctor whether, with the fall of Diem, the Front might not face a dilemma if a new government, with American aid, were to win the favor of the people. His response included this analysis of the problems facing any national government fighting the Front:

It is impossible or at least very difficult for this government to attain that. Under the Diem regime the combatant sought two aims: (1) overthrow Diem and (2) eliminate American military aid. Now the second aim is always before our eyes. A more democratic government is difficult to foresee. It has already been thirteen months that this so-called more democratic government has shown itself to be not democratic.

I can see a contradiction very difficult to resolve: (1) If the new government is less democratic than that of Diem, it will be overthrown; (2) if the new government is more democratic than that of Diem, it will be easier for the Front to have organizations. I don't know the head of the national government now, but I would say that a government that would win the support of the people would win.

A completely military (GVN) regime cannot win over the people, especially when even the soldiers of the government ravage the population. Here, there is still another contradiction. On one hand, a civil government is incapable of beating the Front and at the same time of using democratic means. A civil government does not have real power. For example, a Minister of Interior does not have the same power as a Minister of War; soldiers obey their military chiefs. On the other hand, a completely military government cannot apply democratic means. It cannot authorize freedom of assembly and freedom of propaganda. (26.)

4. The Vietnamese Upper Class

The official propaganda of the Front holds that the war in South Vietnam is a war of "national liberation" in which members of all classes are welcome on the revolutionary side. The Party's policy, however, shows it to be a class war as well. Regroupees found ample evidence of this fact in the difficulties that those with upper-class origins faced in gaining admission to the Party or promotions, in the execution of landlords during the agrarian reforms, and in the propaganda against the "feudalists" and "plutocrats" who have "exploited the people." Some

regroupees said frankly that the enemy to them was the upper class: the Saigon bourgeoisie, the landlords, and the higher government officials; the people supporting their cause were the poor. One prisoner, the son of poor peasants and a Party member, told his interviewer:

On your [GVN] side, as far as I know, the army does not fight for the people -- I mean the large majority of the people in the country, the poor people. Instead, they fight for a small number of the privileged class. In South Vietnam there is no freedom. The newspapers I have read here give evidence of this. The people are not allowed to travel from one region to another. There are people who are too rich and people who are too poor. You are living in Saigon and you are well off, so you cannot understand the poverty of the people in the countryside. They suffer too much.

There is a big distinction between the government and the people. I will give you an example from the Cong Hoa hospital, where I received medical care after my capture. The sergeant in the hospital behaved like a prince; he was too haughty. In North Vietnam, there is nothing like this. Generals and soldiers are equal. The generals and commanders are very nice, and they mix with their comrades in eating and drinking. We shared joys as well as sorrows. (46.)

Another Party member, with a similar background, explained the resistance of the Vietnamese upper classes to the Front as follows:

When the Communists take over, the privileges and interests of the rich, the capitalists and the landlords, will be abolished. For this reason, they fight against the Communists. (64.)

The regroupees' view of the war as a class war was reinforced by their observation in areas under Front control, where many of the landowners and richer elements had fled to the towns and cities, leaving behind mostly the poor peasants.

5. The Enemy Vietnamese

The official line of the Viet Cong is that Vietnamese who work for the GVN are mercenaries. Though some are treated as victims of circumstance, whose actions are dictated by the need to support their families and who may be re-educated and forgiven, others, especially those in higher positions, are labeled as selfish and cruel. The view of the Rhadé highlander who was quoted earlier, and who tended to respond with slogans he had been taught, reflected the typical line of indoctrination. Asked why Vietnamese worked for the GVN, he said:

They work for the GVN for money and positions. The people who join the Front volunteer to sacrifice their lives to protect the country, to liberate the people, and to give their families a good life.

The people who work for the GVN look forward to the end of the day, so they can get out of the office. They look to the end of the month so they can collect their salaries. They want to kill more VC so they will be given a higher rank such as sergeant or master sergeant. I work for the Front because of my spirit of self-enlightenment. (62.)

The theme that the morale of the Front fighters was superior to that of the GVN forces was frequently repeated among regroupees in the Front, defectors as well as loyal adherents. Most interviewees stressed that they were fighting for "the just cause," while their adversaries served for money and lacked fighting spirit. A representative statement is the following, by a low-level VC soldier who had defected after wearying of his long service with the Front and Resistance:

The Republican army is endowed with greater fire power, adequate food supply, and strong home bases,

and its morale derives from its material advantages. The Viet Cong had higher morale, but was inferior in weapons, food, and rear support and had to be self-sufficient. (52.)

Finally, an uneducated prisoner of poor-peasant background compared ARVN and Front morale as follows:

In the study sessions, we were told that many Nationalist soldiers did not want to be soldiers. In my region, I met men who had left their military service in the Nationalist army; they told me they had been at Pleiku. Carrying cartridges was a heavy job; then at the slightest cause they shot any old place just to empty their load. The liaison agents say that at Binh Duong the guerrillas even captured groups of Nationalist soldiers who only tried to retreat. Among the Nationalists there are brave men, but the Front men are harder, stronger, with few cowards.

The Nationalist army is far behind the Front army. The ARVN can't endure hardships, hunger; their fighting spirit is weak; they depend on airplanes. Soldier against soldier, the Nationalist army will certainly be beaten. The Front has high morale. The political commissar stays with us, raises our morale. (43.)

WHAT THEY ARE FIGHTING FOR

1. "The Just War"

Like their statements on what they were fighting against, the regroupees' responses as to what they were fighting for showed the heavy imprint of VC political indoctrination. A series of themes occurred consistently in answers to the question, "What did you believe you were fighting for?" Those most frequently mentioned were: democracy; reunification; an end to poverty, injustice, and brutality; neutrality; and peace. Repeatedly,

respondents expressed the belief that the Front was fighting a "just war" and had the support of the people.

One of the cadres now working for the Chieu Hoi program assessed the Viet Cong's reasons for fighting as a mixture of motives, among which he singled out the "good cause," fear of the GVN, and the hope of a better life:

The Front combatants believe that they fight for the Good Cause. They are not against the people; they are against the traitors of the people, against the Americans. For them, even if they go to the Nationalist side, their life can no longer be saved; the Nationalists never pardon them. Also, once in the Front, their position is permanent. During the Diem period, there were executions in the villages, in the districts, that added to their fear, their desire to leave and fight for the Front. They talk of being outlaws; thus their sentiments are confirmed and reinforced.

I have met many men in the Front who have told me this and they believe it. Besides, those who are poor think that, after the Front victory, there will no longer be rich people, and that poor people like themselves will have land for planting. (50.)

A 28-year-old assistant platoon leader of a main force unit, a prisoner, whose interviewer described him as "heavily indoctrinated but honest in his own way," said:

The Front leaders and cadres think that the Front will win, not with the help of weapons but because it is fighting for a just cause. (25.)

In some cases, the responses of loyal Viet Cong had the mechanical ring of many slogans incessantly repeated by political officers and reinforced at the frequent kiem thao (criticism) sessions. In others, however, the interviewees stated the goals of their struggle with deep conviction, often with eloquence. Such was the case of a cadre, of simple peasant background, who had spent a good part of his life making sacrifices for

his ideals, first in the Resistance, then by the long separation from his family while living in the North, and subsequently in the more than three years of difficult service with the Front that ended with his capture. In earnest tones he explained why he fought:

I fight for the same reasons I fought in the Resistance, for liberty, democracy, and equality, to stop the oppression of the poor by the rich, to end torturing, beating, and killings, to end all forms of oppression. I fight for my family to be happy, to see my country unified and independent, and not colonized as before.

Q: Do you really believe these themes could be implemented with victory?

I fight for freedom and equality. We are still fighting. How can I know if we will win? But I am always confident that we will obtain our objective. When I was in [the Front], I was quite confident that one day we would get what we were fighting for because everybody wanted the same things I wanted. Everybody wanted to have freedom, to put an end to killing, to war -- unification. I do not want to hold high positions. I just don't want to see any more destruction and sorrow, nor do I want to see oppression and beatings around me. . . .

Q: Do you ever get discouraged in this struggle?

I see many people fighting along with me, suffering along with me. I want to keep on struggling without getting discouraged. I am just like a grain of sand in a sea of people. But it is such a long fight.

After the revolution of August '45, I thought we were getting very near our objective. But no, we had to fight in those nine years of Resistance to get half the country. It was such a long struggle. Then I thought I was just going to regroup to the North to stay there two years, but I had to remain in the North seven years and then join the Liberation Front for three more years, and we still haven't got what we have been

fighting and struggling for. But if I have to struggle all my life for these objectives, I will do it. If I cannot attain them in my lifetime, my children will continue my struggle; and if my children still do not achieve these goals, then my grandchildren will. There is a great solidarity among us. I cannot get discouraged.

Q: You sound as though you had infinite patience.

I must say that what I have said is not an absolute truth. But most people on the other side [the Front] feel the same way I do about the objectives of the war. A few cannot stand the struggle so long. Some eagerly join the ranks of the Front, and then, after a period of hard life, their morale goes down and they look for an opportunity to defect. There are a few of these people, but they are a minority.

If only the "liberation" could be accomplished right away! Most of the men are very aggressive in their struggle. I am old and weak, sometimes I get tired. . . . I was transferred to the production unit to yell at people to produce more. I get discouraged and frustrated sometimes. But when I see the people around me, the morale of the men I work with, I cannot allow myself to get discouraged.

The movement is growing every day, and this encourages me somewhat. But now that I am captured, I join the ranks of those who long for peace. It makes me sad to see my "brothers" suffer and die on the battlefield. I am weak and tired. . . . (24.)

The yearning for peace is particularly strong among the regroupee prisoners, reflecting their desire to be liberated from prison life as well as their battle-weariness. Most of them, it must be remembered, have not been able to return home since they began their fight against the French.

At times, some of our interviewers would point out that, if the Viet Cong had not attacked, there would have been no war. The allegation of Viet Cong responsibility

for the war was generally rejected, sometimes with indignation. To the regroupees, the war was a result of American interference, and would end rapidly if "Vietnamese were permitted to deal with Vietnamese."

Seeing themselves first of all as patriots and nationalists, most regroupees reject the notion that Vietnam might be permanently divided. To them, it is one nation, with a common history, language, and tradition; its legitimate rulers are the Vietminh, while those now ruling in Saigon are usurpers and foreign puppets. Though the regroupees strongly prefer life in the South to that in the North, their political security lies with Hanoi. The regroupees' desire for reunification arises not only from nationalism and a sense of history but from practical considerations as well. Interviewees frequently pointed out that the war would continue as long as the country remained divided, and many recognized that, until reunification, each half of Vietnam had to rely upon foreign assurance for its security. Some realized, too, that Vietnam's prospects for economic independence depended upon whether the South, with its rich agricultural resources, was reunited with the North and its larger industrial assets.

A recurrent theme in our interviews was neutrality. Prior to the American bombing of the North and the more direct involvement of the United States in the war, the Front had officially favored negotiations to "neutralize" South Vietnam, and the regroupees who spoke of neutrality were largely repeating lessons learned before February 1965. Most likely, the theme of neutrality was principally a communist tactic to get the United States out of Vietnam; however, insofar as it implied peace and the absence of American interference, it had genuine appeal.

"Democracy," a term adopted by most political systems today, has noble connotations for the regroupees who cite it. Here is how a prisoner defined the democratic nation:

A regime of real liberty, a government really elected by the people, a truly egalitarian society, in which there won't be any more exploiters and exploited. (5.)

Another, whom weariness had caused to defect, defined his ideal of a government for Vietnam in terms that would have been acceptable to most of the loyal Viet Cong whom he had left:

I would like Vietnam to have a more practical government. The government should do something for the people. The government must try to win the confidence of the people. The government should listen to the demands of the people, and try to satisfy them if they are reasonable. The government should not be dictatorial, but it does not have to yield to all the demands of the people. The government should simply consider the people's aspirations. (33.)

2. Commitment to Communism

Party Membership. One approach to assessing the regroupees' commitment to communism is to inquire into Party membership and attitudes toward it. Of the 71 regroupees in our sample, 43 were members of either the Lao Dong or the People's Revolutionary Party. The Lao Dong is the Communist Party whose seat of power is now in Hanoi; the People's Revolutionary Party (PRP) is its Southern adjunct. Despite the name of the Southern party (an apparent attempt to give it a façade of independence from the Lao Dong), our interviewees saw no effective distinction between the two parties. Most of them spoke of either automatic entrance or a perfunctory admittance procedure from the Lao Dong to the PRP. Seniority in the Party -- the "Party age" that is so important to prestige,

recognition, and promotion in the communist world -- was calculated on the basis of membership in either the Lao Dong or the PRP and was transferable from one to the other.

Our interviews leave no doubt that the Party is the source of authority in the VC movement. One of our respondents called it the "General Staff of the Revolution." (37.) A senior captain, who had been a member of a province Party committee before his defection in June 1964, spoke with authority about the organizational structure of the Front and about the PRP:

The supreme organ of the Front is the People's Revolutionary Party, the new name of the "Central Office of the South."

The People's Revolutionary Party represents the Central Executive Committee of the Party for directing the Front and the whole Party organization in the South. (51.)

On the question of whether the real source of authority for the Southern revolution was in the North or in the South, the regroupees in our sample were divided. Some, following the Hanoi line, maintained that the direction of the insurgency lay with the Front and that the DRV was simply assisting the Front army. Others explained that the DRV directed the Front through the Lao Dong Party.

Several regroupees with superior political training pointed out that a principal difference between the Lao Dong and the PRP lay in their respective tasks: while the Lao Dong Party was consolidating socialism in the North, the present task of the PRP in the South was to

"complete the revolution." This distinction was made by a loyal Communist who had served in the Resistance since 1948:

In the North I was a member of the Lao Dong Party. In the South I became a member of the People's Revolutionary Party. There was only one Party member in my cell -- myself. At that time I wanted to join the Party because the Party had advocated struggle against exploitation and oppression, recovery of happiness, and welfare for the people.

The principal objective of the Lao Dong Party is to build up socialism in the North. The objective of the People's Revolutionary Party is to revolutionize the South for popular democracy. Working toward its objective, the Lao Dong has built up a government, reunified the Army, all tending toward socialism. Means used by the PRP are: "unification of the entire people, including the army of the South Vietnamese Government, in working toward independence." This unification affects all persons who agree on this objective, regardless of whether they have worked for the Government or not. My "cultural level" does not permit me to judge which means were more effective than others. (23.)

Our interviews show that the Party is held in great respect by the regroupees, both in the North and among those serving in the Front. Even defectors who were critical of the communist cause seemed to retain a certain awe of the Party. For the time being, the Party holds out no promise of a soft life or special material privileges in the North, and certainly not in the Front. Rather, joining the Party is looked upon as an assumption of responsibility; it means that the member must work harder and perform more efficiently than ever, and show himself as a model to others. Party membership makes one privy to decisions, affords one the feeling of being on the

inside, and is important for advancement; yet the main emphasis is upon service and sacrifice. Following are examples taken from the statements of several present and past Party members as to their conception of the Party.

One rigidly orthodox communist prisoner described in self-righteous tones the role of the Party member:

The fact of being admitted into the Party shows that one has attained an elevated position. From the point of view of character, one becomes, in a general way, courteous, modest, and courageous before the enemy.

Entrance into the Party gives you a better chance than the non-members to study, to make moral progress, to make political progress, and to improve your thinking. There is an internal struggle [toward self-perfection, dau tranh], a special struggle, for the members. There is education, study of documents, and especially self-criticism for members.

Each Party member must be, himself, a model.
(37.)

Another prisoner, who by comparison with the foregoing was almost flippant in his comments, nevertheless expressed the same view of the Party's important role. (Because he had been "stained politically" by earlier membership in the French Army, he himself did not qualify for Party membership, though he had been admitted to the Workers' Youth Group.)

Party members have prestige. They learn first about what's happening. When they go to study sessions, they are helped. The people respect them; the people also consider non-members as not very advanced. . . . There are some who don't respect Party members; these are Catholics, but only in certain zones.

Party members must be close to the people, report everything. If someone does something stupid, the

Party member criticizes him during the self-criticism session. (43.)

A number of defectors who had turned against the communist movement still betrayed their respect for the Party. For example:

People belonging to the Party have additional rights. They meet in advance and discuss future plans before telling the men. I was not asked to join the Party, because only men of good character are selected. I am rather short-tempered; if my superiors try to use their rank to force me to do something I don't think is right, I tell them right away. That is why I could not become a Party member. (33.)

* * *

A Party member must be an exemplary man. He is the first to make sacrifices. . . . The Party member takes charge of the masses [the non-members]. The Party member never quarrels; if the masses quarrel, he calms them, explains things to them. (50.)

* * *

After I was admitted to the Party, the others watched me attentively, occupied themselves with my political education, in order to make me a true revolutionary, carrying out Party orders well and doing everything the Executive Committee assigned to me.

My comrades gave me a good impression in general, by their behavior and revolutionary zeal. I don't know exactly what made them join the Party. I guess they, like me, admired the Party and wanted to be members. (51.)

Our interviews indicate that the Party, especially in the North, was vigilant, putting members on probation for certain violations of the rules and expelling those who did not live up to its rigid standards. A senior captain who depicted himself as a playboy -- a most

unusual thing in a Communist Party member -- told this story of his expulsion:

Although I had been a Party member for nine years, I was expelled from the Party, and this could be considered as a demotion. The reasons for this were: I spent my time not for political training but for my own leisure; I wanted to marry a girl of a different social class; I declined to go to the Highlands of Vietnam to work there at the Bureau of Study of Forest Resources, on the grounds that I was not accustomed to the highlands, I did not know the local languages and customs, etc. (19.)

Another prisoner, who expressed his dislike of the VC movement and its cadres, gave this sour account of his experience in the Party:

I made some declarations, at random, that I had merited membership, and I was accepted. In the beginning, it was an honor, but after that, nothing more.

We had to go to meetings every Sunday, pay dues. I was criticized as being a Party member who did not set an example, arriving late at work, returning late after taking leave. . . . I was criticized when I suggested changing the administrative system in the camp to improve provisions; I was criticized for mentioning this in front of non-members. (47.)

Although the majority of our interviewees agreed that cadres gained respect and prestige through their Party membership, they knew also that they were subject to special controls. A former Party member gave this account of the Party's control mechanisms in the North:

Even among the Party members there is a classification into categories -- a, b, and c -- very good, active, medium or mediocre. The members observe each other, watch each other, make reports. They are themselves the subject of reports from the masses

whom they must educate. Each member must occupy himself with some non-member among the masses. Those men are also classed as tutors in category a, b, and c. In my P.T.T. (Post, Telephone, and Telegraph) service in Hanoi, 50 per cent of the personnel are Party members. The rest are considered the masses. Categories b and c (members and non-members) were more tightly controlled.

There is a Central Control Committee. The usual means are espionage and information.

Self-criticism is also a means of control, often used and very effective.

I found the control very tight. There is the same control in the other organizations, like the Workers' Federation. (39.)

Political Ideology. Another measure of an individual's commitment to communism can be found in the specific political ideas he professes. Good Communists are more apt than others to cite ideas drawn from the writings of the communist classics which their national movement venerates. The regroupees as a group have a high percentage of Party members and may well be the most communist-oriented segment of the Front forces, the result of their training and service in the North. Even they, however, revealed only shallow acquaintance with the traditional communist literature. One of our Vietnamese interviewers, a doctoral candidate in political science at an American university, was almost incredulous at his first interview with a long-time Party member, a regroupee, who had not read a single communist classic: not Marx, not Mao, nor even Ho Chi Minh, Vo Nguyen Giap, or Truong Chinh. With few exceptions, even the middle-level cadres in our sample did not possess the education, the literary inclination, or the access to libraries that

would have familiarized them with the intellectual underpinnings of the communist tradition. The Vietnamese Communist Party member learns his lessons mostly from oral sources, which tend to focus on the current struggle and the objectives of the particular revolution in which he is involved. Moreover, he is likely to see himself as a Vietnamese patriot and nationalist rather than as a communist ideologist. Communism (or "socialism," as they call it) provides the Vietnamese Communists with an orientation which makes them part of the "socialist bloc" in the company of powerful allies.

In the interviews, the specific objectives of the Party, or of "socialism," were generally expressed in noble terms by prisoners as well as defectors. The aims of the Lao Dong Party, according to one defector, were:

- To unify the country;
- To liberate the people and to provide for their material needs;
- To abolish classes, and suppress all exploitation of one class by another;
- To give land to the people. (33.)

Another regroupee, a prisoner, made the following distinction between capitalism and the socialism he had fought for:

Socialism wants to abolish all classes. Capitalism lets the classes remain -- some people are rich, some are poor.

After the independence of the country, the socialist regime wants everybody to have the same economic status, everybody to have the same interests, and everybody to enjoy life together equally. (24.)

When we asked respondents about their conception of a desirable future regime, they tended to speak in vague generalities, such as the following:

Communism works always for peace and the independence of the country, and takes the people along the road of happiness in the future. (18.)

Lucian Pye, in his study of the communist guerrillas in Malaya, comments on the fact that the Malayan Chinese Communists also had only a vague conception of the future regime for which they were struggling. He attributes this, in part, to their Confucian background, for Confucianism provides a clear-cut image of the model teacher, the model father, and the model king, but delves little into the model society or model government. The Vietnamese Communists whom we interviewed, rooted as they were in the same tradition, showed the same tendency: they had a clear idea of the ideal communist cadre and could recite his attributes, yet questions about the kind of government or society for which they were fighting elicited only imprecise, though hopeful, statements.¹⁸ A number of the respondents said simply that they wanted a regime like that in the North. A Vietminh veteran (a prisoner), who had served as an adjutant in the Front after infiltrating in February 1963, gave the highest praise to the Northern regime:

I only see the good things in the North: abolition of the rich landlords' land; building of cooperatives in all branches; movement toward socialism. (34.)

¹⁸Lucian Pye made these observations during a conversation with the author in April 1965. For Pye's analysis of the Communists in Malaya see his Guerrilla Communism in Malaya, Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J., 1956.

A few of the interviewees were prepared to admit shortcomings in the North, and expected a future communist regime in the South to be an improvement. An economic cadre with long experience in the Vietminh and the Front spoke frankly of the changes he wished to see. Though he did not demean the Party cadres, the respondent, a prisoner, found Party control stifling:

The Northern regime is not perfect and requires many changes. I wish for a regime that is really free, where the people are sovereign, where power is not too much linked to the Party. In the North, the Party involves itself too much in the power of government.
(14.)

Although a number of defectors in our sample seemed to share this point of view, it was rare, in our experience, for a prisoner to state so sweeping a criticism of the DRV's political system.

VI. PERCEPTIONS OF THE WAR

THE BOMBING OF THE NORTH

Since our sample includes relatively few regroupees who were still serving in the Front after February 1965, when the continuous bombing of the North began, it is impossible, on the basis of their views, to draw valid conclusions as to the impact of the bombings on regroupees in general. Because of the importance of this question, however, we are presenting below those statements in the most recent interviews which reveal attitudes relevant to this issue. They are not necessarily representative of a broad consensus among the Viet Cong, or even among regroupees. Of the regroupees who had served in the Front after February 1965, four were questioned at some length regarding their reactions to the bombing. Their views will be analyzed here, as will be those of another regroupee, captured in December 1964, who commented on the American bombings of the North in August 1964, after the Tonkin Bay incidents.

A 34-year-old senior sergeant, a Party member who had served with the K-105 Independent Company operating in Thua Thien Province in Central Vietnam, was interviewed at the National Interrogation Center in Saigon on May 13, 1965. Having been captured in December 1964, he was no longer with the Front when the bombings of the North began; but he had heard from his company cadres in September and October 1964 about the August bombings of the North, and later had learned -- apparently from prison officials and perhaps from other prisoners -- of the bombings that began in February 1965. Though he could not

speak about the later events with the personal knowledge of one who had still been with his unit at the time, his views on the August 1964 bombings are revealing of the reasoning of a "hard core," loyal communist cadre. While he recognized the power represented in these bombings, he gave the impression that they had not discouraged him; his opinion was that they would only serve to reinforce the fighting morale of the Front and of the people of the North. His interviewer described him as arrogant at the outset, but "friendly and cooperative" as the interview progressed. Asked what the cadres had told him about the bombings, he said:

They said the Americans bombed North Vietnam not because they were strong but because they wanted to strengthen the morale and the confidence of the ARVN officers and soldiers. The Americans had to bomb the North because the South was falling apart in the face of the people's strong opposition and struggle, and because the GVN was disintegrating. They did so to maintain the confidence of the ARVN's soldiers and officers. After the fall of Ngo Dinh Diem, the GVN administrative machinery from hamlet to district level disintegrated. Many officials resigned, and in many areas the people themselves arose, beat up the GVN officials, and prevented them from carrying on their administrative work. For this reason, the GVN officials no longer believed in the strength of the Americans, and the Americans had to bomb the North. . . . (64.)

To a question on his comrades' reactions to the bombings, he answered that they had not commented on them. Defiantly, he added that he wished the Americans would bomb the North more extensively and land troops there; "we'll then use the strength of the North to crush the landing troops and at the same time liberate the South." When

the interviewer pointed out that the United States was a powerful country and not easily crushed, he said:

The U.S.A. is a large and powerful nation, and possesses a large array and quantity of weapons. If they lose their weapons here, more will be brought in. There are two camps in the world: the socialist camp and the capitalist camp. So, if the GVN and the Americans use force to attack the North, the North will use its strength to counterattack. This means that the Resistance will become general. We'll be fighting both in the North and in the South, and we will thus be able to solve the problem more speedily. The two regions will protect each other, and if the North is annihilated by the capitalist bloc, the socialist bloc will be threatened, Red China most of all. For this reason the socialist bloc will not allow the North to be taken over.

The sergeant claimed that the bombings had had "no effect on the morale of the liberation troops." Nor did he believe that they would end the fighting: "The liberation troops in the South are under the command of the Front, and are fighting in the South," he said. "If they just bomb the North, how could they put an end to the fighting here?" Asked whether the Front would continue the war if the bombing stopped the North from sending men and supplies to the Front, he said:

How could the bombings cut off the supply routes to the South? They won't cut off the supply routes. This is a fact. Now that the North is at war, the North Vietnamese people won't bother to rebuild bridges and roads, so the energy will not be diverted from aiding the Front, and the North will continue to help the Front just as before.

Q: Let us suppose anyway that the supplies were cut off. Would the Front be strong enough to defeat the GVN?

I don't know. The war is being fought not by the Front but by the entire population of South Vietnam. Even though the war is deadly, the numerical strength will be the decisive factor. Equipment is important, but it cannot annihilate the Front, which has the support of the people. If the ARVN can win the war with equipment alone, why hasn't it been able to annihilate the Front within the last six or seven years?

Regarding the effect of the bombings on the outcome of the war, the respondent said, "I don't know." Then he conceded that "the bombings do boost the morale of the ARVN officers. They are confident in the strength of the Americans who are helping them fight the VC in the South." He added that this was an opinion of his superiors and that he himself had no views on this question.

As to whether and in what way the attacks would affect Russia's and Red China's support of the North and the Front, he said:

I have been in the South for four years now, and so, frankly speaking, I don't know anything about the assistance given by Russia and Communist China to the North. I think air attacks on North Vietnam will inflict heavy damage on the North, but they would not destroy the morale of either North or South Vietnam. The more the Americans bomb the North, the more the North Vietnamese people will hate them. It is clear that the Americans have used their strength to attack a small country. The Front and the GVN are fighting each other in the South, and the Americans themselves have declared that they are only helping the GVN in a disinterested manner. If this is so, why have they bombed the North? This only shows that the Americans are aggressors in both North and South Vietnam. This will lead the nations in the world to debate the war in Vietnam. They will debate whether this is a civil war or an aggression by the U.S.A.

Another loyal Party member professed to be equally certain that the bombings of the North would not shake the confidence of the Front fighting forces. He had been ordered from the DRV to the South as late as December 12, 1964, and was captured on April 25, 1965. While still in the North, he had personally witnessed the American air attack of August 5, 1964; afterward, he had seen one American captive being led away, and also two American jets that had been shot down and retrieved. After moving to the South, he served as a cadre of an armed propaganda unit in January-February, and from then until his capture as a proselyting cadre. During this time, he had heard the current bombings discussed over the Hanoi radio as well as among the cadres of his unit. Asked about the reaction of people in the North to the earlier air attack, he said:

The Northerners had long experience with bombing and strafing while fighting the French. Now the Americans are resorting to the same means used by the French. This incited the people to great hatred. The people organized spontaneous demonstrations and requested the International Commission to condemn the Americans, and at the same time they prepared shelters. The government incited the people to hate the Americans on the radio and in the newspapers, and there was a production emulation movement to make up for the time loss due to the damage done by the air attacks. The people do not know what the American policy will be, but they have had the experience of eight or nine years of fighting the French. (67.)

Further fragments of the interview relating to the air attacks are cited below:

Q: What did the government say about these attacks?

The Americans were warmongers. They have been defeated by the people in the South. The North was the rear; therefore the Americans wished to cause confusion and destruction to the economy of the North. Thus they want to cut off the supplies to the South and force the South to its knees, for the South depends on the North for direction and supplies in its struggle. The people in the North understand the objectives of the Americans in these attacks. They hated the Americans and, at the same time, made plans to protect their property; they hid their valuable things in underground shelters lest they be burned or destroyed by the attacks.

Q: What did you think about these attacks?

I had no idea about these attacks. I knew only that in their effort to take over South Vietnam the Americans had been defeated by the people. The Americans had sent spies into the North, but all these had been captured as soon as they arrived in the North. We will stop the Americans from carrying out such sabotage acts in the North. We will do our best to bring about reunification of the country. I was not afraid of these attacks, and my duty was to propagandize and explain to the people the objectives of these attacks.

Q: What did the people in the South think about these attacks?

Some of us knew that the Americans were using force to destroy the North; others felt that their labor for the past ten years had been for nothing because of these attacks. They were concerned about their families and relatives in the North and about their personal property which they left in the North when they came south. We all felt uneasy when we heard of the bombing and strafing. When I was living in the plains, I did not get to listen to the radio, but when I went back to the jungle where I could listen to the radio, I felt very enthusiastic when I was informed of the number of airplanes the North has shot down and the capture of the Americans.

Q: What did the Front tell people?

They said these attacks were being carried out by the Americans and the GVN because these two had been defeated in their endeavor in the South. Therefore they attacked the North, hoping to cut off the line of supplies to the South. The Americans were warmongers.

Q: What effect did the attacks have on your unit's morale?

As I have told you before, the attacks have no effect on the Front members, for they have realized that the stronger the Front is, the more attacks the North will have to endure. We became more enthusiastic when we heard that the North had used its own planes to counterattack. There is nothing that could lower the morale of the Front members. We are somewhat concerned about the fruits of ten years of labor. We have had to live on an austerity program, supporting ourselves with rice mixed with manioc. These attacks will destroy all our labor; and we have not yet had the opportunity to enjoy the fruits of our labor. This thought pushed us to fight harder so the South would soon be entirely liberated and the North would thus be spared further destruction.

Q: What effects do you think the attacks had or may have on the war and its outcome?

When the attacks began, we knew the war would not last long. The reason for this attack is that our strength has grown. When the Front was still weak, only spies were sent to the North. Now our operations in the South have expanded. The stronger the Front grows, the more attacks the North will have to suffer. However, we are not concerned about the defense of the North, for the North has its own defense units.

Q: What will the outcome of the war be?

I am not in a position to assess the situation and outcome. If the Americans continue to attack the North and to send troops into the South, the war will become much more intense. The North will be forced to call for help from other socialist countries. We

have been informed that many people in the socialist countries have volunteered to come to our aid, but the Front has not accepted. The Front does not want this war to turn into a regional war, but if the air attacks on the North become more ravaging, the Front will have to ask for more help. The Front will ask not only for cadres to be sent south but for the return of all the regrouped and the formation of the Northern Youth who will come south, and it will request troops from other socialist countries. On March 22, 1965, the Front declared that it does not want the war to turn into a holocaust.

Q: What effects do you think the attacks have had or may have on the support given by Hanoi to the Front?

This is the policy of the Central Committee. I am not a high-echelon cadre able to understand it. But I know for sure that the North will never be defeated. The North has a plan, although it is known that the more intense the attacks, the more the people in the North will have to suffer and the more the economy in the North will deteriorate. We wish that peace would come soon.

A different line on the current bombings was taken by the defector who had described his unpleasant job as a porter of supplies across the Ben Hai River to the South. Before his defection on May 26, 1965, he stated, he had repeatedly watched sorties against Vinh Linh in the North and heard the bomb explosions, since Vinh Linh was only ten kilometers from Trieu-Van village in the northernmost part of South Vietnam, where he was a guerrilla squad leader and deputy village chief. In contrast to the hard-core Communists, he spoke in a style more typical of the anti-Viet Cong defector, as the following excerpts from his interview show. Asked to recall his reactions to the air attacks while he was still serving in Trieu-Van village, he replied:

The VC claim that they observe the Geneva Agreements. But by infiltrating and sabotaging in the South, they have started it. They have caused people to be killed by gunfire and bombing. The Americans have thought it necessary to retaliate to devastate the North. This is what I have thought because, when I was in Vinh Linh, the VC had organized the infiltration of South Vietnam before the aircraft attacked. They initiated it first. (65.)

Other parts of the interview relating to the bombings went as follows:

Q: Was the morale of the cadres and VC troops boosted by the news of American planes being shot down?

Especially recently, the cadres have been much bewildered. In the beginning, they claimed that the Soviet Union and China would attack South Vietnam with atomic bombs. But several months have passed and these two countries have done nothing to help. The troops are also bewildered; in the operations they have been gradually decimated and have lost quantities of weapons. The population is fed up because they have been exploited too much and have seen no successful operations on the part of the VC. . . .

Q: In your opinion, how do you think the air attacks will affect North Vietnam?

When I was in the North, I was told that the North had been building up an army for ten years, with sufficient strength to crush the Americans if they were foolish enough to attack the North. Having so heard, and having seen huge amounts of ordnance covered with canvas, I was convinced that they [the North] had enough power to shoot down airplanes. Now, I have seen that aircraft has gone north constantly without meeting any resistance. If the factories and the cooperatives, built with the people's sweat, are now destroyed, imagine how discouraged the people there will be. The effect of it will be that the economy cannot develop. Near the Ben Hai River, people on the northern side only a few hundred meters away can see that people on this side

have been able to build their houses, can move freely for their occupational needs, and are well dressed; while they, on the other side, cannot go out to work for fear of aircraft. [In the South] only those who have relatives in the North feared for their safety and were worried.

Q: As you see it, do you think air attacks on North Vietnam will have any effects on the war in the South?

While nobody mentions it, I have been thinking about it myself. The cooperatives and factories in the North being destroyed by air attacks and being no longer productive, such air attacks will have a disastrous effect on the war in South Vietnam. If the economy of the North collapses, supplies to its troops in the South are limited and the [GVN] government will win the war more promptly.

On June 9, 1965, at a Danang prison, we interviewed a master sergeant who had served as a platoon leader in a main force unit operating in Thua Thien until his capture on April 1, 1965. The interviewer, who was particularly sensitive to anything that might bias the prisoner's account, described him as inhibited by the presence of a GVN prison official and, at the time, "anxious to paint an overly gloomy picture of the situation." He had learned about the air attacks on North Vietnam from Radio Hanoi and from the newspapers, he said. Asked what the cadres thought and said about these attacks, he replied:

I know that what they said did not reflect their thinking. In front of their men, they said that the aircraft were ineffective in the North because they were shot down. But, among close friends, they said the North alone was taking care of Laos and of the South and had much to worry about now that the North itself was bombed. (66.)

As to the effect of air attacks upon the morale of his unit, he said:

They had little effect upon the morale of the cadres. But enlisted men were very much worried, not knowing how their folks were doing in the North.

A part of the interview was concerned with the effect of the attacks upon the course of the war in the South, and with the reactions of the Southern cadres to the position taken by North Vietnam and Communist China:

They [the bombings] have a direct effect. The South is the battle front while the North is the rear. All the supplies come from the North. The supply of resources to the war in the South would be limited if every-day life in the North should be impeded.

Q: How did the cadres explain the air attacks on the North to their men?

They usually said that the South had gone mad and had to retaliate in the North because they were losing in the South; that the South could drop as many bombs as they wished, but the Front would continue to fight fiercely and finally get the prize.

Q: Did the cadres try to explain why the North and China have been standing still in the face of the air attacks?

Once, when the political officer was answering the men's questions, one of the men asked why the North and China had aircraft and yet did not intercept the South's aircraft. He answered, "Comrade, you should not worry about that. They don't do it today, they may not do it tomorrow even. The present intensity of the bombing is not sufficient to cause their response; but if the bombing should get tougher, they may respond."

Q: Were the men satisfied with that explanation?

When the battalion political officer talked, the men just listened to him. I don't know how they felt

about that explanation. [After a pause:] At that time, I did not agree with the political officer. I thought that the North was clever and waited until the world "raised its voice" in order to counteract violently and gain prestige.

Q: Do you mean to say you thought the North would react when the United States was criticized by world opinion?

It is not correct to say the North only. We should say the North and China. However, China would react only when the U.S. went wild, attacking with land, naval, and air forces at the same time.

Q: Why has China not done anything while she has threatened, as you may have heard on the radio, "to punish" the United States?

The cadres' worry at the present time is the disagreement between Communist China and Soviet Russia. As they said it often there, the Soviet Union is acting perfunctorily just to prevent the socialist countries from blaming her for doing nothing in behalf of her camp. She may have given a few missiles in aid, but that is just perfunctory aid. (66.)

On this last point of China's inaction, a senior sergeant derided China's false promises in regard to the bombing of North Vietnam. He had infiltrated to the South in August 1964, served there as a political officer in a regional force unit, and rallied to the GVN in May 1965. By the time of his interview, in July 1965, he was working for the Chieu Hoi organization. He said:

Each side has a strong supporter. They have Communist China and the GVN has the U.S. But Communist China is no match for the U.S. Communist China has told the North Vietnamese that the first time American aircraft flew into their country they would bring them down as a warning and, on the second time, they would capture the pilots alive.

But I see that the South has sent hundreds of aircraft on hundreds of missions to the North and the Chinese have done nothing. I realize that they have lied for propaganda purposes.

On the other hand, they said all the North Vietnamese youths should go and liberate the South and leave the North for them to defend. What are the results? Hundreds of bridges have been destroyed. That is why I did not believe in what they said. (69.)

THE COURSE OF THE WAR AND ITS FUTURE

The models of the two "extreme" categories of VC respondents described in the Introduction are especially relevant to a discussion of the regroupees' views on the course and probable outcome of the war. In one model, the disaffected defector or prisoner tends to stress the dislike of villagers for the Viet Cong, the GVN's superiority in weapons and men, the weakening morale of the Viet Cong, and other factors that he sees as spelling defeat for the communist cause. He is likely to hedge his predictions of a Front defeat by stating that the GVN will win "if it can win the support of the people." (This attitude was encountered particularly among defectors who had been in GVN hands for months and felt safe, though disillusioned and unhappy, as they vegetated in Chieu Hoi centers.) In the second model, the hard-core, loyal Viet Cong is sustained in his belief in victory by his ideological training and strong convictions. He asserts that the Front is fighting for the "just cause" and that it has the "support of the people," the two conditions necessary to eventual victory. Between the two extremes lies a third and very broad category; it includes the confused, the

weary, the doubtful, and those who will not predict a Front victory for fear of offending their interviewers but who cannot bring themselves to predict a Front defeat. Many in this category state that the war must soon be brought to a conclusion by negotiation, that each side must give way, and that the killing of Vietnamese by Vietnamese must stop. In discussing the further course of the war they will often stress their own weariness.

The interview with a 32-year-old sergeant, who had served as a propaganda cadre in Quang Tri, South Vietnam's northernmost province, affords an example of the style of the disaffected prisoner. He was captured on March 12, 1965, and was thus one of the few respondents in our sample who were still in the Front when the more recent bombings of North Vietnam began. Wishing to rally, but fearful of VC reprisals against his family, he claimed to have put himself in a situation in which the ARVN would arrest him. According to his interviewer, he was extremely tense, "shaking with fear," and startled by every footstep throughout the interview. He told the interviewer, a gentle, soft-spoken young Vietnamese woman, that previous interrogations had shattered his nerves. She recorded that he "was obsequious, and he kowtowed every time the interviewer posed a question." Though older than the interviewer, he referred to himself as either "young son" or "younger brother," and called her "my superior." Asked how he thought the war was going and whether the Front was winning or losing, he said:

I am not well educated enough to understand this question. But I think the Front cannot win the war, because the Front forces are not strong enough.

The ARVN has airplanes, tanks, a large army. What could the VC do? I myself would like to see the GVN and the North Vietnamese Government negotiate so that people could work in peace. (63.)

He made a number of statements on the villagers' relations with the Viet Cong and the GVN, respectively. At one point he commented on the reaction to a GVN order forbidding villagers under its control to buy large quantities of rice at the market, because of the suspicion that they were buying it to feed the Viet Cong:

The villagers said that they had two ropes tied around their necks. The GVN and the VC are both armed, so the people have to do whatever either side asks them to. For example, the GVN tells them that they should concern themselves with their work only, and so the villagers work hard. The VC come and tell the villagers to dig trenches to protect themselves against air bombardments, and the villagers comply with their orders. (63.)

He was questioned also on the villagers' feelings about the presence of cadres and troops:

The majority of the villagers said that they were living in peace before the Front members came to their village. Now the Liberation Forces come and go through the village so often that the GVN suspects the villagers and takes all the young people away. As a consequence there are only old people left in the village to go fishing.

Q: Whom did the villagers blame for this state of things?

The Viet Cong. The people asked one of my relatives to talk to me about the VC movements in the village. They wanted me to ask the VC to stop coming to stay in the village, because if they came in large numbers and information leaked to the GVN, the ARVN would shell the village. If the village were shelled, all the villagers would be killed. The people thought

I was a Front cadre. That was why they talked to me. They were afraid they would all be killed if the ARVN attacked the village when the VC were there.

Asked whether the villagers liked the Front, he said:

They liked to see the country independent, but they didn't like the VC because the latter lied to them. The villagers told me frankly that the VC were liars. The villagers said, for example: "The VC talked about their victories in nobody knows what areas. We did not understand what they said. They told us that the GVN and Americans are exploiting the people. But for ten years now, nobody has exploited us. We have been able to work and trade in peace." So I told the villagers that life in the hamlet is very good, and that life in the North is miserable.

The sergeant's report of what the villagers said about the Americans was unusually mild:

They said that, if the Americans were exploiting them, why did they come to the village to distribute American rice and corn to the people? I told the villagers that the VC and the Americans are both saying bad things about each other. The VC said the Americans are exploiting the people and transporting the country's resources to the U.S.A.; therefore, we should drive the Americans out of the country, because if we let them stay here too long they will dominate us like the French.

The Americans said that the VC are exploiting the people. I told the villagers that, since both sides are saying bad things about each other, the people are lost and don't know whom they should believe.

The aforementioned unhappy porter, who had defected from Trieu-Van village in Quang Tri, gave a similar account of the villagers' distaste for the Viet Cong, and added that this unfavorable popular attitude was taking a toll of the cadres' morale:

In the North, we were told that if the Americans chose to violate the territory of the North, the Soviet Union and China would provide all necessary armament to attack South Vietnam. "Please be gone," we were told, "you must not hesitate at this stage." Having come South, after staying in the plains for nearly a year, we have seen no change in the situation. The [VC] troops continue to destroy hamlet fences, call together meetings, and ask for rice; but the VC have never been able to establish a government. It is true that the coastal area has become less secure, but the population sees that, every time government forces advance, the VC have to retreat. The VC never deploy for a battle; they have never been able to shoot and kill any government soldiers or capture any weapons. They just fire a few random shots and run. They dig underground passages, with the claim of fighting the nationalists.

The population is disgusted and too miserable; they say that the VC should fight a battle once and for all. The cadres have been saying that they will fight, but they never have. The cadres themselves are discouraged because the population will not listen to them. The population is afraid; they do not say a word but they don't do what the cadres tell them to do. They even want to re-establish "Hoi-te" (village authorities loyal to the government) as in times of old, in order to be able to move around for their daily work. The cadres coming back from work sigh in despair because the population no longer listens to them. They ask villagers to cook meals for them, and the latter invariably decline with such excuses as being busy with farming or fishing. Only a few families cook for them out of fear, but they are really very few. (65.)

Regroupees of the "hard-core" loyal Viet Cong type often gave responses which bespoke a tenacious belief in a Front victory. A 46-year-old propaganda specialist, who had joined the Resistance in 1945 and lived in a communist environment until his capture in August 1964, made the following statement:

The Front is on the way up. It will certainly achieve victory. From 1955 to 1960, the revolution was still in infancy. From 1960 onward, it kept growing and now has become extremely strong, in spite of the fact that the GVN has better weapons now and in spite of the Staley-Taylor Plan. The Front now has larger areas under its control. The people support it in larger numbers. It has a larger army. More countries in the world support it, and even the American people and intellectuals are supporting the Front. (30.)

A lieutenant who had served as an intelligence officer in the Front until his capture in September 1964 showed the same confidence. He asserted that the Vietnamese people supported the Front, because it meant their country's liberation from the foreigners. When challenged with the argument that, if this were so, the war should have been over long ago, he shot back at his interviewer:

If this revolution did not come from the people, it would have been dead ten years ago. In 1958, it was the GVN year; there was peace everywhere. And what do you find now? If this revolution did not originate from the people, how could it have survived until now? If it had no support from the people, how could it have been so widely known and progress to this point? The revolution started out very poorly armed in many areas; it was the people who armed their soldiers. We have the people's support, but the revolution has not yet come to its successful ending. Why? Because there are still mighty weapons and lots of prisons on this side. If it were the GVN that had the support of the people, you would not have to fear defeat, because you would possess every means to bring the revolution to an end.

Q: Why do you think the revolution is making progress?

If I did not know, I would not be a revolutionist. Look at the map. What area was under the Front control in 1964? Every year the GVN loses some areas.

At the beginning, we had only guerrillas at the village level who carried troubles to the GVN; now we have regiment-sized forces. A few years ago we lived in the mountain areas. Now we come down to the delta.

The GVN had its officials at the village level to conduct its business; now they are no more. The government's machinery has broken down completely at the village level. There is no one to carry out its programs such as the strategic hamlet program or rural improvement program. The areas under Front control expand every year while the areas under GVN control shrink. (25.)

The 34-year-old Party member and senior sergeant whose hard-line communist views on the bombings of the North were quoted earlier was confident of victory despite the increased U.S. involvement in the war, a confidence in keeping with his general attitude. Questioned about the impact of the presence of American troops on Front morale and on the further course of the war, he said:

If the Front cadres and fighters don't understand which of the two factors [men or weapons] will determine final victory or defeat, they will be demoralized by the presence of American combat forces here.

Q: In your opinion, which one is the decisive factor?

I think the decisive factor is men. Weapons are important also, but numerical strength will decide the outcome of the war.

Q: Do you think then that, if the Americans keep sending their troops here to increase the numerical strength of the ARVN, the GVN will win the war?

It depends on what kinds of men are on your side. If the entire Vietnamese nation, from North to South, did not agree to the Americans' sending their troops over here to fight, if the world did not approve of their presence in Vietnam, could they live here? (64.)

The sergeant then was asked whether he wished that Russia and Red China would send troops to help the Front. He answered:

In a war, it is not good for us to bring outside forces into the country to help us. If these outside forces were brought in, the war would either become general or would turn into a world war. If this happens, nuclear warhead missiles will be used. The interrogators here [at the National Interrogation Center] asked me if I was afraid of having Chinese Communist troops in Vietnam, and they talked to me about Chinese domination in the ancient times. I told them feudalist China is different from socialist China. Red China at the present time is a brother of North Vietnam, which also belongs to the socialist camp. China helps us in a disinterested manner. Anyway, compared to China, Vietnam is so small, what use would Vietnam be to China?

The interviewer, aware that twenty-five North Vietnamese troops had been assigned to the sergeant's unit in October 1964, then asked what effect the bombings had had on the morale of these Northern infiltrators. The answer:

If they were scared of fighting, they wouldn't have come here. They were even more eager to fight because the Americans had destroyed and burnt down their houses and disturbed their peaceful lives. They were the young elements of society, they had to put an end to the aggressive actions of the Americans.

You asked me earlier what effect the landing of American combat forces in Vietnam would have on the outcome of the war, and I gave you my answer. But I

would like to have you add the following. If the Americans land more troops here, the war will become general. The U.S.A. has a population of 200 million (not quite, but let's put it at 200 million), Russia also has a 200 million population, and Red China has 700 million people. If the Americans carry out a general war, could they defeat the socialist camp? If the Americans resort to nuclear warhead missiles and H-bombs, Russia and Red China also have them. Have the Americans thought of this? If in this general war the Americans employ only their troops, how long will it take them to defeat the VC supported by the socialist camp?

As to what it would take to end the war, the sergeant said:

Negotiations. Only when the two sides agree to negotiate will the war be ended. All my friends and I wish the two sides would negotiate, because the war brings so much grief to the country. The fighters of both sides get killed, and the innocent people also get killed. Nobody wants war. The Front is always ready to negotiate with the GVN on the basis of peace, neutrality, and the people's happiness.

Q: Does the expectation of negotiations make the fighters and cadres willing to wait passively?

No. On the contrary, the cadres and fighters have to fight hard because the other side will only negotiate when they cannot defeat the VC. We have to use war to solve this problem. (64.)

Another, intensely loyal Party member, who had left the DRV in December 1964 and been captured on April 25, 1965, gave an assessment of the situation and of the outlook for the future that read like an official communist document:

a. The success of this war will not depend on the strength of the forces each side possesses. The success of this war is the result of the will of the people to fight. Once almost bare-handed, with the cadres in hiding in the jungles or in the mountains,

the Front can now boast of having battalions and regiments who have engaged in many battles with the ARVN and the Americans.

b. The government is not united. There are too many coups, this leader takes over and later is toppled by another, and so on; the army is divided.

c. The soldiers are more concerned about their salaries and their own life than about fighting. In the Front I have seen a Front squad rout an entire GVN company accompanied by armored cars. The GVN is well armed but it has not destroyed the Front.

d. The world situation. In 1963, during their meeting in Hanoi, the World Labor Unions, and in 1964 the World Peace Conference, both voiced their support for Vietnam.

e. The Front is conducting its foreign relations with other countries, and the world now knows that there exists a Liberation Front in South Vietnam. Although some members of the Front have been captured, the Front is against defeatism.

[As to how the war was going],

I think the war is getting hotter and is becoming a holocaust. It will not be simpler. The GVN possess all kinds of powerful weapons; so does the Front. If the two sides cannot come to the negotiation table, I am sure the war will be much more destructive. This is a special war, for in this war the Vietnamese kill the Vietnamese. If the war is not ended soon, it will turn into a regional war -- it will not be a world war -- and many countries will take part in it. Take for instance right now: the GVN is aided by the Americans, the South Koreans, and the Australians. If the Front cannot withstand this combined force, the Front will be obliged to call in soldiers from the socialist countries to its aid. The war will then become devastating and deadly, and the Vietnamese will be the ones who have to endure all the sufferings if there is no negotiation soon.

Q: Which side do you think is winning?

Looking at the situation, I have to concede that the GVN soldiers are better equipped than the Front's. The GVN has the air force, the marines, the navy, which the Front does not have. However, the Front has the support of the people. If the Front had the strength the GVN has, the Front would have won a long time ago. At the present time, the majority of the people are for the Front, and the side that has the people will win the war in the end. It is difficult to say which side will win in the end. Right now the two sides are equal. The GVN is strong but it cannot destroy the Front. As for the Front, it is becoming more powerful every day. The Front only engages in combat if the Front knows that it will win. Otherwise the Front members will retreat to their bases.

Q: How many stages are there in this war?

This is the equilibrium phase. This phase will prepare for the general insurrection. In order to bring about the general insurrection, the Front is building an equivalent force. The Front has to have the support of the people and an equivalent force. The year 1965 is the year of preparation for the coming years. (67.)

Following are the statements of other Front members who have maintained their faith in victory. Except for one of them, who has been a prisoner since late 1963, they were captured in the summer or fall of 1964.

I am confident that the Front will achieve final victory, but I don't know when. We will have achieved victory when there are no foreigners left in the South.

While we were in the North, and also during my stay in the Front, we were taught that the revolution would be long and arduous. The cadres would have to endure hardships, hunger and cold, difficulties, sacrifices of their own personal lives and their families. Even though the revolution is long and difficult, its duration is limited. We still believe in the final victory of the Front.

I know that the revolution will last very long, but I am confident that I'll see my country independent before I die, unless I am struck by sudden death. (36.)

* * *

One knows that, to make a revolution, one must put up with material difficulties . . . that's something one expects in advance. Difficulties do not diminish my belief in final victory. (12.)

* * *

I believe [in victory] always. That's the reason why I participate and work. All of the people of the South detest the imperialist invaders. Generally speaking, the Front has as its goal to chase out the foreigners. That's the aspiration of the people, and the force of the people shall conquer. (18.)

* * *

I have always believed that we will win. I am a member of that political system, and therefore I believe in that system. (10.)

* * *

Our people would suffer and many people would be killed as a result of the war. But anyway we would win. That was my conviction. (1.)

* * *

I believe in the victory of the Front because, at present, the Front is in an advantageous position compared to the Resistance during the war against the French in 1950. Today we have a Front organization, an army, and radio communications to make known our struggle to the entire world. (13.)

In contrast to the foregoing are comments by the third category of respondents, who speak of neither a

Front nor a GVN victory but stress the problems entailed in resolving the war. Some of these statements are cited below.

A defector who rallied in March 1963, spoke in January 1965 quite frankly about his estimate of the length of the war -- and in so doing, revealed a remarkable sense of personal security:

I think the war will never end. When I was with the Front, I had to believe that the Front was winning.

(1) This is the people's war. Any side that has the support of the people will win the war. If the people do not care whether a side wins or not, this is an indicator that that side will lose. As I see it, the Front has the support of many people because it follows a flexible policy.

(2) During all those nine years of fighting against the French, the Vietminh fought almost empty-handed, and at the end they won half the country from the French.

(3) The VC has strong support -- the North. If the GVN wants to win this war, it first has to have the support of the people and modern weapons. During the mopping-up operations, the soldiers should refrain from taking people's belongings. (48.)

A prisoner who had been an adjutant in the Front from November 1962 until his capture in April 1964 expressed this view on the future of the war:

It will be prolonged. I don't know up until what point. The Front becomes stronger and stronger, the GVN gets well furnished with arms but cannot win, but neither can the Front be victorious then.
(2.)

A senior captain, who had served the Front from 1960 until his defection in June 1964, said on the same subject:

We believe almost unanimously that this war will not finish easily, and might be transformed into a second Korean war, because there are two opposing camps.

I believe that reunification of the country is in the very distant future, because it will be necessary for one of the two camps to gain a final victory, and at the present time each camp has its own ideology, its power, and its strategy to maintain the equilibrium. (51.)

A second lieutenant, who had been captured in January 1963, made this declaration:

Formerly, I wished only for victory over the GVN and to achieve that victory rapidly. Now that I have been in the South I am beginning to reflect. I find that the government of the South also has a policy aiming at bringing happiness to the people, just like the North. The difference is that both sides don't follow the same road, nor the same methods. (40.)

A 33-year-old infantry platoon leader, a prisoner since December 1964, expressed the view of those who were weary of the war. Though he was not asked what he thought of the future of the war, his attitude suggested fatigue. He had married while serving in the Front, and apparently, had conditions permitted, would have been glad to give up the revolutionary struggle in which he had been caught up since he joined the Vietminh in 1945. He told the interviewer:

Personally, after I got married I did not feel like being in combat, but I would not dare tell that to my wife. In the Front, the women were mobilized

to encourage their men in combat. Had I known the whereabouts of my sister's family, I would have found a way to visit them. Sometimes I felt very sad. Many Front members got homesick and they began to smoke and drink tea and wine. Had I known that, if I gave myself up, my safety would be guaranteed, I would have done that a long time ago. We are all fed up with the war. During the Resistance the French did not have an abundance of bombs and ammunition; but now, with the help of the Americans, bombs and ammunition are plentiful. We are all very weary and hate to fight. (58.)

The next two statements also belong in the third category of responses:

The majority believed in final victory on the side of the North. But that wasn't my opinion. There can be no peace if mutual concessions are not made by both sides. On that single condition there is a possibility for peace between the two regions and reunification would be possible. (32.)

* * *

As for me, I don't care if it's one side or the other which governs. The essential thing is that the Vietnamese live as brothers. When there are no longer any foreigners in our affairs, Vietnam will be unified. (34.)

The platoon leader who was thought to have felt inhibited by the presence of a GVN prison official was asked what had been his expectation as to the length of the war when he was still in the Front. He said:

I was able to look at it from only one angle. Because of treacherous propaganda, I believed the war would come to an end in 1965. (66.)

Asked whether his views had changed between the time of his infiltration, in 1962, and his capture, in April 1965, he answered:

In early 1963, I saw that main force units were spreading on the plains. The VC in their propaganda capitalized on the situation of various areas and induced me to believe that the end of the war was near.

Q: At the present time, when do you judge the war will end?

It is impossible to judge. Now I have realized that I had judged wrongly. (66.)

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Part Three

THE DEFECTORS

VII. WHY DO THEY RALLY?

Political and military weaknesses of an insurgent movement may be illuminated by an analysis of the reasons why some of its followers leave it. Thus, the 15 accounts of defection in our total regrouped sample of 71 reveal stresses in the VC system that were strong enough to make regrouped abandon a cause which they had served for ten years or more.

Some basic information on these regrouped defectors may help in evaluating their reasons for defection. The most recent defectors in our sample, and the only ones to come over in 1965 (both in May of that year), were a squad leader of a village guerrilla unit, who also served as a VC deputy chief of village, and a senior sergeant. The next most recent, a sergeant and a lieutenant, defected in July 1964, six others between January and June 1964, four in 1963, and one, who now works for the GVN Chieu Hoi program, in 1962. Ten of the defectors were Party members, three were not, and the membership of the remaining two is unknown.

The ages of the defectors are relevant in view of their common complaint that they were growing "old," and the apparent feeling that their life was slipping by before they had had time to found a family and settle down. The oldest in our sample was 44 at the time of defection, two were between 36 and 40, and the others ranged between the ages of 29 and 35. (In Vietnam, where life expectancy is considerably lower than in most advanced Western countries, 35 is considered quite old.)

When asked to rate their families' relative wealth according to the categories established by the Vietminh, eight of the fifteen defectors stated that they came from "poor" backgrounds, two specified "middle," and five "well-off" or "rich." Among those who classified themselves as well-off or rich, there was an indication that being relegated to this category was a major factor in their decision to defect.

The defectors ranged from a former member of a province Party committee with the grade of senior captain down to a corporal from a main force battalion. Between them, as regards their level of responsibility in the Front, were two cadres who had performed administrative tasks (one was involved with transport at the province level and the other was a district committee secretary); seven lieutenants with military tasks (three with the artillery, two in communications, and two platoon leaders); three sergeants; and a village guerrilla squad leader. Twelve of the defectors had been in the South less than a year when they changed sides; one had served with the Front almost two years, another two-and-a-half years, and one (the senior captain), four years.

Most cases of defection are to be explained by a combination of reasons. Generally speaking, they were brought on by material hardship and personal dissatisfaction coupled with opportunity. Among the regroupees, weariness, hunger, loneliness, and fear were the most common complaints likely to make them think about rallying to the GVN. The long separation from family and home was particularly painful, and the hunger, dampness, and cold of jungle life, coupled with fear of death in combat and

the apprehension of improper burial, made this loneliness hard to bear. Once his morale had been shaken by these hardships, the weary combatant was prone to find faults in the VC system. Some of the defectors, for example, complained about the undue severity of the control system, especially the criticism sessions. (Men with poor combat records, and those who had difficulties with their superiors, were particularly sensitive on this score.) There were also those whose parents had been classified as well-off, including a few sons of rich landowners. Never fully integrated into the communist environment, some of them had witnessed the persecution of landowners during the land reform in the North, and would seem to have been waiting only for a safe opportunity to escape. Other regroupees, having noticed that conditions of life in the South were quite different from what they had learned in their Northern indoctrination, had reexamined and revised their faith with regard to superiors as well as ideology.

A senior captain who had served four years in the Front before defecting gave a lucid description of the hardships faced by many Viet Cong. As his account suggests, guerrilla life in the highlands is especially difficult for the ethnic Vietnamese, who are lowland people and traditionally have found the mountains uninviting. Soldiers who have to move frequently are particularly aware of the cold nights, the scarcity of food, the wild animals of the mountains, and the strangeness of the sparse montagnard population. The senior captain had been secretary of a district Party committee and a member of the province Party committee in the highland region of

Central Vietnam. An intelligent observer, he summed up some of the problems faced by Viet Cong operating there:

We lacked many things. From 1960 to 1962, we were completely self-sufficient. In 1963, the organizations among the people developed and the people supplied us food; this lessened our hardships. At the time I rallied (June 1964), the situation, relatively speaking, had improved, because our forces had grown considerably. However, the troops' morale was tense, because they never had a moment to rest: study sessions, production of food, and fighting all day long. We did not have enough medicine to care for the sick, nor blankets to warm ourselves when the weather was cold. Everybody was weary, but thanks to the ideological guidance, they still liked the Front.

I knew in advance that I would have to suffer hardships in the South, and that I might die. Compared to conditions in the Resistance, conditions in the Front are not bad. During the Resistance, we had nothing to cover ourselves with when it rained, but now each one of us has a nylon sheet. . . . However, during the Resistance, whenever we were hungry we could go to see the people and obtain something to eat. [In the Front], if we didn't have enough food to eat, we had to dig up roots in the forest to eat. Shortly after I had arrived in the South [in 1960], we did not have any salt for six months, and we had to burn one kind of tree (similar to bamboo), mix the ashes with water, and eat rice with this kind of "soup," which is a little bit salty. . . . (51.)

Asked to suggest ways in which the GVN might appeal to the Viet Cong to encourage them to rally in larger numbers, the captain said:

In the liberated areas, the VC lead a good life, they don't suffer any hardships. Their emotional needs are satisfied, because they live among the people and are loved and helped by the population. There are organizations such as the "Soldier Foster-Mothers' Association" etc. which provide consolation to the VC away from home. In addition, most of the

VC have their families there with them. Consequently, the GVN should not dwell on the hardships in the Front, nor should it try to work on the emotions of the VC (being away from home, etc.). Rather the GVN should try to counteract the appeal of communism. It should destroy the VC dream of building up a socialist state.

It should be noted that, in describing the "good life" in liberated areas, the captain was referring to conditions which prevailed in some parts of the Delta prior to his defection in June 1964. With the increased air and ground activity by U.S. and GVN forces in 1965, this picture of relative security in liberated areas has obviously ceased to be accurate. Also, the captain's belief that most of the Viet Cong in these areas had their families living with them was exaggerated, reflecting perhaps his own wishful thinking. Inasmuch as he himself had been assigned to the mountain region, the following of his comments are likely to be more authoritative:

In the mountain areas or unliberated areas, the VC live away from home and have to endure considerable hardships. Their material as well as emotional needs are not fulfilled. Therefore, the GVN could stress the hardship and difficulties the VC have to endure in the Front. In particular, the GVN have to strike hard at the fact that they are away from home and appeal to their emotions. If the GVN could influence the emotions of the VC, they would be at the same time influencing the minds of the VC. Once the emotions of the VC have been touched, they will start thinking about their families and so on.

They are watched constantly, and such a change in their attitude will be noticed. If they suddenly became sad and absorbed in thought, for example, they would be immediately suspected of harboring devious thoughts. They would be made the subjects of a

self-criticism session. They would be watched more closely. Their friends would avoid them out of fear of being accused as their accomplices. They would become utterly discouraged, for there they were, away from home, isolated and abandoned by their friends, and their fighting spirit would disappear. The VC who arrived at that stage would be considered useless, and they themselves would rally out of discouragement and dissatisfaction.

In explaining his own defection, the captain emphasized the difference he had observed between life in the North and that in the South:

At that time, I liked to struggle for my ideals. I learned of the sufferings of the South Vietnamese people under the Ngo Dinh Diem regime, and I wanted to liberate the population from Diem's tyranny. For this ideal I endured all the hardships in the Front. However, later on (in 1962), after I had learned of the real situation and the life of the people in the South, I became discouraged, and began to compare the life of the North Vietnamese to that of the South Vietnamese in all aspects. I found out that the South Vietnamese people are much better off from every point of view. At the present time, they have to endure hardships because of the war; but if it hadn't been for the war, they would be much better off than the North Vietnamese people. I compared the situation in two regions, and weighed the pros and cons from 1962 until after the overthrow of Diem, when I decided to rally (in June 1964).

I did not want to rally when Diem was still in power, because I was prejudiced against his regime. I believed that his regime was totalitarian and cruel. Also, I did not have the opportunity to defect.

His having endured four years of hardship in the mountains, and the fact that he was 35 and had not yet founded a family, suggest that lowered morale may have made him susceptible to ideological qualms.

The difference between the suffering in South Vietnam that they had been led to expect and the reality that they found upon arriving in the South was mentioned frequently, not only by defectors, who may have been more calculating in their statements, but by prisoners who exhibited no desire to ingratiate themselves with their captors. Nor is there any objective reason to doubt that they were being truthful. The South has far greater agricultural riches than the North, and its people live better, and any intelligent observer who had a glimpse of life in the South could easily wonder whether things in general were quite so bad as he had been taught to believe.

A 39-year-old district administrative cadre, who had been recruiting laborers for production work, defected in April 1963, after more than two years of service with the Front. According to his story, his decision was prompted by ideological disillusionment mixed with weariness:

The Party in the North told us that the people in the South were living in misery under the oppression of the Americans and the Ngo family. However, having had occasion on my [propaganda] missions to Banmethuot to verify that the living conditions of the people were not that bad, I realized that the Party had lied to us.

Furthermore, I compared the life of the mountaineers before and after the existence of the Front, and I found that the Front brought them only unhappiness and misery. Before the Front came, the mountaineers had been happy and free; they sang, danced, traded, and had enough to live on. After the Front came, they were forced to the extreme end of the forest and mountains. They lost their freedom, they had to abandon their musical instruments, etc. Their identity papers were destroyed, they could not therefore buy

salt, for instance. The mountaineers who lacked salt became sick immediately; many children died for lack of salt.

Also, the Chieu Hoi leaflets [telling us about the rallier program of the GVN] and my personal radio helped me to follow day after day the news on the GVN side. Furthermore, I knew this would be a long war and I thought I had participated too much in it already. It made me unhappy not knowing when and how I could see my family again. And, the Front forces could not fight against those of the GVN. The propaganda from the North was all lies. (56.)

Two other defectors blamed the hardships of life in the Front for the fatigue and disillusionment that caused them to rally:

I should tell you that I thought over my feeling of weariness while I traveled to the South. I thought about how my father had sacrificed his life for the Party, that I myself had served the Party for more than ten years, that I was still a simple member without being appreciated and rewarded justly. Tiredness, and discontent because of the Party's ingratitude, were my motives for abandoning the communist ranks.

I no longer have ideals. I wanted to see my family again; I have done so already. What I want now is to live a new life, honestly. (39.)

[In the North] life was too intense, too active. . . . I wanted to be more easygoing, out of the army. Added to this, the "absence of sentiment" made life hardly bearable. I wanted to get married, but it was impossible because the command knew from my records that I [already] was married. . . .

[I rallied because] I had been gone from home too long and received no compensation. I had grown old (34 years), my health had been declining. Life was hard with privations. I was not allowed to visit my family, although I was stationed near my home. I did not know the way home, because it would take two days to get from where I was to the nearest hamlet. (52.)

From the VC point of view, the least reliable combatants turned out to be those whom the Vietminh had classified as upper-class and who had never been successfully absorbed by the communist system. The rich landowner's son whose description of harrowing denunciation sessions was cited earlier (pp. 52-53) explained his defection as follows:

I was unhappy about the agrarian reform of 1954-1957. It was unjust. Even if the Front won, my family would always be in the enemy class. Then, too, the material conditions of the battle in the South are too difficult. . . .

What I especially didn't like in the Front was the extreme severity of material life. When a person reaches a point of extreme poverty -- with not enough to eat and drink -- the poverty degrades him, makes him vile and base. Also, they have too much training procedure for the men, too many subtle means. (50.)

The son of another rich farmer said that he had had a political change of mind regarding the Communists while he was still in the North, primarily as a result of the land reform program. He infiltrated in September 1963 (like all the respondents, he dwelt on the arduous march to the South), and defected in July 1964. These were the reasons he gave:

One must live according to circumstances, it is necessary to conform to them. When I was young, the Vietminh suited me -- to go fight the French, that was right. When I arrived over there [in the North], I sensed a dissatisfaction in myself, notably with the agrarian reform. I now reflected on the political point of view. Before 1954, they had had a prejudice against my family. My family was feudal, my grandfather and my father were mayors of the village. Taxes were high. The treatment was different. Before, I believed that that was right; but beginning in 1955 I changed my mind. (49.)

Still another case attributable to family background is that of a lieutenant who defected in January 1964. The son of a family of prosperous small traders who sold cattle and illegal Western medicine, he had joined the Party with a false statement that he was a poor peasant, hoping thereby, as he put it, "to gain their trust." Though the interviewer's impression of him was not favorable, suggesting caution in accepting his political statements, the lieutenant's explanation of why he defected seemed plausible enough:

I found that life in the North and in the army was too hard, and "social" life [life in the society] there was stifling. I thought it would be better to leave to go with the national government because of the economic conditions in the South.

I knew that the economy of the South was more prosperous because of the imports and the climatic conditions which were favorable to agriculture. (54.)

One defector claimed he had been barred from Party membership in the North (though he was a member of the Labor Youth Group) because of "his behavior as a petit bourgeois intellectual." The majority of Party members, he said, belonged to the poor-peasant class. He reported having quit the Viet Cong in May 1962 (though, curiously, he told another interviewer that he had left in April 1961), and gave the following reasons for his defection:

At that time, I observed the situation, the state of the population, the economic life of the region placed for nine years under the control of the Southern government and which had just come under the occupation of the liberation troops. I found the level of the

life of the population clearly superior to that of the population in the North (several peasants had their bicycles, several families even had radio sets). In particular, the life of the population of Quang Ngai was very different compared to the time that I had left the region to go to the North. In addition, I found the organization of the Southern army very much progressed, not only from the point of view of equipment, but also from the point of view of morale. So I said to myself that the government of the South wasn't so bad as they had told me up to now. After reflection, I decided to give up. (44.)

Another former Viet Cong cited his resentment of the agrarian reform program as having contributed to his disenchantment with Communism. The son of a rich farmer, he had joined the Vietminh in 1953, claiming to have come from the working class. But he did not feel at ease in the political climate that followed the defeat of the French. Though life had been more arduous in the Resistance than in the Front, he said, he had felt happier there:

We felt [in the Resistance] as if we belonged to a family. It did not matter what social class you came from if you were a good warrior. Under the Liberation Front it isn't so. To become a trusted cadre you have to possess basic requirements. You have to belong to the proletariat. (48.)

He said that he first began to think about rallying when he was still in the North: "The reasons that led me to that position were a result of the agrarian reform." Moreover, he claimed, the Vietminh had killed his father in 1950 because they suspected him of being a spy, and although he joined them thereafter, he never overcame his anger at them.

One defector, a former Party member, 2d Lieutenant and Viet Minh, who had been working for the Chieu Hoi program, summarized his charge thus:

Logically speaking, it is a surprise to hear that I rallied to the government side while still clinging to the belief that there are good points on the Viet Cong side. I was not afraid to die or to lead an arduous life, but I had realized that the Viet Cong had betrayed the Vietnamese people. The Viet Cong had betrayed the revolution, and that was their mistake.

Even though most defectors we interviewed tended to denounce the Communist movement, a good number of them betrayed an almost grudging respect for those who continued the fight, and some seemed to feel guilty at not having been able to withstand the hardships that the others were willing to face.

The oldest defector in our sample was a 44-year-old former dock worker who, according to his interviewer, "spoke of his past activities in an apologetic tone and, unlike most other subjects, did not derive any pride from having served in the Front." It is interesting to compare the ideological content of his comments with the more straightforward answers of other defectors:

I had contemplated rallying when in the North. I did not dare tell anybody. I tried hard to move south in order to be near my home and eventually actually to return there. The Vietminh promised every social freedom. But I found that the regime in the North was not a liberal one. The Nhan Dan newspaper, like all other newspapers, was censored before publication; yet it had to criticize the regime. They never said Ong [Mr.] Pham Van Dong, as you would call a government member here, they always had to say Thu Tuong Pham Van Dong [Prime Minister Pham Van Dong]. Everything was in the hands of the state. They availed themselves of our patriotism to establish their rule and lead us in the wrong direction. We were parted from our families. We were old and still felt the stifling atmosphere. Many regroupees were repressed, demoted, and caused to commit suicide. (53.)

A 31-year-old platoon leader, who had guarded buffaloes for a rich family until he entered the Vietminh in 1949, had spent almost ten years in the North before infiltrating the South in June 1963. He defected in a Delta province in March 1964, for reasons that he described as a mixture of personal grievance and ideological disaffection:

Because the Liberation Front guerrillas killed my mother, whom they suspected of being a liaison agent for the Hoa Hao, I could not go back to my native village to see her, but relatives of mine in the village who were selling fruit told me what happened to her. Furthermore, there was a conflict between my immediate higher-level cadres and myself. I myself did not have much faith in the abilities of the cadres from the South to fight or to command. Any time we suffered a defeat, we got the blame for not knowing how to command even after nine years of

training in the North. A third reason is that I had heard while in North Vietnam that we were to fight against foreigners, not against Vietnamese in South Vietnam. But this line of propaganda was not true, because I saw that the Americans did not fight directly. . . .

Judging from the political situation in our country I thought that to continue to fight with the VC would not help my personal interests in any way because I was only serving the imperialists' interests of Russia or China. I began to think that way when they sent me to the fighting unit. Actually, to be fair, I must say that they did help me a great deal and that among the members of the unit there was much sympathy. I was in conflict only with two people in the unit: the political commissar of the company, who had gone north, and the deputy commander of the company, who had come back from the North with me and was older than I (about 40 years old).

Asked by the interviewer to give an example of the conflict between himself and the political commissar of the company, he said:

For instance, once they took me as the target of their criticism session. The Party section had twenty-one persons and the Party cell six. The troops were stationed at the Chia La Canal, and they asked me to come to their meeting in a garden. They said that I had feudal and militaristic tendencies, although the preparations for the operation were jointly decided upon and I only gave my opinions as to how the troops had to be deployed. The political commissar and the commander of the battalion made the final decisions. Yet, when the operation failed, they blamed me for not knowing how weak my unit was, for not knowing how to command, and for not gathering enough ammunition. (60.)

In many cases, no doubt, personal disgruntlement, rather than ideology, is the chief cause for defection. Our sample included a senior sergeant who had worked in an infiltration corridor, in a rugged highland region of

Central Vietnam, where he had the job of carrying materiel from one relay post to another. Apparently a grumbler by nature, he had not been admitted to the Party because he was, in his words, "short-tempered." He hated life in the mountains, and he frequently quarreled with his superiors. He gave the following reasons for defecting:

For a long time, the question of the future bothered me. I often said to myself: I am getting old (34 years); I live in poor conditions; I fight for an uncertain future. Why continue this way? The idea of defecting tormented me in May 1964. Then, in June, one thing decided me. This was a fight with Trung, the Section 1 chief (I was in Section 2, under Tien), when I tried to defend a man named Tron, 40 years old, who was caught eating a piece of manioc before the meal. The company chief, Son, supported Trung, and they were getting ready to criticize me by reporting this to the superiors. I couldn't stay any longer. My decision was made. (33.)

A similar case was that of the most recent rallier we interviewed, who had defected on May 26, 1965. Like the senior sergeant, he had worked as a porter of supplies from North Vietnam destined for the Front. For two years, he carried goods across the Ben Hai River, which divides North from South Vietnam at the 17th Parallel, and he, too, disliked the mountains and hated his task. When he was given a new assignment in a village in the plains, he seized that opportunity to defect. His own account follows:

The Communists recruited me a long time ago. When peace came, I feared for what I had done, and fled to the North. While farming in the North, I kept thinking that only the high-ranking cadres were better off. When they needed to have something done, they called on the citizens. When it was finished, the citizens returned to their farming. The cadres had no policy whatsoever regarding the citizens. Then they said: "You must go south to liberate South Vietnam. It has been three-fourths

liberated, and you'll only need to liberate the cities." Having learned this in education sessions, as well as in their propaganda, I wanted to be active for some period of time and to rejoin my wife and children.

But, for two years, what I did was transport duty in the mountains, carrying on my back ammunition, mail, newspapers, etc. Every week, I had only one day off to wash up. You will excuse me: when we passed by a girl, she did not want to look at us. Our clothes were so dirty and smelly from the dry fish and fish sauce we carried. In many houses, they absolutely refused to let us in. Some families gave us rice and cassava roots, true; but this was arranged in advance by district cadres. Yet, they would not give us any quarters.

I compared the real conditions with what I had heard in the North during the education sessions and in the daily propaganda of the government of the North. They had said that the people [in the South] had lost their liberties and had been burdened with hundreds of taxes. Arriving in the South, I saw nothing of my home village. I wanted to go to my village, but I was too far up in the mountains. When I was finally allowed to go to the plains, I could see that everything was free in the South, free trading (if you have money, you can buy anything, and as much as you want, unlike in the North), free dressing (nobody prevents you from being well-dressed), etc. In my own hamlet, there were only thatch houses at the time I went North. Now, there are plenty of brick houses, or at least the houses have brick walls. The roads are wide and clean. People can practice their religions freely, can kill cattle for food whenever they want.

In brief, the political and economic situation has improved, in contrast with the North. There, they kept saying: "Do not ask what time of the day, what day of the week it is." Each citizen was allowed to buy only 12 kilograms of paddy a month, and had to complement the rice with sweet potatoes and cassava roots, in keeping with the slogan, "Shrink your belly and tighten your belt in order to build up socialism." I saw with my own eyes that the people had to change what they called "financial notes" into "bank notes." If a person turned in 200,000 piasters, he was given back

only 20,000 piasters with the promise that he would be allowed to draw money from the bank when he needed it. And there were many other instances of exploitation. Regarding the army, troops had to carry heavy loads as a means of transportation; if you carried loads that were not heavy enough, you were put on the self-criticism stand. Coming south, I found relatives and friends had gone into the armed forces of the government. I did not see Americans; I saw only brothers killing one another. I joined the Resistance and the Viet Cong, and what have I got: my wife has become a hired laborer and my mother is destitute. (65.)

A man's motives for defecting are inevitably complex. Although most ralliers seemed to find it less damaging to their self-respect to cite ideological enlightenment rather than the baser reasons of fear, fatigue, and loneliness, the foregoing accounts would indicate that the negative feelings induced by the protracted hardships of life in the Front actually weighed a great deal more heavily in the decisions of defectors than did the positive reasons that most of them stressed.

APPENDIX

Following is a list of 71 regroupees (here numbered 1 to 71) and 9 Front members, not regroupees (designated by numbers a to i), who together constitute the group interviewed for the purposes of this study. The first line of each item shows the number (or letter) by which the interviewee's statements in the text of the study have been identified, and indicates whether he is a prisoner-of-war or a defector. Below that line will be found the basic information available about him, arranged by three possible categories: (a) biographical information (date and province of birth, parents' social class at the time he joined the Vietminh, schooling, and peacetime occupation); (b) career in the Vietminh and in North Vietnam; and (c) career in the Front (including area of assignment and Party status).

Abbreviation key:

PW: prisoner
elem schl: elementary schooling
occ: occupation before joining Vietminh
VM: Vietminh
NVN: North Vietnam
SVN: South Vietnam
infil: infiltration to South Vietnam
cap: captured
def: defected

REGROUPEES

1. PW
 - a. Born: 1929; Quang Nam; poor fisherman; elem schl; occ: fisherman.
 - b. VM: 1949; soldier. NVN: 1954; corporal.
 - c. Infil: April 1964. Front: sr sergeant; propaganda section; Quang Ngai. Party member. Cap: Aug 1964.
2. PW
 - a. Born: 1938; Phu Yen; rich farmers; elem schl; occ: student.
 - b. VM: 1947; youth org; soldier. NVN: sergeant; transmissions section.
 - c. Infil: Nov 1962. Front: adjutant; quartermaster office; Quang Ngai. Party member. Cap: April 1964.

3. PW
 - a. Born: 1924; Binh Dinh; poor laborers; elem schl; occ: laborer.
 - b. VM: 1945; liaison work. NVN: social aide at rest center for Southerners; transport division.
 - c. Infil: Jan 1964. Front: armed propaganda group; Darlac. Party member. Cap: June 1964.
4. PW
 - a. Born: 1934; Kien Phong; orphan; poor farmers; no schl; occ: farmer.
 - b. VM: 1952; soldier. NVN: military training; transmissions schl.
 - c. Infil: Nov 1962. Front: chief, transmissions; aspirant; Dinh Tuong. Party member. Cap: Dec 1962.
5. PW
 - a. Born: 1933; Gia Dinh; middle farmers; elem schl; occ: farmer.
 - b. VM: 1950; soldier. NVN: sergeant; adjutant; aspirant.
 - c. Infil: May 1961. Front: aspirant; chief, infantry section; Tay Minh. Party member. Cap: 1962.
6. PW
 - a. Born: 1933; Quang Nam; poor laborers; no schl; occ: laborer.
 - b. VM: 1952-54; militia. NVN: adjutant.
 - c. Infil: Feb 1962. Front: adjutant; Quang Nam. Non-Party. Cap: May 1962.
7. PW
 - a. Born: 1922; Quang Nam; poor traders; no schl; occ: trader.
 - b. VM: 1947-54; militia. NVN: aspirant; in farm center.
 - c. Infil: 1960; sea liaison on sailboat carrying letters, directives between NVN and SVN (not in Front). Membership not given. Cap: May 1961.

8. PW
 - a. Born: 1928; Phu Yen; poor farmers; elem schl; occ: farmer.
 - b. VM: 1947-55; ammunitions factory. NVN: transport convoy; mechanic.
 - c. Infil: April 1964. Front: production worker. Non-Party. Cap (on trip to SVN): June 1964.
9. PW
 - a. Born: 1939; Quang Tri; middle farmers; elem schl; occ: student.
 - b. VM: 1954; to North. NVN: production work; male nurse; soldier.
 - c. Infil: Nov 1961. Front: corporal; male nurse; Thua Thien. Non-Party. Cap: July 1964.
10. PW
 - a. Born: 1924; Phu Yen; poor farmers; no schl; occ: laborer.
 - b. VM: 1947-54; youth grp; civil guard. NVN: soldier; regt cook; state farm.
 - c. Infil: Feb 1963. Front: master sergeant; production work. Non-Party. Cap: Aug 1964.
11. PW
 - a. Born: 1930; Darlac; poor farmers; no schl; occ: farmer.
 - b. VM: 1950; kidnapped for training; liaison agent. NVN, 1954-61: production worker; sergeant.
 - c. Infil: June 1961. Front: chief, production group; Darlac. Party member, April 1964. Cap: May 1964.
12. PW
 - a. Born: 1933; Quang Tri; poor laborers; elem schl; occ: laborer.
 - b. VM: 1954; to North. NVN: army regiment on 17th Parallel.
 - c. Infil: Oct 1961. Front: sergeant; armed propaganda; Thua Thien. Non-Party. Cap: July 1964.

13. PW
 - a. Born: 1931; Thua Thien; middle farmers; elem schl; occ: student.
 - b. VM: 1948; army. NVN: barracks construction.
 - c. Infil: Aug 1964. Front: military instructor; aspirant; Thua Thien. Non-Party. Cap: Oct 1964.
14. PW
 - a. Born: 1917; Phu Yen; rich farmers; elem schl; occ: farmer.
 - b. VM: 1945; liaison agent; Party econ committee, village. NVN: 1955; econ cadre in farm production.
 - c. Infil: 1960. Front: cell chief; production group; Phu Yen. Party member. Cap: April 1964.
15. PW
 - a. Born: 1930; Quang Ngai; poor farmers; elem schl; occ: farmer.
 - b. VM: 1945. Nat'l Youth. NVN: driver.
 - c. Infil: 1963. Front: squad leader; supply and produc; Quang Nam. Non-Party. Cap: Feb 1964.
16. PW
 - a. Born: 1938; Quang Tri; middle farmers; elem schl; occ: farmer.
 - b. VM: 1954; to North to study. NVN: farmer; soldier.
 - c. Infil: July 1964. Front: soldier; regional force; Quang Tri. Non-Party. Cap: Sep 1964.
17. PW
 - a. Born: 1924; Quang Tin; middle farmers; elem schl; occ: farmer.
 - b. VM: 1947; militia. NVN: 1954; state coffee farm.
 - c. Infil: March 1963. Front: private; Quang Ngai. Non-Party. Cap: May 1964.
18. PW
 - a. Born: 1916; Quang Ngai; small traders; elem schl; occ: small trader.
 - b. VM: 1949; Demo Chinese Youth; transport grp. NVN: 1954; commerce house; agr reform work.
 - c. Infil: Nov 1963. Front: jt chief, dist bureau; sabotage GVN villages; Quang Ngai. Party member. Cap: July 1964.

19. PW
- a. Born: 1926; Binh Dinh; small traders; elem schl; occ: trader.
 - b. VM: 1946; army: co commander. NVN: 2nd lieutenant; market research dept; political cadre.
 - c. Infil: Feb 1964. Front: aspirant captain; political cadre; Binh Dinh. Party member, but expelled after 9 yrs for "strong bourgeois sentiments." Cap: Oct 1964.
20. PW
- a. Born: 1935; Quang Nam; poor farmers; no schl; occ: servant.
 - b. VM: 1953; army. NVN: farm camp; cook (worked with 60 former prostitutes sent to camp for reeducation).
 - c. Infil: 1962. Front: corporal; production work; Quang Nam. Non-Party. Cap: Feb 1964.
21. PW
- a. Born: 1930; Quang Ngai; middle farmers; elem schl; occ: farmer.
 - b. VM: 1947; militia. NVN: 1954; transport, chief of sect; construction work.
 - c. Infil: 1964. Front: aspirant; transport; chief, platoon sect; Quang Nam. Non-Party. Cap: Feb 1964.
22. PW
- a. Born: 1925; Kien Phong; poor farmers; elem schl; occ: laborer.
 - b. VM: 1945; liaison; squad leader; asst co commander. NVN: PAVN; committee chief, training and operations; sr captain; (after Jan 1961): Domestic Collection Off, Research Bur, DRV; training functions.
 - c. Infil: 1963 (captd after boat capsized during sea infil). Front mission: to set up intelligence network to report directly to Research Bureau (Intelligence), DRV. Party member. Cap: April 1963.

23. PW
- a. Born: 1921; Quang Tri; middle farmers; elem schl; occ: farmer.
 - b. VM: 1948; Nat'l Farmers Assn. NVN: charge of welcoming former PWs under French; propaganda cadre; agr production work.
 - c. Infil: 1961. Front: propaganda cadre; district committee; Quang Tri. Party member. Cap: Sep 1964.
24. PW
- a. Born: 1920; Quang Ngai; poor farmers; elem schl; occ: farmer.
 - b. VM: 1945. NVN: inspector, salt refinery; agr reform cadre.
 - c. Infil: June 1961. Front: production troop leader; chief, district finan sect; Quang Ngai. Party member; sec, Party village comm. Cap: June 1964.
25. PW
- a. Born: 1936; Phu Yen; poor farmers; elem schl; occ: student.
 - b. VM: 1953. NVN: cultural and military training.
 - c. Infil: Sep 1962. Front: asst platoon leader; master sergeant; Quang Ngai. Party member. Cap: Sep 1964.
26. PW
- a. Born: 1925; Thua Thien; petite bourgeoisie (father, doctor "de cadre supérieur"); occ: medical student.
 - b. VM: 1947; to liberated zone to study; medical service in mt. regions. NVN: Haiphong hospital.
 - c. Infil: May 1962. Front: doctor; in charge of health conditions in Hré area; Kontum. Party member. Cap: May 1963.
27. PW
- a. Born: 1937; Quang Tri; middle class; elem schl; occ: student.
 - b. VM: 1954; NVN: army and nat'l farm.
 - c. Infil: April 1964. Front: adjutant; transport mission; Thua Thien. Member of youth org, but not Party. Cap: Sep 1964.

28. PW
- a. Born: 1918; Vinh Long; poor farmers; elem schl; occ: farmer.
 - b. VM: 1945; Vanguard Youth; security agent; army; head of military intelligence section. NVN: sr captain.
 - c. Infil: Oct 1961. Front: food production in charge of handling US PWs; political sect; asst chief, troop proselyting section; Bien Hoa. Party member. Cap: Dec 1963.
29. PW
- a. Born: 1931; Quang Nam; middle farmers; elem schl; occ: farmer.
 - b. VM: 1947. NVN: 1955; co commander.
 - c. Infil: Feb 1962. Front: lieutenant intelligence officer; Quang Ngai. Party member. Cap: Sep 1964.
30. PW
- a. Born: 1918; Binh Dinh; poor farmers; secondary schl; occ: teacher.
 - b. VM: 1945. NVN: 1955; registry of traders; accountant in Min of Recon.
 - c. Infil: Sep 1960. Front: civil propaganda amg mountaineers; Binh Dinh. Party member. Cap: Aug 1964.
31. PW
- a. Born: 1926; Quang Nam; poor farmers; elem schl; occ: farmer.
 - b. VM: 1949. NVN: construction work; state farm.
 - c. Infil: April 1964 (captd on trip to SVN in Quang Ngai). Member of youth and farmers orgs in village, but not Party. Cap: June 1964.
32. PW
- a. Born: 1922; Quang Nam; poor farmers; elem schl; occ: farmer.
 - b. VM: 1945; youth grp. NVN: 1954; farm production distillery service.
 - c. Infil: 1961. Front: chief, armed propaganda group; Quang Ngai. Party member. Cap: Feb 1963.

33. Defector
- a. Born: 1934; Khanh Hoa; poor farmers; elem schl; occ: farmer.
 - b. VM: 1954. NVN: 1954; soldier; sr sergeant.
 - c. Infil: Oct 1962. Front: porter for matériel and personnel along trail betw Rt 14 to NVN and Song Tranh to SVN; Quang Nam. Non-Party. Def: July 1964.
34. PW
- a. Born: 1930; Quang Ngai; poor farmers; elem schl; occ: farmer.
 - b. VM: 1949; army. NVN: 1954; soldier; lumber yard, econ branch.
 - c. Infil: Feb 1963. Front: sergeant; ambush mission; Quang Ngai. Non-Party. Cap: Aug 1963.
35. PW
- a. Born: 1921; Binh Dinh; proletariat; elem schl; occ: farmer.
 - b. VM: 1945; militia. NVN: 1955; worked on dams, irrigation; production.
 - c. Infil: 1964. Cap (on trip to SVN in Quang Ngai): spring 1964.
36. PW
- a. Born: 1920. Binh Dinh; middle farmers; elem schl; occ: farmer.
 - b. VM: 1946; village comm; province cadre. NVN: 1955; merchandise sect; accountant.
 - c. Infil: July 1962. Front: propaganda cadre; unit leader; Binh Dinh. Party member. Cap: Dec 1963.
37. PW
- a. Born: 1930; Phong Dinh; poor farmers; secondary schl; occ: farmer.
 - b. VM: 1949; statistics clerk; secretary. NVN: 1955; personnel office of state farm.
 - c. Infil: 1961. Front: office work; reports on combat in Saigon area; aspirant 2nd lieutenant; Tay Ninh. Party member. Cap: Feb 1964.

38. Defector
- a. Born: 1931; Quang Nam; poor farmers; secondary schl; occ: farmer; weaver.
 - b. VM: 1953 (before, in French army and capt'd by VM forces). NVN: 1954; corporal.
 - c. Infil: May 1963. Front: main force battalion; Quang Nam. Def: Jan 1964.
39. Defector
- a. Born: 1934; Vinh Long; well off (father, traditional doctor); elem schl; occ: farmer.
 - b. VM: 1947; liaison; province comm of Party; army gen staff. NVN: adjutant; Hanoi radio service, gen staff. PTT in Hanoi.
 - c. Infil: Feb 1963. Front: defected on trip to SVN at Kontum. Party member. Def: Nov 1963.
40. PW
- a. Born: 1931; Long An; petite bourgeoisie; secondary schl; occ: student.
 - b. VM: 1946; liaison agent; army. NVN: 1954; on army gen staff.
 - c. Infil: April 1962. Front: 2nd lieutenant; training recruits; guard communication center to NVN; Bien Hoa. Party member. Cap: Jan 1963.
41. PW
- a. Born: 1925; Quang Nam; poor farmers; elem schl; occ: farmer.
 - b. VM: 1948; army. NVN: 1954; farm work.
 - c. Infil: July 1962. Front: asst chief of group; production work; armed propaganda; Quang Nam. Party member. Cap: Dec 1963.
42. PW
- a. Born: 1918; Phu Yen; rich farmers; elem schl; occ: farmer; VN medicine.
 - b. VM: 1945; liaison; village and district finan chief. NVN: purchasing cadre.
 - c. Infil: Oct 1960. Front: production unit head; purchasing sect; cell leader; Phu Yen. Party member. Cap: April 1964.

43. PW
- a. Born: 1933; Gia Dinh; poor farmers; elem schl; occ: farmer; in French army engineer corps.
 - b. VM: 1954. NVN: construction work; soldier.
 - c. Infil: 1963. Front: corporal; instructor of new recruits; Tay Ninh. Non-Party. Cap: 1963.
44. Defector
- a. Born: 1936; Binh Dinh; middle farmers; elem schl; occ: student.
 - b. VM: 1953. NVN: in signal c; adjutant; off training schl; instructor of transmissions.
 - c. Infil: Dec 1961. Front: 2nd lieutenant; radio communications; Quang Ngai. Member of Workers' Youth but not Party. Def: May 1962.
45. PW
- a. Born: 1924; Binh Dinh; poor fishermen; elem schl; occ: fisherman.
 - b. VM: 1949; militia. NVN: 1955; dam and canal construction; water plant; agr production; economic agent.
 - c. Infil: April 1964. Front: capt'd on trip to SVN; Thua Thien. Party member. Cap: June 1964.
46. PW
- a. Born: date not given; Gia Dinh; poor farmers; elem schl; occ: farmer.
 - b. VM: 1949; army. NVN: milit and political training.
 - c. Infil: early 1963. Front: lieutenant, military intelligence; Tay Ninh. Party member. Cap: Jan 1964.
47. PW
- a. Born: 1930; Binh Dinh; poor farmers; no schl; occ: servant.
 - b. VM: 1954 (in VM village groups before). NVN: transport unit; work camp.
 - c. Infil: March 1964. Front: production camp; corporal (in NVN army); Quang Ngai. Party member. Cap: June 1964.

48. Defector

- a. Born: 1933; Dinh Tuong; rich farmers; elem schl; occ: student.
- b. VM: 1953. NVN: 1954; "correction of errors" cadre in agr reform.
- c. Infil: Feb 1962. Front: 2nd lieutenant; artillery training officer; Bien Hoa. Party member. Def: March 1963.

49. Defector

- a. Born: 1934; Binh Dinh; rich farmers; elem schl; occ: farmer.
- b. VM: 1952; VM youth; chief of grp, army. NVN: 1954; aspirant; 2nd lieutenant.
- c. Infil: Sep 1963. Front: chief, artillery section; Quang Nam. Party member. Def: July 1964.

50. Defector

- a. Born: 1929; Quang Ngai; rich farmers; elem schl; occ: farmer.
- b. VM: 1945; youth grp. NVN: 1954; sergeant; farm camp.
- c. Infil: July 1962. Front: 2nd lieutenant; artillery section; Kontum. Party member. Def: Sep 1963.

51. Defector

- a. Born: 1929; Quang Nam; poor farmers; elem schl; occ: farmer.
- b. VM: 1947; polit sect of company; polit officer. NVN: adjutant to polit officer.
- c. Infil: 1960. Front: sr captain; polit planning and propaganda; Lam Dong. Party member; polit action cadre for Party in SVN. Def: June 1964.

52. Defector

- a. Born: 1930; Quang Tin; poor laborers; elem schl; occ: laborer.
- b. VM: 1951; militia. NVN: 1954; salt production; transport platoon.
- c. Infil: May 1963. Front: sergeant; squad leader; produc work; Quang Ngai. Party member. Def: June 1964.

53. Defector
- a. Born: 1920; Quang Nam; poor laborers; elem schl; occ: docker.
 - b. VM: 1945; village youth grp; militia. NVN: 1954; construction work; barge transport work; ministry of transport.
 - c. Infil: Sep 1963. Front: province cadre; transport mission; Kontum. Party member. Def: June 1964.
54. Defector
- a. Born: 1935; Quang Nam; well off; commerce (medicine); farmers; secondary schl; occ: farmer.
 - b. VM: 1945; Nat'l Youth; army. NVN: military training.
 - c. Infil: Jan 1964. Front: first lieutenant; platoon leader; ambush; Kontum. Party member. Def: April 1964.
55. PW
- a. Born: 1942; Quang Tri; poor farmers; elem schl; occ: student.
 - b. VM: 1956. NVN: soldier.
 - c. Infil: Nov 1964. Front: private; Thua Thien. Non-Party. Cap: Jan 1965.
56. Defector
- a. Born: 1925; Quang Ngai; poor farmers; elem schl; occ: farmer.
 - b. VM: 1945. NVN: bldg construction; agr reform program; state farm.
 - c. Infil: Oct 1960. Front: recruit laborers for production; district committee sec; lieutenant; propagandized and trained highlanders; Darlac. Party member. Def: April 1963.
57. PW
- a. Born: 1934; Binh Dinh; poor farmers; occ: farmer.
 - b. VM: 1954; militia. NVN: transport co, driver.
 - c. Infil: July 1962. Front: deputy platoon leader; sergeant major; Quang Ngai. Party member. Cap: Nov 1964.

58. PW
- a. Born: 1932; Phong Dinh; poor traders; elem schl; occ: trader.
 - b. VM: 1945; Vanguard Youth; militia police. NVN: 1954; radio commu unit.
 - c. Infil: Oct 1961. Front: infantry platoon leader; An Xuyen. Party member. Cap: Dec 1964.
59. PW
- a. Born: 1933; Thua Thien; poor farmers; elem schl; occ: farmer.
 - b. VM: 1954; transport. NVN: cook for army; state farm.
 - c. Infil: April 1963. Front: private; production unit; Thua Thien. Non-Party. Cap: Dec 1964.
60. Defector
- a. Born: 1934; Dinh Tuong; poor farmers; occ: farmer.
 - b. VM: 1949; militia. NVN: 1954; trained Northerners for combat.
 - c. Infil: June 1963. Front: platoon leader; Dinh Tuong. Def: March 1964.
61. PW
- a. Born: 1926; Binh Dinh; middle farmers; no schl; occ: farmer.
 - b. VM: 1949; army. NVN: agr field service; caretaker at officer quarters; Reunification Committee.
 - c. Infil: Aug 1963. Front: production cadre; Binh Dinh. Party member (reinstated after temporary disgrace). Cap: Aug 1964.
62. PW
- a. Born: 1933; Darlac; poor farmers; elem schl; occ: farmer.
 - b. VM: 1953; cultural training; NVN: cook; cultural and military training.
 - c. Infil: June 1962. Front: leader, armed propaganda squad amg highlanders (Rhadé and Mnong); Darlac. Non-Party. Cap: Jan 1964.

63. PW
- a. Born: 1933; Quang Tri; middle farmers; elem schl; occ: fisherman.
 - b. VM: 1953. NVN: milit training; land surveying course; econ missions.
 - c. Infil: Dec 1964. Front: sergeant; indoc and propaganda section; Quang Tri. Non-Party. Cap: March 1965.
64. PW
- a. Born: 1931; Thua Thien; poor farmers; elem schl; occ: farmer.
 - b. VM: 1949; militia. NVN: 1952; went to Laos and Cambodia agst French; NCO schl.
 - c. Infil: June 1961. Front: sr sergeant; Thua Thien. Party member. Cap: Dec 1964.
65. Defector
- a. Born: 1926; Quang Tri; poor farmers; elem schl; occ: farmer.
 - b. VM: 1949; militia. NVN: 1955 (fled to NVN to escape village authority harassment); transport trooper in PAVN.
 - c. Infil: 1963 (across Ben Hai River). Front: guerrilla squad leader; Quang Tri. Non-Party. Def: May 1965.
66. PW
- a. Born: 1932; Thua Thien; poor farmers; elem schl; occ: farmer.
 - b. VM: 1947; VM youth; army. NVN: state farm.
 - c. Infil: Nov 1961. Front: platoon leader; master sergeant; Thua Thien. Party member. Cap: April 1965.
67. PW
- a. Born: 1934; Quang Tri; middle farmers; secondary schl; occ: student.
 - b. VM: 1951. NVN: 1954; production group; factory overseer.
 - c. Infil: Dec 1964. Front: cadre, armed propaganda unit; proselyting cadre; Quang Tri. Party member. Cap: April 1965.

68. PW
- a. Born: 1925; Quang Nam; middle farmers; no schl; occ: farmer.
 - b. VM: 1954. NVN: 1954; built dikes; tea plant.
 - c. Infil: July 1961. Front: sergeant; Quang Ngai. Non-Party. Cap: April 1964.
69. Defector
- a. Born: 1933; Thua Thien; middle farmers; elem schl; occ: farmer.
 - b. VM: 1951; army. NVN: 1954; production work; squad leader.
 - c. Infil: Aug 1964. Front: sr sergeant; polit off; Thua Thien. Party member. Def: May 1965.
70. PW
- a. Born: 1932; Quang Ngai; poor farmers; no schl; occ: farmer.
 - b. VM: 1951; army. NVN: 1955; regiment cook.
 - c. Infil: July 1962. Front: platoon polit off; Quang Ngai. Party member. Cap: Feb 1965.
- 71.2 PW
- a. Born: 1930; Thua Thien; poor farmers; no schl; occ: farmer.
 - b. VM: 1952. NVN: 1954; salt production.
 - c. Infil: July 1962. Front: production work; Thua Thien. Non-Party. Cap: May 1965.

NON-REGROUPEES

- a. PW
- a. Born: 1917; Gia Dinh; poor traders; elem schl; occ: carpenter.
 - b. VM: 1947-54; imprisoned by Diem government Aug 1960-July 1961.
 - c. Front: 1961 (fled to VC secret base); training and work in rural areas; propag agent, recruiting for VC Labor Front in Saigon; Gia Dinh. Party member. Cap: Sep 1964.
- b. Defector
- a. Born: 1938; An Xuyen; middle farmers; occ: GVN village self-defense youth.
 - c. Front: 1961; military training; private; squad leader; Tay Ninh. Party member. Def: May 1964.

- c. Defector
 - a. Born: 1940; Kien Hoa; middle farmers; father, hamlet chief; elem schl; occ: farmer, later jobless.
 - c. Front: 1959; sabotage work; guerrilla in village; then district regional forces; weapons transport; regional main force; private; asst squad leader; Kien Hoa (Ben Tre). Member of Labor Youth Grp but not Party. Def: June 1964.
- d. PW
 - a. Born: 1908; Ma Nam (NVN); parents' class not given; no schl; occ: dock worker.
 - b. Workers of Democratic Front: 1936; prison: 1936-40; VM: 1940; admin committee; Lieu-Viet Front, 1951; admin committee of Lao Dong (West reg).
 - c. Front: 1961; training and propaganda section of Party Comm (West reg); Kien Giang. Party member. Cap: 1964 or Jan 1965.
- e. Defector
 - a. Born: 1931; Kien Giang; middle farmers; last yr elem schl (GVN); occ: selling radio cabinets.
 - b. VM: 1949, clerk-typist; distr finan affrs section; head of entertainment group. Left VM for govt-controlled area in 1953.
 - c. Front: 1961; head of admin staff of propag and training sect of Region (Party) Cmte; Gia Dinh. Party member. Def: April 1965.
- f. Defector
 - a. Born: 1935; Vinh Binh; poor farmers; literate in Vietnamese; occ: hired laborer.
 - c. Front: 1961; squad leader; platoon leader, Main Force; Vinh Binh. Non-Party. Def: April 1965.
- g. Defector
 - a. Born: 1937; Chuong Thien; poor farmers; elem schl; occ: farmer.
 - c. Front: 1957; liaison off; polit officer in guerr platoon; propaganda and training cadre of distr unit; Chuong Thien. Party member. Def: March 1965.

h. Defector

- a. Born: 1940; An Xuyen; poor farmers; 3 yrs elem schl; occ: farmer.
- c. Front: 1957; VC informer; asst squad leader; asst platoon leader in Regional Force; An Xuyen. Party member. Def: April 1965.

i. PW

- a. Born: 1930; Quang Tri; middle farmers; elem schl; occ: farmer.
- b. VM: 1950; joined army in NVN and stayed there; 2nd lt guarding border. Party member. Cap (on an espionage op acr 17th Parallel): June 1964.