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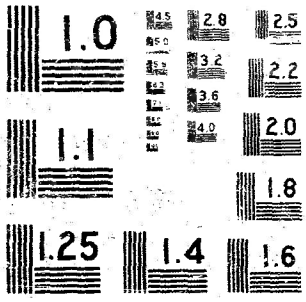
The RAND Corporation

Vietnam Interview Series

March 1972



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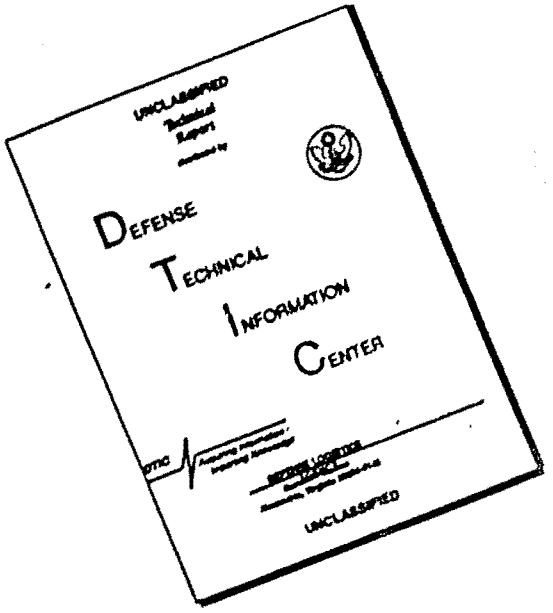

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13. ABSTRACT
The AGR Series includes 84 interviews of refugees from VC-controlled and contested areas throughout South Vietnam. It explores the attitudes of these people toward the Viet Cong, the GVN, the Americans, and the war in general.

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PREFACE

Between August 1964 and December 1968, The Rand Corporation, under contract to the U.S. Department of Defense, conducted approximately 2400 interviews with Vietnamese who were familiar with activities of the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese Army. Reports of those interviews, totaling approximately 62,000 pages, constitute an extraordinarily rich source of information about political and military upheaval in a developing country; about Vietnamese rural life; about the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese armed forces; and about many related subjects. They describe conversations with prisoners captured by South Vietnamese or U.S. forces, defectors who voluntarily left the Viet Cong or the North Vietnamese Army, refugees from battle areas, and a few other kinds of persons. Many of the reports have a poignant, human quality; nearly all are informative about conditions in Vietnam.

In December 1971, action was initiated to make these interview reports available to the public. That has entailed a scrupulous double reading of all the reports and blocking out of information that might enable identification of the respondents. This sanitizing process does not imply a scenario for postwar Vietnam, but reprisals are possible against those who cooperated with the United States and the government of South Vietnam by disclosing certain information. Researchers have an ethical responsibility to ensure that no one suffers from having been a subject of research.

The guiding principle in the excision of information from the reports has been to preserve as much substantive content as possible, blocking out only information that could identify the respondent. At

the least this includes the respondent's name, places of residence, names of relatives and close colleagues, military unit designation, day (not month and year) of rallying or capture and of the interview (interview logs may still be available in Vietnam), and job titles that can be linked to a place or unit. Long reports that give many indirect clues have required more deletions of critical information.

The amount of excision may also vary according to the interview series. For example, in the "DT" series, comprising interviews only in Dinh Tuong Province, it was found that a respondent's battalion could readily be deduced even when blocked out. There were only three Viet Cong battalions in that province, and they could easily be identified by time, district of operation, and date and place of battle. In that case it was necessary to exercise special care in excising all clues to the identity of a member of a given battalion.

The names of the Vietnamese interviewers have also been deleted, both because they too might be subject to reprisal and because they would be potential sources of information about particular interviewees. A code number has been assigned to each interviewer (where named--not every report identified the interviewer) and in most cases is shown on face sheet of the interview report. Thus, the user may assess, for example, particular interviewers are associated with biased interviews or showed such skill that their reports should be flagged for special attention.

In the initial screening of the interviews, the designation "For Official Use Only" at the top and bottom of some pages, and a paragraph on the face sheet stipulating that use of the interview required permission of [illegible] and the Department of Defense, Assistant Secretary for International Security Affairs, were deleted. Subsequently, those

restrictions were nullified by a blanket clause, removing all restrictions on distribution, shown on a covering sheet for each interview series. No material, other than the above-described deletions, has been removed from the interview reports being released. Gaps in the numbering of the interviews refer to reports that were not completed, for various reasons explained in the Guide (AD-741 300); all available reports are included.

This Guide, which should accompany all interview series issued to the public, has been prepared to help the user of the interviews understand the purposes and limitations of the interview reports. The Guide recounts the history of the interview project and explains how the questionnaires were prepared and administered and how the resulting interviews were written up. Information in it was obtained from conversations or written communication with many of the participants in the project, including field directors, team leaders, and interviewers working in Vietnam, and Rand staff members working on the project in the United States. Other sources are internal Rand memoranda and analyses of the project, and of course the interview reports themselves. It is important for every user to read the Guide because it explains the wartime conditions under which the work was conducted and will enable the reader to understand some of the limitations of the material that might otherwise elude or puzzle him.

The text of this 'Guide' was drafted in the summer of 1969 by W. Phillips Davison. Dr. Davison was temporary field director of the Rand Interview Project in Saigon during the summer of 1965, while on leave from the Council on Foreign Relations. He is currently Professor of Journalism and Sociology at Columbia University. Neither he nor any other individual is known to have read all interview reports.

--- March 1972

AGR

INTERVIEW

1

THE RAND CORPORATION
[redacted]

STUDIES OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR-1

Date of Interview : May [redacted] and [redacted] 1965

Subject's Category : Refugee

Area : Long Dinh district,
Dinh Tuong province

1. How long have you been here ?

I have been here for about three weeks.

2. Where did you come from ?

I came from my village. At first I had to stay temporarily in the house of a relative located at the other end of this village. I bought lumber and thatch and built my house in one week. I then moved my family to our new house here.

3. How did you get here ?

We came here on my sampan. I brought all my family with a few belongings in one sampan.

4. What are your plans and prospects now ?

I expect to go to [redacted] and work as a hired worker there. I expect to get forty or fifty piasters a day. I am ready to do any work available, e.g. earth work or construction work. I do not hope to be a regular worker in some factory, therefore I would work for anybody who hires me for a day or two.

5. How is it impossible for you to find regular work ?

Because I know nobody there. I am poor and I can only work as a hired worker. You need some capital to start a trade and I have none.

6. Did all the members of your family live together before you came here or were some living apart ? Where did they go and why ?

I lived with my wife and children in the same house. Before the lunar new year last year (i.e. February 1964), my father and my two younger brothers also lived in our village. My father lived with my youngest brother.

Then in 1964 the ARVN and the VC began to fight almost continuously down there in my village. Therefore my father and my two younger brothers moved to [redacted] village which is in the GVN controlled area. [redacted] is also the place where the family of my sister-in-law lives. Life is impossible in my village. Each time the ARVN moved into the village, there would be fighting with the guerrillas and the aircraft never failed to show up and attack the village. All the villagers have left the place. People with some money moved out first. They went to the GVN controlled area to start a new way of living. The poor people are the last to leave. Like myself they were afraid not to be able to find work out here. With so many children to support, they would certainly starve if they could not find employment.

7. How large is your family ?

I have six children aged 2, 5, 8, 10, 12 and 15 years old.

8. How big was your hamlet and village (how many hamlets, how many people) ?

My village has [redacted] hamlets and had about two or three thousand people.

9. How long have you lived there ?

I have lived there since my birth. During the war against the French, the Viet-Minh destroyed an outpost near my village. Then as today I had to move out to a secure area which was [redacted] I stayed there for one year and a half and went back to my village after the war. Afterward I stayed in my village until the day I came here.

10. How many families or persons have left your village in the past years ? Why did they leave and where did they go ?

People from my village began to move out after February 1964 and now nobody lives there. They deserted the village little by little. The rich people moved out first. They went to My Tho to buy a new house and start trade there. The poor people are the last to leave. The villagers could not move out en masse because the VC would not let them go. Therefore they had to move out one after the other. Life was impossible down there because of the war. People who went out to the open fields risked being killed by aircraft and you can find reeds only in the open fields.

11. What happened in February 1964 which made the villagers begin to desert the village ?

The VC at that time attacked [redacted] village and the [redacted] outpost and then retreated to my village. The outpost called in the mortars from Tan Hiep district town. The shells rained on my village and it was frightening.

12. Did all the people go to My Tho ?

Most of them went to My Tho to start trade. Others went to Long An, Phu My or any other places where they have friends or relatives.

13. What did most of the people in the village you just left do to earn a living ?

Those who had some money did business by buying goods from My Tho and bringing them to the village on their sampans for retailing. They also went from village to village and sold all kinds of goods. The poor people made a living by picking reeds in the fields.

The stalks of the reeds are crushed flat and are used to weave mats or baskets for sale. Rice cannot be grown down there because the land is saturated with alkali which is detrimental to agriculture. Only reeds can be found there during the rainy season. During the dry season the hollow places on the plain swarm with fish. The villagers drained the puddles and caught the fish.

14. Was the village prosperous or poor ?

Poor.

15. Were most people rich, medium or poor ?

Poor.

16. What did you do to earn a living ?

I picked reeds with my 15-year-old boy. My wife and my 12-year-old daughter wove them into mats. I also caught fish during the dry season.

17. What category did the Front assign to your family ?

Very poor farmer.

18. How much land did you own ? How much did you work ?

I had a kitchen garden of about one "mau" and also two or three "mau" of waste land. My garden produced bananas, coconuts, sweet potatoes, cassava and a few vegetables. I got some money out of the trees which grew on my waste land. They are used in house building.

19. Were there any changes in your economic condition in the past years ?

My economic condition remained the same year after year. We were always poor; however we did not fear

going hungry. Even without money we could still live on the produce of our kitchen garden. It earned for me from forty to fifty piasters a day throughout the year.

20. How much education have you had ?

I studied for five or six years. I was in the last year of primary school, but I did not take the final exam. I can read and write and I also knew some French. My classmates went to work in Saigon and their lives are now very successful. I remained in my village. Now I am poor and I have forgotten all my French.

21. Where did you go to school ? What kind of school was it ?

I went to school in my village a long time ago. The school was built by the French, but my teacher was a Vietnamese.

22. Did your children go to school ?

Only my eldest son had some education while in my village. He was taught to read and write by a teacher for a few months for a monthly tuition of 20 piasters. My village had no school. Its school was destroyed last year by bombs dropped from aircraft.

23. Do you plan to send your children to school here ?

Yes.

24. Why did you have to take refuge during the war against the French ?

It was like today. The French gave up the outpost near my village and I had to take refuge in [redacted]

My village is eight kilometers from [redacted] and is 14 or 15 kilometers from here. I stayed in [redacted] for more than a year. When Mr. Ngo (Dinh Diem) came to power, he retook the outpost and I went back to my village to stay there until last month.

25. Was your hamlet a strategic hamlet ?

No.

26. Who controlled your hamlet or village a year ago ?

My village was liberated about one and a half years ago when the GVN lost the outpost near my village. It is still entirely liberated.

27. Did the Front carry out any terroristic acts in your village or kill any of the people ?

All those who had worked for the GVN were arrested and killed. They were village council members or hamlet chiefs. One of my uncles was killed by the VC. He was accused of informing the GVN about the VC. In fact he was a GVN spy. All told, three persons were killed in my hamlet.

28. Did the villagers think the killing was justified or not ?

The population pitied the victims. People gave them decent graves. The killings were always justified according to the VC - each victim had a written condemnation pinned on his chest but the people were sad and they disagreed. At public gatherings where the people were read the written condemnation of the accused, they begged the VC to spare the victims. They said the accused had resigned their positions a long time before. The VC calmed them and said that they only wanted to take the accused away for some time in order to reeducate them.

That was not true. They led the poor men out into the fields to kill them and left their bodies there.

29. If your village was under Front control, how did you and the other villagers feel about it ?

Down there in a liberated area, it was impossible for the people not to obey the VC. The VC had come to liberate the people and to give them a prosperous life. But what did the people see ? They only saw war and more destitution. People were poorer because they could not go out into the fields to earn a living any longer for fear of being killed by aircraft.

30. Were you satisfied or dissatisfied with the Front administration and policies in your village ?

It was impossible to be satisfied. The VC compelled the people to do collective labor three nights each month. The labor consisted of digging up the roads or driving piles across the canals. These night trips were very dangerous and nobody wanted to go. But those who evaded two or three times were shot. No one had been shot yet but many were tormented. They had their eyes blindfolded for two or three days and they were accused of being reactionaries. After such a torment they usually lost the use of their eyes for some time. That is why people were so afraid of the VC.

31. Did your attitude and that of other villagers towards the Front change during the past year ?

The people could not stand the hardships any longer and they all left for secure areas (i.e. GVN controlled areas). Life was impossible down there. The VC made us do all kinds of work for them. We had to sabotage

the roads and canals, to build a combat village, to dig trenches, to erect fences and to sharpen bamboo spikes. All this work was very hard. Particularly hard were the night trips. We had to march through swampy land. We could easily get killed by the government soldiers. We returned home only at dawn and we could do nothing that day.

32. How did you feel about living in a combat village ?

I could not stand the hardships of life in a combat village.

33. How did life in a Front combat village differ from life in a GVN strategic hamlet ?

I live now in a GVN new life hamlet and my fears have ended. Life is more peaceful. I am no longer afraid of seeing my wife and children killed by bombs or mortar shells.

34. How many young men 16 years old or more were in your village ?

I do not know the number of young men in my village. But there were many of them.

35. How many joined the Front ? How many joined the ARVN ?

The number of young men from my village who joined the ARVN is as high as one hundred. Only forty or fifty men joined the Front. Life in the Front is very hard and there is no pay. The people were very poor and they preferred to escape to secure areas and join the ARVN. In my village the Front also has its military service like the GVN. All young men around 20 years of age are drafted whether they stay in a liberated area or in a secure area. Therefore most young men preferred to join the ARVN.

36. How many joined the Front in the last six months to a year ?

The figures I have given apply to the past year.

37. How did the Front recruit people in your village for military duty ?

The Front members came to see the young men and told them it is their duty to be a fighter for the people. They said the young men must join the Front forces to chase the Americans out of the country and to restore liberty and independence to the people.

38. Did the VC undertake propaganda action or did they order people to serve in the military force ?

The VC undertook propaganda for two or three days at the end of which they forced the young men away from their families. Some families cried pitifully when their sons were taken away but that did not prevent the VC from carrying out their orders. Nobody was happy to serve his military duty.

39. How did you and the other villagers feel about the recruiting ?

They were very sad. They were afraid their sons would be killed on the battlefields.

40. Were you or any members of your family taken by the Front for reeducation ?

No. But we had to attend meetings. Now and then the Front members would gather the people from six or seven houses. We were told about the coming collective labor we were going to do. For instance we were told to go and sabotage roads and canals. The Front members would explain to us that the sabotage of ways of communications was devised to prevent the enemy from coming and destroying our village . Two or three days after the meeting they would lead the people to the worksite.

41. How often did the Front hold meetings with the villagers in your hamlet ?

The meetings were held every week in my hamlet and every two weeks in my village.

42. What was said on each occasion ? What was the occasion ?

The meetings were held regularly. At these meetings, the Front members told the people about the present situation, about the Front victories. We were told about life in North Vietnam, which is experiencing peace and reconstruction, and about life in the Soviet Union and in China. These countries have been liberated long ago and their peoples are now very happy.

43. What did you and the villagers think about what was said at the meetings ?

They were very sad about the war. They said the Front was lying to the people. The Front said it would destroy the enemy this year and bring peace and prosperity to the people. But the war is still going and is fiercer every day and the people are becoming poorer and poorer. The Front said happiness would come in the very near future but it did not say when.

44. Did the Front cadres say anything about the bombing of North Vietnam ?

Yes. They said that the Americans suffered heavy losses when they sent their aircraft to provoke North Vietnam. We were told only about the American losses and nothing about the damage done to the North Vietnamese. According to the Front the Americans suffered from twenty to thirty aircraft lost every time they went up North. We were also told that many American warships were sunk in North

Vietnamese waters, thanks to help from the Soviet Union and China which provided assistance to the North Vietnamese. The strength of the North Vietnamese forces, according to the Front, is sufficient to fight the Americans. The Front said the Americans can send as many planes as they like to North Vietnam because in the end all of the planes will be destroyed there.

45. Did the Front explain why North Vietnam is bombed ?

According to the Front the Americans bomb North Vietnam with the hope that the bombing will force the Front to withdraw its troops to North Vietnam to defend it. But this withdrawal was not necessary because the North Vietnamese have enough forces to fight with the Americans. The Front said it is winning in South Vietnam and thus the Americans tried to avoid defeat by bombing North Vietnam.

46. Did you belong to any village organization or cooperative while the Front was in control of your village ?

I belonged to the Youth organization. All men between 18 and 45 had to join this organization in order to carry out the collective labor orders. People above 45 were not required to do collective labor. They joined the Elders organization.

47. What did you think of the Youth organization ?

The organization members were required to do heavy work. I did not want to join but I had no choice.

48. To whom did you pay taxes or contributions during the past three years ? How much did you pay ?

Before my village was liberated I had to pay taxes to both sides. I paid about 270 piasters a year to the GVN

for the land I owned and about 50 piasters a year to the VC. However the VC did not call the money they collected from the people taxes. They said the Front had abolished all the taxes of the imperialists. Therefore they called their taxes contributions to the Revolution. After my village was liberated the contributions remained the same and I did not pay taxes to the GVN any longer. Instead I paid ten piasters per month to the Front, which said the money would be used to feed its fighters. Each family paid the same amount per month to feed the fighters.

49. How did you and your family feel about the taxes you paid ?

The VC were very clever. They said they had abolished all the taxes of the imperialists and in their places they had levied contributions. That change fooled nobody and the people said the VC are deceitful. But they had no choice but to pay; otherwise they would be accused of being reactionary and unpatriotic.

50. What did the Front cadres say about the increased contributions?

They said our forces are stronger every day and our fighters more numerous, therefore it is the duty of the people to feed them.

51. What did you and the other villagers think about the cadres' explanation ?

They think the cadres were speaking the truth. At first the Front had only three or four rifles and about ten men in my village. Now the Front soldiers are innumerable and they are well supplied with weapons. Before the weapons consisted of small rifles. Now the Front has very big guns with muzzles as big as rice bowls and with

legs as long as a man's legs. Before I left my village I saw many Front Main Force units coming there regularly. They came to my village every one or two months and stayed there for a few days.

52. Did the Front carry out land distribution in your village ?

Yes. My village has no ricefields but only waste land on which is found lumber used as beams. The land was equally distributed to each family, which received two or three "cong" on the average. The rich people did not like the idea because they had worked hard to get this land and then the Front took it to give away to the poor.

53. When was the land distribution done ?

About three years ago.

54. Whose land was distributed ?

Those who had more than five "mau" had to give up the excess land and those who had three "mau" had to give up one and one half "mau". Generally speaking the rich people were required to give half of their land to the poor. (Note: The subject's explanation of land distribution was rather cloudy and he could not explain it more understandably.)

55. Did you receive any land ?

Although I was a very poor farmer I received no land because I already had my kitchen-garden. Only those who had absolutely no land were distributed some land.

56. Were those who received land from the Front afraid the land might eventually be taken away from them ?

No, they were not afraid. During the war against the

French the Viet Minh had instituted land distribution too and when Mr. Ngo came back to build the outpost the land was given back to the owners without any trouble. Therefore in the present war those who received land were not worried. They would give back the land to its owners and the latter would create no trouble for them. The landowners knew from past experience that it was better not to sue those who took their land because, if they did, the Front might come back in the future and kill them.

57. Did you own your land or rent it ?

I inherited my land from my father. He cleared the jungle growth off the land and was granted ownership by the French government. That happened long ago under the French.

58. Tell me something about the history of your village during and after the Resistance period.

During the Resistance period my village was controlled by the French during the first two or three years. The VC (Note: The subject always identified the Viet Minh as the Viet Cong) then took over the village for the next six years. When they went to North Vietnam, Mr. Ngo came to the village to rebuild [redacted] outpost. In 1963 or 1964 the VC took the outpost and seized control of the village and are still there. Before the [redacted] outpost was taken my village was classified as temporarily liberated because the GVN soldiers still passed through.

59. When did the Front become active in your village ? What form did this activity take ?

The Front began to become active in my village about two years after Mr. Ngo came into power. At first there were only three or five Front members in my village. They went at night from house to house to make propaganda. At that time they did not ask for any contributions. They only talked about the liberation of South Vietnam, about the need for chasing Ngo and the Americans out of the country. At that time the Front did not force people to serve their military duty. Then the number of the Front members in my village swelled to one platoon. In recent years the forces that passed through my village were as large as two or three hundred men. We were required to pay contributions beginning about four years ago and last year the Front began to force the young men to serve military duty. Before, nobody was forced to go and people were free to stay home to work for a living. At first the people knew nothing about the new situation because government troops still patrolled the village and the Front members came only at night. I myself did not pay attention to them and I had no idea about the situation. But the following year the Front began "to crush the traitors" and "to demolish the yoke of oppression". Many village and hamlet officials were killed and the situation still persists.

60. How did you and the other villagers feel about the initial activity of the Front ? What did you and the other villagers do ?

We were very afraid of the Front members. The GVN outpost was very close and the soldiers patrolled very often into the village and hamlet. The villagers were afraid of being found in the company of the Front members and they were reluctant to let them come into their houses.

61. Do you know who the GVN village, district and province chiefs are ?

I am a newcomer here and do not know any GVN officials. But in my native village I knew my hamlet chief. He had resigned long ago before the outpost was taken because he was threatened by the VC. (Note: The subject used the expressions VC and Front members or Liberation members indifferently throughout the interview.) The village chief still holds his position. He is a very good man and all the villagers like him very much. I do not know who the district chief and the province chief are.

62. You said your village is now controlled by the VC. How can a GVN village chief remain in his position then ?

He is still a GVN village chief, but he does not live in the village; he lives in My Tho. He left my village when the VC began to harass the outpost. He moved his family to My Tho but has his office here in [redacted] village. He still keeps under his authority the people who move out from my village. He is the man we see to request permits or identity cards. But recently I heard that the local village chief wants to take us under his authority and I am very sorry to hear that. My village chief is also very sad to leave us.

63. How often did the GVN officials visit your village before ?

They never visited my village. Under the French - even during the war - the Vietnamese officials at the district or province levels came to inspect my village about once every year.

64. What did you think of the GVN administration ?

The GVN administration was fairly good in my village. People could get permits very easily. Permits are always required then and now. You must have a permit to go out of the village and work in the cities, a permit for a burial service or an ancestor worship service. Birth certificates were also delivered without difficulty by the village administration.

65. What did the people in your village think of the fall of the Diem regime ?

People were worried at the fall of Mr. Ngo. They were worried about the future. They feared that the next head of government would intensify the war and the ARVN operations. Under Mr. Ngo people knew peace and they were able to work for a living because the ARVN did not attack the village very often.

66. What did the VC tell the villagers about the fall of Mr. Ngo ?

They said the Americans had realized that they were in a bad position because Mr. Ngo had not been effective in leading the war. Consequently the Americans had to change Mr. Ngo for a more effective man. The VC said Mr. Ngo was downed because the Americans were losing the war to the Front. Afterward, on the occasion of each change of government the VC said the Americans were losing faster and faster every day, therefore they had to change their men who had been incapable.

67. Do you know who heads up the present government ?

No. I only know that Mr. Duong Van Minh succeeded Mr. Ngo and was succeeded by Mr. Khanh. I do not know who is now in power.

68. What have you heard about the present government and its policies ?

I have been too busy working since I came here. I have no time to go and listen to the loudspeakers at the other end of the village.

69. What did the VC tell the villagers about the present government?

While Mr. Khanh was still in power, the VC had predicted that he would be downed very soon because the GVN was getting weaker and weaker and Mr. Khanh would not last long. They said that from then on, nobody could last as long as Mr. Ngo.

70. Did the GVN carry out any programs in your village to help the villagers ?

Before the liberation, the GVN had given money to my village to build a school and a temple.

71. What did you and the other villagers think about these programs? Did you benefit from these programs ? Did they help the villagers ?

Those who had children of school age put many hopes on the school and the old people were very pleased to have a temple to worship the village guardian spirit I had hoped to send my children to study in the village school. But as soon as the school was completed the VC took over the village. They used the village school as barracks for the guerrillas. They put their flag on top of the school and had banners flying all around. That provoked the GVN which sent in aircraft to bomb the schoolhouse. It is now completely demolished. Nobody was able to study there.

72. Were there any military or self-defense forces stationed in your hamlet or village ?

Before my village was liberated, there was about one platoon of Civil Guardsmen who stayed inside the outpost. Before I left my village also had about one platoon of VC. They belonged to the 514th battalion. They stayed permanently in the village in spite of the almost continuous bombing. Although they numbered only one platoon, they were never afraid of the GVN soldiers, even if they were one hundred strong. The VC fled only when the ARVN was one thousand men strong.

73. How did the GVN soldiers and the Front soldiers behave towards the villagers ?

Both of them caused no trouble to the villagers. The VC lived on the other end of the village, near the GVN controlled area. They fired at the GVN soldiers whenever they came close to the village. The VC do not call themselves guerrillas any longer. They now call themselves the Protection Force.

74. Did GVN troops pass through your village ? How often ? How did they behave towards the villagers ?

The GVN soldiers dared not come into my village if they were less than one thousand strong. They came once every seven or eight months and sometimes a full year went by without seeing them in my village. They did not kill the villagers but asked them to carry their ammunition until the river boats (Note: probably landing craft) came to pick them up.

75. How did the villagers feel about the GVN troops ? Did they like them ? Did they hate them ? Were they afraid of them ?

The villagers did not hate the GVN troops. Neither were they afraid of them. But the villagers were very afraid of being killed while carrying the ammunition. They prayed that the GVN troops would not meet the Liberation members and that there would be no fighting.

76. How did you and the villagers feel about the activities of the (VC) Protection Force of your village?

People did not like them. They said the VC provoked the GVN in a careless manner by firing at the GVN soldiers who went by on patrol. The GVN soldiers were forced to fire back and everybody - including the VC - had to flee the village and go into hiding in the open fields or along the canal. People said among themselves: "Why don't they go out to the province capital and fight the GVN there and leave the villagers alone with their work ?"

77. How did you and the villagers feel about Front troops passing through your village ?

They did not stay long, only one or two hours or at most a half day. They came and went by sampans.

78. Have there been any changes in the attitude of the villagers toward the Front forces in the past year ?

No. The attitude was the same.

79. What have you heard about the aims of the Front ?

The Front was set up to liberate the people from slavery. We were asked to help the Front increase its strength and its forces to oppose the Americans. Until the day the Americans leave this country, the people will have to suffer from their domination with its hardships,

its slavery and its hunger. Therefore the Front must build up its forces to liberate the people and give them abundance, freedom and independence. When that day comes, everybody will be free to go anywhere he likes, even abroad.

80. Who told you that ?

The Information Section of my village was in charge of talking with the villagers.

81. What do you think about the aims of the Front ?

I understand nothing about the aims of the Front because I had no time to care about them. I picked reeds all day long. Besides I had nothing to help build up the Front forces.

82. What have you heard about life in Front military units ?

The fighters receive no pay. They say they fight for themselves and for the people, therefore it is their duty to join the Front forces. They receive only clothing and food. If death comes to them, their families will receive no pension.

83. What have you heard about Front successes, defeats and losses ? Who told you about this ? What did you think of it ?

The cadre in charge of Information told the village about Front successes, defeats and losses. He used a megaphone and announced that the Front had won a battle in this place or that place, had killed how many of the enemy or had taken how many weapons. He did announce the Front losses but I believe he had reduced the figures to half of what they were because otherwise nobody would dare to join them. Now and then he did admit that the

guerrillas had lost so many rifles and explain that it was because they were outnumbered. They had to admit defeat now and then or else people would not believe them any longer.

84. Do you have any close friends serving in Front military units ?

Some people in my neighborhood served in the Front. However they did not say they joined the Liberation Front but rather they served their duty to the people. When the uprising began they joined because they wanted to join but recently - i.e. since 1963 - most of them were taken away by force.

85. What are the proportions of those who volunteered and those who were forced to join ?

The majority of men who joined were forced to. The proportions are about 6 - 4.

86. How often did they visit your hamlet ?

They rarely visited the hamlet, perhaps once a year. Most of them were assigned to the Main Forces operating in the region. They moved from province to province and they rarely had the opportunity to visit home. But those who are not very courageous or who are married were assigned to the Protection Forces and were stationed in the village.

87. Could the new recruit choose the category of force he would like to be assigned to ?

Yes, but only after he had been assigned to a category of force. For instance a guerrilla could go to his leader and ask to be assigned to a Main Force unit because he could not stand the hard life of a guerrilla or a Main

Force fighter could ask to become a guerrilla because he missed his family.

88. What did the Front soldiers tell you about their lives and activities ?

They said their life was very hard. They had to move in swampy areas and to eat irregularly because of the fighting. They were given only two pairs of black pajamas at one time. But they said they were happy because they fought for the people and their children to bring them freedom and prosperity.

89. Are any members of your family or relatives serving in the ARVN or with the GVN ?

My younger brother now serves with a Ranger unit. My second cousin has two sons in the ARVN and a son-in-law who is a security agent. (Note: The subject had no idea about the function of a "security agent.")

90. Have they visited you and your family ? When was the last time you talked with them ?

They joined the ARVN a long time before and they rarely visited their families. Last week I went to My Tho and I met there the son-in-law of my second cousin. About two or three months ago when I was still in my village, I went to [redacted] to see my younger brother. His wife lives there and he went on leave to see her. He sent word to me and asked me to go and meet him in [redacted].

91. Are any members of your family or relatives serving with the Front ?

No. Since I have relatives who serve with the ARVN the Front would not trust my other reletives.

(Note: The subject had looked forward to being interviewed on his situation as a refugee. At this point he was annoyed because he was asked only about the VC in his former village. When asked about his close friends and relatives serving with the VC, he had a self-conscious smile as if he was reluctant to tell a lie. In fact he took his time before answering.)

92. Has your hamlet or village been attacked ? Describe what happened.

Yes. My village was attacked last July 1964. One aircraft was shot down in that attack. Many GVN soldiers came from the direction of [redacted] in the morning. They were stopped by the Protection Forces who fought with them. The helicopters then flew in reinforcements composed of paratroopers. They fought with the Protection Forces inside my village for many hours. Many aircraft came and bombed the village all day long. There were helicopters, twin engine aircraft and single engine aircraft. They strafed and bombed and uprooted many trees. The craters caused by the bombs were very large. There were six dead among the villagers. Four of them belonged to the same family. They had a very solid shelter and did not leave the village to take refuge in the open fields. Two neighbors also believed the shelter would give adequate protection and stayed with that family. The shelter received a direct hit and all six were killed. Three other villagers were slightly wounded.

93. What did you and the villagers do during the attack ?

We ran out of the village to the banks of the canal. We took refuge in the hollow places there.

94. How often was your hamlet attacked ?

Since my village was liberated there was only one big attack as I have described it. Smaller attacks were innumerable. The VC fired on the GVN soldiers and then fled and nothing happened.

95. Was your hamlet bombarded by artillery ? How often ?

Yes, my village was often shelled by mortars from Tan Hiep district. The shellings are unpredictable too. Sometimes the GVN fired mortar all night long, one shell now and then. On such nights we made numerous trips to the shelters and I could not sleep.

96. What damage was inflicted ? Did your family suffer any damage ?

No, because my house was located at the center of the village and the fighting and shelling always took place at the outer limits of the village. As soon as I heard the shells I brought all my family into the shelter. But the villagers suffered one or two dead after each shelling. All told, forty to fifty people died in my village from all kinds of attacks.

97. Where were the wounded treated ?

They were taken to My Tho. The trip was made by sampan to [redacted] and then by bus to My Tho.

98. How did you feel about the attacks ?

I complained to my neighbors that with these attacks I could do nothing to earn a living.

99. Why do you think your village was attacked or bombarded ?

Because there is a war between the two sides. The people have no choice but to endure it.

100. What did other villagers say about it ?

I do not know.

101. What did the Front people say about it ?

They said the Americans were very cruel. They wanted to destroy the village and make life impossible for the people.

102. What kinds of attacks frightened you and the other villagers most ?

They feared only air attacks. They were not afraid of the infantry because the soldiers did not fire on the civilians. On the contrary the aircraft fired indiscriminately on everybody. When the GVN soldiers came to the village the people were not afraid and they did not leave their houses. They left only when the aircraft came. They were also afraid of mortars.

103. Did any persons in your village join the Front because of the attacks ?

Only a few persons joined the Front because of the attacks. They were only two or three. They joined because the aircraft had killed their parents or their brothers and sisters.

104. Did any villagers move to GVN controlled areas after the attacks ?

Yes. After each attack about five or ten persons moved to the GVN controlled area. Now they have all moved out. They had to move out cautiously, bringing their belongings stealthily to [redacted] for consignment on many trips before moving out for keeps. In spite of that they had to leave behind many things because the VC forbade people to take their property with them.

105. Did the attacks interfere with your work and your earning a living ?

Yes. It was very difficult to earn a living. I had to stay on the alert for a possible attack. When we were bombarded by mortar fire I had to stay awake all night to bring my children into and out of the shelter through the night and I could do nothing the next day.

106. What kinds of attacks damaged you most ?

People were most afraid of the "powdered gasoline" bomb. The gasoline can leak through a shelter even when it is dropped far from the shelter. The fragmentation bomb is not a threat unless it is dropped right on the shelter. The mortar shell is nothing; it causes damage only to the garden. The people are still safe when their shelters are hit directly by ten mortar shells. Down there in my village the shelters were very strong. They were one meter wide, two meters long and one meter deep. They were covered with beams and a one meter layer of earth. Some people built their shelters inside the houses; others built them outside.

107. What effect did they have on your living conditions ?

When all was quiet I managed to go to the fields and pick reeds. But recently the aircraft were very active in my area, therefore I dared not go out into the open. I saw that my wife and children could not sleep a quiet night and I wanted to go to a more peaceful place to live.

108. When did the aircraft begin to be more active ?

The aircraft have been very active for seven or eight months now. They flew over my village regularly and strafed every day. I could not go out to the fields

and pick reeds any longer because there was no hiding place out there. The reeds are only one meter high. There was no place to hide when you were strafed by aircraft.

109. How many villagers were killed by aircraft while they were picking reeds ?

About nine or ten persons. They were all poor people and they gambled with their lives.

110. Did the GVN warn your hamlet that it would be attacked ? Did it explain the reasons for the attack ?

No, the GVN never warned the people before it attacked the village. But last year, around August or September, it started to tell the villagers to move out to the government controlled area because it could no longer insure their lives and property if they stayed in the insecure area. It urged them to move out because they were oppressed by the VC in their villages.

111. How did it tell you ? What did you think about it ?

The poor people chose to take the risk of staying in the village. They were apprehensive about life in the cities. They were afraid of staying unemployed out here and of dying of hunger. The GVN told the people by way of leaflets dropped from Dakota aircraft.

112. What other means did the GVN use to warn the villagers ?

The GVN used only leaflets.

113. What did the Front people say or do ?

The Front asked the villagers to remain in the village. It said they would die of hunger in the GVN controlled

area because nobody would hire a farmer. It pointed out to the villagers that they had their houses and their gardens in the village, that they had all the food available around them with no need to buy from the market but that they would have to buy everything out here. In spite of that talk, people could not bear the dangers of war any longer and they all left.

114. How did you and the villagers get news about what was going on ?

We heard only the news from the Front. We could not listen to Radio Saigon for fear of being arrested. We were allowed to tune in only Radio Hanoi and the Voice of Liberation.

115. Were there many radio sets in your village ?

The Front brought a radio set to each populated neighborhood and turned it on at night for the people to listen to. The villagers owned about twenty or thirty private radio sets.

116. Do you know of other means of information beside the Front radio ?

Every two or three months, each neighborhood was given a Front newspaper. The neighborhood was divided into cells of ten families each and the cell leader gathered the people and read them the newspaper. The VC strictly forbade the purchase of GVN newspapers.

117. Could you get news about what was going on out here by word of mouth ?

No. If the VC heard about such talk they would arrest the man and charge him with delivering enemy propaganda. This crime was called the crime of counter-propaganda.

II Taking Refuge

118. Had you or your family thought of moving to a GVN controlled area before ?

We came to take refuge here because we were asked to by Mr. [redacted], the chief of my former village. He is a very kind man. From the GVN controlled area he passed word to the people in his village to come out to [redacted]. He promised he would ask the government to provide the refugees with land to build their houses on and to give all the necessary papers to allow them to go and find work. All the people from my village like him very much. He is from North Vietnam, but he is very kind to the people. (Note: The interviewer forgot to ask the subject what he thought of the North Vietnamese in gener He never cares about formality. Down there in my villag., people did not need to go to the village office to ask for a permit. They could always stop him in the street and ask him for one. He would then take a pad of forms out of his pocket and write a permit immediately.

119. Before you came here, had you ever thought of leaving your village ?

Yes. Two or three months before I came here I had thought of moving my family to My Tho (Dinh Tuong province capital). I planned to work as a pedicab driver in My Tho. I gave up the idea because it was too hazardous. Then I received word from a close relative that the refugees in [redacted] are having a good life and that they have received land from the government. The news about the land made me decide to move here.

120. Have you taken refuge or tried to take refuge in a GVN controlled area before ?

No.

121. What had you heard about conditions in GVN controlled areas before you left ?

I had heard that a pedicab driver can earn enough money to support his family.

122. Were you told what the GVN would do for you and your family ?

My former village chief sent word to the villagers that he had asked the government to provide the refugees with land and money to build their houses. We were also promised that we would receive all the necessary papers and we would not be arrested. This news calmed the fears of the villagers. Before, the VC had told them that they would not be free out here, that they would be imprisoned in new life hamlets with no possibility of getting out without the consent of the GVN.

123. What did you expect the GVN to do for you ?

I expected to be given land and money to build a new house. When I came here I was given a piece of land by my former village chief to build my house on. I received no money.

124. When and why did you or your family decide to leave your village to come here ?

I had thought of leaving my village a long time ago, at least four or five months ago, because life was impossible. I wanted to move to the GVN controlled area to earn a living. But I was too poor and I could not make up my mind. I was afraid I would not be able to get employment out here. I was in a very difficult situation because

once I moved out I would not be allowed to return to my village. I was hesitating when I got word from my village chief and I made up my mind to move out. I had no choice but go to [redacted] because there I would be given land, while in My Tho I would be on my own. Here, I received ten meters of land. The refugees are relocated on both sides of the road. Each family is given a pieace of land that reaches ten meters back from the road and is wide enough to build a house on (approximately five or six meters).

125. How did you get the word from your village chief ?

I got the word from the villagers who had left before me. They live in [redacted] village and when I went there they told me about the situation of the refugees in [redacted] The VC in my village did nothing to prevent us from going to [redacted] but the villagers who left for keeps could never return to the village.

126. When did you first get word from your village chief ? How long was it before you actually left ?

About half a month before I left.

127. What did you do during that period of time ?

It was not easy to get out. I had to save money in order to build a new house here. Therefore I had to work hard. I risked my life and went to pick reeds from dawn to late afternoon. I had to be very careful about the aircraft. Then I went to sell the mats made of reeds in [redacted] and consigned the money to a friend.

128. Did you hear any rumors of a possible attack on your village?

No.

129. What did you fear most when you were considering leaving the village ?

I was afraid of dying of hunger out here. The village chief had promised he would give land to everybody who comes out but this was only a promise. I was most worried about a house to live in.

(Note: Up to this moment the interview was conducted at the house of the [redacted] village chief. Beginning on the second day, the subject was interviewed at his house in the presence of his wife, and both of them took part in the interview. The interviewer arrived at their house at 9 am and all the family was having its morning meal. While waiting for them to finish, the interviewer seized the opportunity to make the following observations on the house. It was a new house built of thatch and small timber with an earthen floor. The furniture in the one-room house consisted of one bed, one wooden couch (on which all the family was having breakfast), one hammock and one big jug. There was no table but only shelves on three of the four walls of the house. It was later made known that all the furniture was borrowed. Here and there were strung some clothes. Apparently this family brought out from its village only a wooden suitcase and a pouch, both of which were kept carefully on the bed. The cooking had been done right on the ground in a corner of the house. All the members of the family had a tremendous appetite. The man said he had three meals a day and ten bowls of rice per meal and his five-year-old son had four or five bowls per meal. The rice was accompanied by French beans and fish. The wife said it was not usual that they could afford to eat fish. They had fish only when the trucks that brought fish to Saigon could not cross the ferry and had to sell them very cheaply. She said her

family could live on 60 piasters per day, including food, firewood and salt. After the meal the eldest son washed the dishes in a small, dirty pond in back of the house. The husband explained that he had dug the pond to get the earth that went into making the house foundation. He expressed his wish to have an additional ten meters of land extending back from his house because with the coming rice season the farmers would spread fertilizer on the land next to the pond. He was afraid the rain would drain the fertilizers into his pond and make the water undrinkable. He said he wished nothing beyond having the additional land because he could grow vegetables on it and have food for his family; without the land he had to buy all the food his family consumed. He said he relied solely on the government to give him that piece of land because he had no money to buy it and neither could he grab it at the expense of the owner.

130. Did you hear broadcasts from aircraft or read leaflets telling you to leave ? What did they say ?

Yes. The government dropped leaflets asking people to leave the liberated area and move to the GVN controlled area. The leaflets said the government would not be able to safeguard our lives and property if we stayed in the liberated area. We were promised that the GVN would give us land to build a house on, 3,500 piasters to build the house, seven piasters per day per person for food for six months, and pigs and poultry to breed. The leaflets were dropped beginning a few months ago from a very big plane. They were dropped over the area every two or three weeks. The Old Lady aircraft also spoke to the people.

131. Did the leaflets promise you all those things ?

No. They only said that we had to move out. The promise was made by the [redacted] village chief here. He saw that too many people came to his village and he soothed their worries by promising that.

132. Were you told by the aircraft to go to any specific place or only to move out of the village ?

We were not told to go to a specific area. We were told only to move to the GVN controlled area where we would be safe.

133. Which was more frequent, the leaflets or the broadcasts ?

I heard the broadcasts only twice. The leaflets were dropped three or four times. They landed on the village only twice but those who went out to pick reeds said they saw the leaflets many times. The leaflets had to be read furtively or else the reader would be criticized

134. Did you hear the broadcasts distinctly ?

I did not hear the broadcasts very distinctly. I could never hear an entire sentence because the aircraft flew elsewhere.

135. What did you think of what the broadcasts and leaflets said ?

I was very afraid to hear that the GVN could no longer guarantee our lives and property. I expected the village to be attacked by aircraft or mortars very soon. I did not leave immediately because I was very poor. Many people left the village before me. I discussed the idea of leaving the village with my wife and she agreed. Life was impossible then. After we received the warning, aircraft began to strafe and to fire rockets on both the village and the open fields. They came almost every day. Some were helicopters and some were Cormorant planes with three tails.

136. What were the main religions in your village ?

Most of the villagers were Buddhist and Caodaists. Some were Catholics and they lived on the far end of the village where they had a church.

137. Have you heard about the Chieu Hoi program ? What have you heard about it and from whom ?

Yes, I have heard that the government is calling upon the Front fighters to leave the Front and to come over here. The government promises to help them find work or even to join the ARVN. That is what I hear in [redacted] I heard nothing of that kind in my village.

138. Did you expect to leave your village for a long or a short time ?

I plan to stay here until the end of the war, after which I will return to my village. For the time being I have built a house here and it would be foolish to return there. Anyway it is impossible for me to go back and live there. I can assure you that everybody here is very happy to be given land to build a house on and to have a quiet place to live. However we would like the government to hasten the payment of the relocation allowance. I had to borrow money to buy materials to build this house and I want to return it as soon as possible.

139. In your opinion when will the war end ?

I do not know. I only know that I shall go back to my village when peace comes. However if the government gave me additional land behind my house, I would stay here forever. I would have my wife and children grow vegetables in the kitchen-garden while I go to work as a hired worker.

I could stay here and work for the villagers, doing such work as hoeing, building houses or clearing canals. I could also go to My Tho and work as a pedicab driver or a stevedore. Particularly during the Lunar New Year period I could find work easily on the barges which move from village to village to sell their wares. For such work out of the village I have to ask for a permit from the village council.

140. How much did it cost you to build this house ?

I built this house myself with the help of three hired workers. It took me six full days to complete it and I had to pay 1,200 piasters in wages to the workers. I built this house very carefully. I had to fill the moat in the front and make an earth deck higher than usual to guard against floods. All told, I spent 3,500 piasters on this house, i.e. all the money the government promised to give me. I wanted to make a very solid house, therefore I spent all the money I was promised. I had to borrow the money from my brother-in-law, who moved out here very early and is now completely resettled. I have to pay 5% interest per month. I succeeded in getting the loan because he is a relative and because the government has promised to pay back the money.

141. Why did you decide to come to this place ?

Mr. [redacted] was village chief in [redacted] village and most of the people there heard his words and came to settle here. When people came here, the government put them under the authority of [redacted] village and both he and the villagers are very sad about the change. He is a very kind man.

142. What property did you bring with you ?

I brought none of my property with me. I had only five hundred piasters I had saved and some clothing. The furniture in this house belongs to my friends and relatives. The dishes, pottery and firewood are newly bought here. I could bring nothing with me because the Liberation people said, "We do not care about your leaving but take nothing with you and never dare to come back!" I put all my family on my sampan and made my way here. The trip lasted from 8 am to 3 pm.

143. Are you worried about the property you left behind ?

No. I left behind my house, my garden, my beds, pots and dishes and five or six water jugs. People who moved out after me said my house has been burned down by aircraft fire and all the village is now in ashes. I am not worried about my property now that I have a new house here.

144. What else would you have liked to have taken with you if you had been able to ?

Everything, the beds, the jugs, and even the house. I could have taken the house to pieces and re-assembled the pieces here. But I am fully satisfied to be able to get out here.

145. Is there anyone in the village who will look after the property you left behind ?

Everybody has left my village. They moved out little by little and one week after I came here there was practically nobody there any longer. They saw that the villagers are safely settled here and they wanted to follow suit.

146. What did the Front people in your village say or do when you and the other villagers decided to leave ?

The village cadres did not want us to leave. They said life in liberated areas is safer. In fact it was not safe at all. They said that once we had left we would never be able to live in our house again or to work our land again. The village cadres said that and the Front people at the checkpoints also said that. In spite of the talk people still left the village. Some left stealthily and some did not hide their plans. They said : "You cannot make my life and that of my family safe, therefore I have to leave."

147. Did you come out stealthily or in the open ?

I moved out stealthily. If the VC had stopped me I would have told them we were going to an ancestor worship service in the GVN controlled area.

148. Has the Front threatened to punish you for leaving the village and settling in a GVN controlled area ?

They used no threats. They said they did not care about our leaving but we had to go away and never come back.

149. How many families left the village at about the time you did?

I cannot tell because they moved out little by little. But I know that about one thousand persons had left before me. They settled in many places where they have friends or relatives. About fifty or sixty families in [redacted] have come from my village. I guess that about twenty or thirty persons left during the week I did. Now there is nobody left behind. They saw that people out here are safely settled and they all wanted to follow suit. Generally speaking the poor people in my village had been

worried about not being able to earn a living in the GVN controlled area. They knew only how to pick reeds and were very afraid of dying of hunger out here. But when they saw that people have been able to earn a living as hired workers they all moved out.

150. What do you think might happen to you if you went back to your village ?

I will never go back to my village because I have a stable life here. If went back I would lose my civil rights because I would be labeled pro-GVN. The VC would not trust me and I would have all kinds of troubles.

III Being a Refugee

151. Do you blame anyone for causing you to leave your village ?

I blame nobody. The two sides are fighting each other and it is not their purpose to fight the people. It is only because I could not stand the war that I left my village.

152. What help did the GVN authorities give you and your family after you left your village ?

I was given this land by the village council. Beside the land I have received nothing I have been promised. The village council also gave me authorization papers to go and find work in My Tho. I had asked for and received two such authorizations. They were valid for

one month each but I stayed away for only one week each time. I worked as a stevedore in My Tho and each time I brought home about six or seven hundred piasters.

153. Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the help you received?

I am very happy to be in this house. But I would be happier if the government gave me additional land, hastened the payment of the allowances and provided my family with pigs and poultry to raise. As a refugee I can rely only on the government.

154. Which would you prefer ? The money to build your house or the additional land in the back of your house ?

I would like to have both, but I am now in great need of money to pay back my loan because the interest is piling up. But as a poor man, I value the land higher.

155. What did the GVN authorities tell you they will do for you ?

We were promised land, 3,500 piasters to build a house and 7 piasters per person per day for food for six months - some say for one month only.

156. What do you think about what they told you ?

It is government business. I have no right to say anything or complain about it. If the government gave me money to buy food for one month, it is good; if it gave me enough for six months, it is better. For the time being I must try to work hard to support my family. Everybody here is in the same situation as mine.

157. What did you plan to do when you left your village ?

I planned to come here and to work as a hired worker to support my wife and children. I wanted nothing more than a house to live peacefully in.

158. Do you want to stay here or move elsewhere ?

I want to stay here. I also want the village authorities to keep security here. Once I have built my house I do not want to move anywhere else because I do not have the money to rent a house. A house now rent at least for three hundred piasters a month and I do not have the money.

159. What sort of work do you plan to do ?

For the time being I plan to work as a hired worker. If I had money I would like to start trade. I would sell such wares as firewood, pottery, dishes, dippers or rice.

160. How much money do you need to start trade ?

I would start with 5,000 piasters by selling wares of little value. But if I wanted to sell rice I would need much more than 5,000 piasters.

161. Has anyone tried to persuade you or the other refugees to go back to your village since you came here ?

Nobody has tried to persuade me to go back to my village. I am very happy to be able to get out of my village. I am like a bird that has escaped from its cage and nobody can persuade me to go back there.

162. Did you tell your friends who stayed behind to come out and join you ?

I have not had the opportunity to do so.

163. Have any of the villagers who left with you moved back to your village ?

Nobody wants to return to my village and no one has moved back. But some have left this end of [redacted] village

to move to the opposite end near the market place. They want to be closer to the Catholic priest. He is a very kind man. He was touched by our condition when we came here. He asked the Church to provide him with wheat. He distributed his wheat to everybody regardless of creed. My family received more than 30 liters of wheat. The distribution was made only once because he ran out of his stock. The people who moved over there have their land here but they could not find money to build their houses. Therefore they moved there temporarily to wait for the government to pay the allowances.

164. Have you seen any Americans ?

I see them driving by very often but yesterday I saw the first Americans who came here to visit us. (Note: They were one US military adviser, one US embassy official and one Rand Corporation staff member.)

165. What have you heard about the Americans ?

Nothing.

166. What do you think they are doing in Vietnam ?

I do not know accurately but I think they are here to govern us and to help us.

167. Have you seen people from other countries other than Americans (Koreans, Filipinos etc) who are helping the Vietnamese ?

No. I do not know what the Koreans or Filipinos look like. Are they black or white ? I knew the French pretty well. It was long ago during the "French period." I was in school and every six months a French headmaster would come to the village to visit us. He always brought with him stationery and books to give us.

168. In your opinion what did the French do in Vietnam ?

They also came here to help the people, to build schools and to teach the students. My teacher was a Vietnamese but the headmaster was a Frenchman. The French were in great need of students. We had all kinds of favors and gifts. They were in great need of students because they wanted us to govern our country later. It is the same thing today. The Catholic priest and the village chief here also urge us to send our children to school so that they will be educated and will be able to work for the government.

169. Have you sent your children to school here ?

I have not been here very long and I have not sent my children to school yet. But I am going to send two of my daughters aged 8 and 10 to the school of the Catholic priest. I have heard that the monthly tuition is 25 piasters. The village has a public school but it is closed now during the summer vacation. When it opens I will send my daughters to study there. My 15-year-old boy and my 12-year-old daughter must stay home to help my wife and me weave the mats for sale. The other children are still too young for school. I hope I will earn more money soon and send them all to school. In my days schooling was not expensive. It was entirely free - no tuition, the books, the copy books, the ink, the chalk, all were given free.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

The subject appeared to be very satisfied with his new life.

He was intelligent but a little shy. He took his time answering questions which, in his opinion, might incriminate him or his relatives, therefore some reservation must be had in regard to those answers. His attitude was understandable because he was detained for so long during the first day of the interview at the house of the village chief (from 11 am to 4 pm) and was asked only about the Front activities in his village. However in general he appeared to be honest and was quite relaxed during the time he was interviewed at his house. The interviewer had no difficulty with the questionaire. It was very easy to follow closely and it was rare that the questions did not fit the situation of the subject.

NO. AGR - 1

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

1. Name of interviewer [redacted]

2. Name of subject [redacted]

3. Time and date of interview :

   From 11.20 am to 2.00 pm on May [redacted] 1965

   From 2.30 pm to 4.00 pm on May [redacted] 1965

   From 9.00 am to 11.00 am on May [redacted] 1965

   6 HRS.

4. Place of interview :

   [redacted] village, Long Dinh district, Dinh Tuong province

5. Sex of subject : Male (XX) Female ( )

6. Age of subject : 38

7. Ethnic background : Vietnamese

8. Place of birth :

   hamlet [redacted]

   village [redacted]

   district Long Dinh

   province Dinh Tuong

9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :

   hamlet [redacted]

   village [redacted]

   district Long Dinh

   province Dinh Tuong

10. (a) Length of residence in last location : 38 years

    (b) Who controlled the place of residence :

    GVN ( ) VC (XX) Contested ( ) How long? Over 1 year

NO. AGR - 1

11. Number of brothers (2) and sisters (1)

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : two

13. Marital status : married

14. Number of children : six, all living

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age : one is 15 years old

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject (XX)
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject( ) or not with subject (XX)
Wife with subject (XX) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject(XX) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion : ancestor worship

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : picked and wove reeds

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation very poor farmer
(b) Landowner? no

20. Education :
illiterate ( )
literate (XX)
schooling completed : five years

21. Any relatives in VC : none

22. Any relatives in GVN : one brother in ARVN

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by :
(a) French : his mother, killed in 1946
(b) GVN : none
(c) VC : one uncle, killed in 1965

24. When became a refugee : about three weeks ago

AGR

INTERVIEW

2

THE RAND CORPORATION
[redacted]

STUDIES OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR-2

Date of Interview : May [redacted] 1965

Subject's Category : Refugee

Area : Long Dinh district, Dinh Tuong province

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

1. How long have you been here ?

I have been here for more than three weeks.

2. Where did you come from ?

I came from [redacted] village (Ben Tranh district).

3. How did you get here ?

I went from [redacted] to [redacted] post by sampan. The distance is [redacted] From [redacted] post, I came here by three-wheel commercial transportation scooter. The fare was [redacted] per person.

4. What are your plans and prospects now ?

I would do any work to make a living. I also intend to sell straw mats.

5. How large was your family ?

My family consists of my wife and my six children.

6. Did all the members of your family live together before you came here or were some living apart ? Where did they go and why ?

Before coming here, we all lived together, except my eldest daughter who has been married for a long time and she has been living with her husband near My Tho.

7. How big was your hamlet and village (how many hamlets, how many people) ?

My village was very big, but I don't know the number of hamlets which belonged to it. I don't know the number of people in either the village or the hamlet.

8. How long have you lived there ? Where did you live previously?

I have always been in my hamlet, since my childhood.

9. How many families or persons have left your village in the past years ? Why did they leave and where did they go ?

My village has constantly been bombed by the GVN planes, that was why since last year nobody dared stay. All the families have left the village to go elsewhere. The majority of them went to live in [redacted] near My Tho.

10. What did most of the people in the village you just left do to earn a living ? Was the village prosperous or poor ? Were most people rich, medium or poor ?

The inhabitants of my village were fishermen, makers of mats, traders or farmers. There were some who had to practice several occupations at a time in order to be able to make both ends meet. There weren't any really rich persons in my village. Most of the inhabitants were poor. There were very few houses made of bricks.

11. What did you do to earn a living ?

I was a farmer. But in addition my wife and I had to sell mats in order to live adequately.

12. What category did the Front assign to your family ?

We were classed among the poor.

13. How much land did you own ? How much did you work ?

We had two acres (mau) of ricefields which we ourselves farmed. But these ricefields were of very bad quality; they were worth nothing.

14. Were there any changes in your family's economic conditions in the past years ? What were they ? What were the reasons? How did you feel about them ?

During the past two years I became poorer and poorer. The GVN airstrikes have seriously interfered with our work and the output has dropped. In addition to that we had to pay contributions to the VC. I was very sad. Sometimes I couldn't sleep at night.

15. How much education have you had ? Can you read or write ?

I have never been to school. I don't know how to read or write.

16. Did your children go to school ? Do you plan to send your children to school here ?

I have a son, 16 years old, who has learned to give injections. I would like very much for my son to improve himself in order to become a nurse later. My last daughter, 13 years of age, knows how to read and write. But I don't want her to go to school any more because she should stay at home to help her mother do the housework.

17. Was your hamlet a strategic hamlet ? If yes, when was it organized ? Was it destroyed by the Front ? When ?

In 1962 all the families in my hamlet that lived scattered about were ordered to gather themselves in one place which became a strategic hamlet. Only a few simple fences were put up. But six months later the VC came back and broke them all down and obliged the families to go back to their former houses.

18. During these six months, how did living in this strategic hamlet affect your life and earnings ? What did you like about it ? What did you dislike about it ?

Life in the strategic hamlet during those six months didn't affect my work, neither did it affect my income. We had nothing to complain about. On the contrary, we wanted to stay there, because there we had no reason to be afraid of being bombed by GVN planes.

19. How did the GVN village and hamlet authorities behave ? What did the villagers think of them ?

The members of the Village Council as well as the chiefs of the hamlets were kind and correct people. Nobody would complain about them.

20. Who controlled your village a year ago ? Who controlled your village when you left it for here ? How many hamlets in your village are now controlled by the Front ? How many of them are contested ?

It's been about two years since the Village Council and the chiefs of the hamlets left my village and from then on there weren't any GVN officials. The VC came very often but they didn't settle there. Then last year, all the villagers abandoned their village to live elsewhere.

21. Did the Front carry out any terroristic acts in your village or kill any of the people ? Did the villagers think the killing was justified or not ? Explain.

The VC have executed four persons in my village. They explained that these people were paid agents of the GVN authorities. Nobody could figure out whether that was true or not. Everybody was afraid. None dared make the least comment.

22. Were you satisfied or dissatisfied with the Front administration and policies in your village ? Explain.

The VC didn't organize any administration structure in my village. They just came to collect rice and money. The inhabitants didn't have any sympathy for them, but nobody dared say that publicly.

23. Did your attitude and that of other villagers toward the Front change during the past year ? Explain.

The inhabitants despised the VC more and more. Their presence in the village only attracted the GVN aircraft. That was why all the villagers have had to leave their village since last year.

24. Was your hamlet a combat hamlet ?

My hamlet as well as other hamlets of my village have never been transformed into combat hamlets.

25. How many young men 16 years old or more were in your village ? How many joined the Front in the last year ? How many joined the ARVN ?

I don't know the number of people who are 16 years old and older in my village or in my hamlet. There were none, in my hamlet, who joined the VC. I don't know whether there were or not in other hamlets. None of the inhabitants of my hamlet is in the ARVN. I don't know anything about other hamlets.

26. How did the Front recruit people in your village for military duty ? Did the Front persuade most of them through propaganda or did it order people to serve in the military forces ? How did the villagers feel about the recruiting ? Explain.

In my hamlet there were three young men who were obliged to join the VC military service. I don't know whether there were any in other hamlets or not. I have never seen the VC explain or make propaganda for joining the military service. They only came to the families of these three young men to lead them away by force, saying that they have to do their military service. Those families were certainly very frightened. Everybody felt oppressed by the VC without being able to do or say anything against them.

27. Were you or any members of your family taken by the Front for "reeducation" ? If yes, what happened ? Why were they taken ? How long were they away ? What did the Front tell them ? Were you afraid of being taken away by the Front for "reeducation" ? Why ?

I have never been obliged to go and attend the political reeducation courses. None of my family has been forced to. I heard that some of the inhabitants of the village were forced to attend these courses. They told me that these courses lasted from 15 days to one month. But I didn't know the details; I don't know what they say during the course. Everybody was afraid of being forced to attend these courses, because if one has to stop working suddenly for 15 days or one month, who will take care of feeding his family during this time ?

28. Did the Front hold meetings with the villagers in your hamlet ? How often ? What did they say on each occasion and what was the occasion ? What did the villagers think about what they said ?

The VC have often organized meetings in my hamlet, every 20 or 30 days. I don't know on what occasions. It was almost always in order to recount the victories won by the Front. I don't know what the villagers thought about them. As for me, I don't believe what they said. If the forces of the Front were so powerful that they only won victories, the war wouldn't be so long and the VC in my village wouldn't have to flee whenever the GVN soldiers came close to my village.

29. Did the Front people say anything about the bombing of North Vietnam ?

No, the VC have never talked about bombing North Vietnam. I heard about it vaguely from people who learned about that news on their way to the market. I don't know the details.

30. Did you belong to any Front village organization or Farmer's Association ? What sort of organization was it ? What was its purpose ? What did you think about it ?

The people in the Front haven't formed any organizations or associations in my village. They have never obliged the inhabitants to form any.

31. To whom did you and the villagers pay taxes (or contributions) during the past three years ? How much did you pay ? How much did they pay ?

All the inhabitants from my village had to pay contributions to the VC, both in rice and in money. Those contributions are from VN$200 to more than VN$1,000 per year, and from one to three liters of rice per month. For my part I had to pay VN$200 to the VC per year and one liter of rice per month. Two years ago,

the inhabitants had to pay taxes to the GVN authorities as well. But as for me, being poor, I never had to pay taxes to the GVN.

32. Did your contributions increase during the past years ? By how much ?

First I only had to pay the VC VN$100 but starting last year my contribution has gone up to VN$200. I think that others' contributions have been increased also. I don't know how much.

33. Were the contributions to the Front higher or lower than the taxes the villagers paid to the GVN ?

The inhabitants said that the contributions required by the VC were much heavier than the taxes paid to the GVN.

34. What did you think about the contributions you paid ?

I was poor, that was why I was excused from paying taxes to the GVN. But the VC forced me to pay them contributions which were too heavy for me. I was very displeased but I had to pay them anyway.

35. If your contributions to the Front increased, what did the Front cadres say about it ? What did the villagers think about the cadres' explanation ?

The VC cadres said that the people's duty is to contribute to the expenses of the forces of the Front, for the latter are fighting only for the goal of bringing peace and happiness to the people. The Front forces have become more and more important so the contributions of the people must naturally increase. I don't know whether the inhabitants believed their explanations or not. Many other people as well as I have begged

the VC not to increase the contributions too much. The VC didn't accept the people's supplication and everybody had to pay what the VC asked.

36. Did the Front carry out land distribution in your village ? If yes, when was it done ? Whose land was distributed ?

The VC took the ricefields of those who no longer lived in the village, and of those who possessed a lot, to distribute the land to those who didn't possess any ricefields at all or those who just had too little. Generally the part given to each person was five "cong" (½ mau : i.e. five days' labor which is equivalent to ½ acre). That division of the ricefields was done two years ago.

37. Did you or your family receive any land or lose any land ? How much ?

As I told you, I was the owner of two acres of ricefields. That was why I didn't benefit from that division. In principle, the VC would have taken a good portion of my two acres of land to share with others but as my ricefields were of very bad quality they didn't touch them.

38. If you rented land did the landlord live in your village ? Was there a period of time when you did not have to pay the rent ? Explain. How did you feel about it ? Are you worried about your land or rent you owe if the GVN takes control of your hamlet ?

I have never rented any ricefields, because we always have to pay in advance to the landlord a certain amount of money which might reach thousands of piasters. So I wasn't able to do so. Before the division of lands

organized by the VC there were quite a few people who farmed rented ricefields. The landlords who always lived in the village could rent their fields. Those who left the village couldn't rent their fields which were taken away by the VC.

39. Tell me something about the history of your village during and after the Resistance period.
When did the Front become active in your village ?
What form did this activity take ? How did you and the other villagers feel about it ? What did you and the other villagers do ?

During the Resistance, my village was under Viet-Minh control. Nothing special happened in my village. I only remember that a lot of organizations were formed, which I don't know anything about. They forced everybody to learn the alphabet (I always refused to do so, because I wasn't capable) and there wasn't any division of land. After the departure of the Viet-Minh, the GVN officials came to form the Village Council, to build roads and bridges. So we had a period of peace and prosperity that lasted about six or seven years. Then came the VC who destroyed the roads, blew up the bridges, terrorized the inhabitants and collected contributions. With them we began a period of insecurity and unhappiness again, the intensity of which increased day by day. The GVN officials left the village and GVN planes came to bomb the village. At last, last year, after the VC attack on [redacted] post, the GVN soldiers went away and left us in the hands of the VC. So not being able to take any more, the villagers also left bit by bit, and at the end of last year there was nobody there.

40. Do you know who the GVN village, district and province chiefs are ? When did they last visit your village ? How often did they visit your village before ? What did you think of the GVN administration ?

As I told you, there weren't any GVN officials in my village when I left it. I don't know how the chiefs of the district and of the province are. For many years now, neither the chief of the district nor the province chief has come to my village. During the period of peace and security which I told you about just now, the district chief had come to my village two or three times. The last time I met him was a long time ago. I also remember that once President Diem came to my village accompanied by the province chief. The inhabitants of my village as well as myself always wanted our village to be administered by the GVN officials, for the latter are always kind and correct.

41. What did the people in your village think of the fall of the Diem regime ? What did the Front tell the villagers ? Do you know who heads up the present government ? What have you heard about the present government and its policies? What did the Front tell the villagers about the present government ?

I heard it said by the inhabitants of the village that President Diem was forced to give up power. The VC didn't say anything. Most of the villagers loved President Diem. I don't know who is actually at the head of the government. I only heard since President Diem retired, our government changes leaders constantly, but none of them could overcome the VC. That's why I wish that President Diem would soon return to power.

42. Did the government carry out any programs in your village to help the villagers ? What did the villagers think about these programs ? Did you or your family benefit from these programs ?

The inhabitants of my village as well as myself haven't received any help from the GVN authorities. Many years ago I received only once an amount of $150 riasters given by the priest of the village.

43. Were there any military or self-defense forces stationed in your hamlet ? Who were they ? How many men were there? How did they behave towards the villagers ?

There was one GVN post in my village named [redacted] post. I don't know how many men were there, or what sort of soldiers they were. But they left the post last year and never returned. They behaved well toward the inhabitants of my village. They often came to my hamlet to buy chickens, for which they always paid without bargaining.

44. Did GVN troops pass through your hamlet ? If yes, how often? How did they behave towards the villagers ? How did the villagers feel about the GVN troops ? Did they like them ? Were they afraid of them ? Did they hate them ? Explain the reasons for the attitude of the villagers.

Before the soldiers of [redacted] post left, other GVN soldiers had usually come to the post, passing through my hamlet. It was on an average of once a month. They behaved themselves toward the inhabitants exactly like the soldiers stationed at the post. They didn't cause any damage; neither did they disturb anybody. They usually talked with the inhabitants and they were always good humored. The inhabitants had a lot of

sympathy for them. They wanted the soldiers to pass by as frequently as possible, or even to be stationed in the hamlet. Because when the GVN soldiers were in the hamlet the VC dared not come to trouble the people.

45. How did the village feel about the activities of the hamlet or village guerrillas ?

The village guerrillas came to my hamlet very often. There were about from three to five at each time. They were polite toward everybody. Sometimes they asked the people to give them something to eat, which the inhabitants accepted willingly. I think nobody disliked the guerrillas. The people only despised the civilian cadres.

46. How did the villagers feel about Front troops stationed in or passing through your hamlet ?

From time to time the VC soldiers passed through my village and nobody complained about them for they were correct.

47. Have there been any changes in the attitude of the villagers towards the Front forces in the past year ? Explain.

I didn't notice that the attitude of the inhabitants of my hamlet towards the Front soldiers changed last year. On the other hand I found out that the Front soldiers had become more flexible and more polite when they talked to the inhabitants since last year.

48. What have you heard about the aims of the Front ? Who told you about them ? What do you think of them ?

I don't know anything about the Front. I don't know anything about its aims either. I only heard the

cadres say that the Front is fighting the GVN in order to bring happiness and peace to the people. I don't understand anything. The cadres also said that the Americans were going to go home soon and the Front was on the point of beating the GVN. I don't know what others think about it, but I myself don't believe so. I noticed that their way of making war was like that of a dog which bites behind your back. If the forces of the Front met face to face with the GVN forces, they would be destroyed in one day.

49. What have you heard about life in Front military units ?

I don't know anything about life in Front military units. I only heard that the VC soldiers were very miserable and short of everything for they had no salary.

50. What have you heard about Front successes, defeats and losses ? Who told you about this ? What did you think of it ?

During the meetings the cadres only told the inhabitants about their victories. I don't remember the details. By listening to them, people would say that they have never known any defeat. I always listened to them carelessly, I knew that they lied. For instance, the battle of [redacted] last year. The VC cadres told the inhabitants of my hamlet that the Front forces only suffered two killed at [redacted] while the GVN forces suffered almost a hundred killed. My wife's brother who lived at [redacted] told me that about fifteen airplanes had dropped a large number of paratroopers who caused the VC serious losses. The Front forces suffered more than fifty killed on the battlefield before they could flee.

51. Do you have any close friends serving in Front military units?

No, I don't.

52. Are any members of your family or relatives serving in the ARVN or with the GVN ?

No, I have none.

53. Are any members of your family or relatives serving with the Front ? How many ?

No, I don't have any.

54. Has any fighting taken place near or in your hamlet or village ? What happened ?

There was never a fight in my village or near it.

55. Has your hamlet been attacked ?

None of the hamlets of my village was attacked either by the Front soldiers or by the GVN soldiers.

56. Was your hamlet bombarded by artillery or aircraft ? How often ? What did you and the villagers do ? What damage was inflicted ? Did your family suffer any damage ?

My village has never been struck by artillery. But it was strafed by GVN aircraft four times last year. Each time, there were many houses burned and three or four persons killed. Once the number of killed went up as high as ten. My house was burned. My son's house was too. At each bombing the inhabitants couldn't do anything but hide themselves in trenches.

57. How did you feel about the attacks ? Why do you think your village was bombarded ? What did other villagers say about it ?

The inhabitants as well as myself were very afraid of the bombings. Everybody said we were bombed because of the VC cadres' presence in the village. That was one of the reasons which drove the people to detest the VC more and more. The latter have never said anything about the bombings.

58. Did any persons in your village join the Front because they resented the bombardments ? How many ?

I have never seen any person in my village join the Front because of the bombings.

59. Did any villagers move to Front controlled areas after the bombardments ? How many ?

Nobody ever moved to Front controlled areas after the bombardments.

60. Did any villagers move to GVN controlled areas after the bombardments ? How many ?

After each bombardment there were always four or five families who left my village. Some came back about ten or fifteen days later. But the majority went to live in GVN controlled areas, never to come back again. As I have told you, at the end of last year everybody left the village for good.

61. Did the bombardments interfere with your work and your earning a living ? What effect did they have on your living conditions ? How did you feel about them ?

Of course those bombardments caused me a lot of difficulties. I no longer had a house and neither did my son. In addition the fact that I would tremble everytime I heard any aircraft; and the fact that I always had to be ready to jump into the trenches at the slightest alarm,

prevented me from working seriously. The output of my work suffered. Life became harder and harder. I personally think that innocent people suffer the most in this war.

62. Did the GVN warn your hamlet that it would be attacked ? Did the GVN explain the reasons for the attack ? What did the GVN tell the villagers ? How did it tell you ? What did you think about it ? What did you and the villagers do ? What did the Front people say or do ?

The GVN has never warned us of its bombardments. If we had known in advance that our village was going to be bombed, we all would have gone to take refuge in the fields, which would have saved us from being killed or wounded.

63. How did you and the villagers get news about what was going on ?

The inhabitants of my hamlet only knew the news broadcasted by the VC. Ordinarily there was only news about their victories. That news was disseminated among us either during meetings or by loudspeakers.

64. Were there any radios in your hamlet ? What station did you listen to ?

There were more than ten radios in my hamlet. I don't understand what broadcasting stations are. I always listened only to the classical opera songs (vong co) on the radio. The VC forbade us to listen to the (vong co), but we listened to it in secret.

65. Were any newspapers read in the village ? What were they ?

There weren't any newspapers in my village.

66. Had you or your family thought of moving to a GVN controlled area before ? Explain.

During that time we had no intention of leaving our village to go and live in the GVN controlled area. In spite of the GVN bombardments and the VC collections which caused life to be harder, we were able to make ends meet. But coming to live in a strange region was to go into the unknown. I always was afraid of being unable to find the means of supporting my family.

67. Have you taken refuge or tried to take refuge in a GVN controlled area before ? If yes, describe what happened ? Why did you take refuge there ? How were you treated ? Did you go back to your hamlet ?

We left our hamlet last year to come to [redacted] village where we took refuge for six months before coming here. It wasn't a GVN controlled area. It was rather a contested area. But it was about 2 kms from a GVN post. Therefore we thought that we wouldn't be bombed by GVN planes. In addition there were some people whom we knew; this made us decide to go there. We didn't receive any help. But we could, from time to time, borrow a little bit of rice from those we knew. We could also do a bit of mat business.

68. What had you heard about conditions in GVN controlled areas before you left ? Were you told what the GVN would do for you and your family ? What and how did you hear about it ? What did you expect the GVN to do for you ?

Before leaving [redacted] nobody had told me about life here. I had only heard that refugees were well received here. A certain number of families came here before me.

I thought that here I could avoid the bombardments and the VC. I have always wished that the GVN would help me in furnishing the means to earn my living and that of my family.

69. When and why did you decide to leave [redacted] to come here? Did anyone induce you to move ? Explain. Why didn't you leave earlier ?

A few days before Tet (New Lunar year), the helicopters came to strafe [redacted] and my house was burned for the second time. It was after that disaster that I made the decision to come here. Nobody forced me to do so. I didn't make this decision earlier, because, as I told you, I was afraid of not being able to find the means to earn my living in a region that is strange to me.

70. What preparations did you or your family make ? What did you fear most when you were considering leaving [redacted] village ?

I sent my wife and my children here many days ahead of me. I stayed at [redacted] to arrange some business before leaving for good. I was only afraid that the VC wouldn't let me come here if they knew my decision to leave.

71. Did you hear broadcasts from aircraft or read leaflets telling you to leave ? What did they say ? How often did you hear the broadcasts or read the leaflets ? Could you hear clearly what the broadcasts from aircraft said ? When did you hear them best ? What did you think of what they said ?

When I was still in my hamlet, the planes came twice during the day to drop the leaflets and talk to the

inhabitants. I couldn't read, but I could hear clearly what the planes said. They urged us to leave the village to go to live in the GVN controlled areas. They said that the GVN authorities will help them to remake their life. That impressed me very much. But I was told that the GVN wouldn't be able to furnish help to the refugees indefinitely. One should, by all means, find the ways to make his own living. That caused me to hesitate.

72. Have you heard about the Chieu Hoi program ?

No, I have never heard of the Chieu Hoi.

73. Did you expect to leave your hamlet for a long or a short time ? Explain. Why did you decide to come to this place ?

I decided to stay here definitely. I chose this place because there is one member of the village council of my village. I know him personally. He is a kind and helpful man, in whom I have a lot of confidence. I think that he is ready to help me if I need him.

74. What property did you bring with you ? Are you worried about the property you left behind ? Is there anyone in your village who will look after your property ? What else would you have liked to have taken with you if you had been able to do so ?

When we left [redacted] to come here, we were able to bring with us but a few clothes. I would have liked to bring all I possessed, but all had been burned. As for my ricefields in the village, nobody would take care of them. I do not regret losing my ricefields. I only regret one thing, which is not being able to live near the tombs of my ancestors in order to look after them.

75. What did the Front people in your village say or do when you and the other villagers decided to leave ? Did they encourage you to leave ? Did they try to stop you ? How did you avoid being stopped by them ?

When the people left the village, either they did it suddenly, without giving the VC the time to know about it, or they said that they would come back after a while. The VC always advised the villagers not to leave the village. They didn't formally forbid doing so, but they said that those who left were not allowed to come back. They always added that it was very difficult, even impossible, to earn one's living in the GVN controlled regions.

76. Has the Front threatened to punish you or other villagers for leaving the village or for settling in a GVN controlled area ?

The VC didn't threaten to punish us. As I have just told you, they simply said that those who left had no right to come back.

77. Did your entire family come with you ?

Yes, I've come with my entire family.

78. What do you think might happen to you if you went back to your hamlet ?

If I went back to the village now, I am sure I would be arrested and obliged by the VC to attend a reeducation course.

79. Are there any differences between what the Front told you about life under GVN control and what you have heard and seen here ?

Life is not impossible as the VC said, but even so it is hard. Since I've been here, it has been hard for me and for my family to find something to eat twice a day.

80. How long do you think the war will go on ? Explain.

I have no idea about the length of time of this war. I was only told that in order to have peace, there must be only one king in the country. During the time when there was only king, Bao Dai, we had peace. Now there are two kings, king GVN and king VC. How can you have peace with two kings in one country ?

81. Do you blame anyone for causing you to leave your village ? Whom ? What do the other refugees say ?

It was certainly the VC whom we blame. It was their presence which cause us to leave the village. I think that all the people have the same opinion as mine.

82. What help did the GVN authorities give you and your family after you left your hamlet ?

We haven't received anything from the GVN authorities since we left [redacted] to come and settle here.

83. What did the GVN authorities tell you they will do for you and your family ? What do you think about what they told you ?

The village chief here told me on the first day that the GVN promised to give 5,500 piasters to each family to build a house, and 7 piasters to each person per day during the first month to help him live while waiting for jobs. We've been here more than one month, and we haven't received anything from the authorities. I had to borrow from my eldest daughter who lives near My the

with her husband in order to build our new home. We don't even have a wooden board to use as a bed. We are certainly short of rice. I have asked the Village Chief about the news on the promised help by the GVN many times, but every time I asked him, he said to wait.

84. What did you plan to do when you left [redacted] village ? Have your plans changed since you came here ?

At the time when I came, I intended to sell mats and nothing has caused me to change my project.

85. Do you want to stay here or go back to your village or move elsewhere ?

I have no intention of going back to my village at all. Definitely I would like very much to stay here. But in case it would be impossible to find the means to earn my living, maybe I would have to move to my eldest daughter's.

86. Did anyone try to persuade you or the other refugees to go back to your village since you came here ? Who was it and what were you told ? Did you tell friends who stayed behind to come out and join you ?

One of those whom I know, who lived near me at [redacted] came to see me here, telling me that the VC at [redacted] advised me to return. I refused. On the contrary I told him to tell those I know who are still living at [redacted] to come and settle here in order to avoid being bombed by the aircraft.

87. Have any of the villagers who left with you moved back to your village ? Why did they do so ?

There is no one who moved back to the village.

88. Have you seen any Americans ? What have you heard about them ? Did you believe it ? What do you think they are doing in Vietnam ?

Yes, I have seen Americans accompanying GVN soldiers passing through my hamlet many times. The VC said that the Americans are cruel, accustomed to killing people, and to burning houses; coming with the intention of taking hold of the country; while the GVN soldiers said that the Americans are very good people, coming to Vietnam with the unique aim of helping to fight the VC. I didn't know where the truth was then. But there was one thing which I was sure of, that was that nobody had seen, with their own eyes, the Americans doing any harm towards the Vietnamese people. Now I also think that what the GVN soldiers said about the Americans must be true, that the Americans are coming to help the GVN to fight the VC.

89. Have you seen people from other countries other than Americans who are helping the Vietnamese ?

No, I haven't seen foreigners other than Americans.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

The subject is an old illiterate man with respectful aspect.

Before the interview, he wanted another to replace him, saying that he dared not speak about the VC controlled regions to a government agent for fear that the VC would learn about that. After explaining the aim of the interview and saying that the interviewer is not a government agent, the latter asked him why was he afraid of the VC, when he lives in the GVN controlled region, about 200 meters from a military post. "I have lived," he answered, "less than a hundred meters from [redacted] post. In spite of that, the VC came to me as they pleased."

During the interview, the subject appeared to be sincere and cooperative. But his obsession with the VC hasn't left him. For example, when the interviewer asked him what were his attitudes and those of the villagers' towards the VC, he answered with a normal voice that he himself had nothing against the VC and he doesn't know anything about others' attitudes. Then he moved close to the interviewer and spoke softly into the latter's ear : "The inhabitants don't have any sympathy for them (the VC)," or, "The inhabitants hate them more and more."

He only seemed to forget about the VC when he spoke about his actual state. The GVN has promised him so many things! Though he didn't say it openly, he has really put all his hope on these promises. In fact he has been there for almost a month, and he has not received anything from the GVN yet. His sole acquaintance in this new region, where

he is a stranger to all, was a former member of the village council of his village who can't do anything for him and is a refugee himself. The authorities can't do anything for him either, except repeat the promises, and tell him to wait.

He has poured all he possesses into the construction of his tiny house and also all that he has borrowed from his eldest daughter who lives elsewhere. He bitterly complains about having not even a wooden board for a bed. He has enough to eat, but is at one border line of hunger.
When the interviewer gave him a small amount of money in the guise of repayment for the time lost for the interview, he repeated two or three times the question, "Is it really you giving me this money ?" He seemed not to believe his eyes. Then he was confused on giving his thanks, saying that he was going to have enough rice for a few days.

It was really moving to see that old respectable and simple man disappointed and disillusioned in his hope, torn by the threat of the VC, and the fear of an uncertain tomorrow.

NO. AGR - 2

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

1. Name of interviewer [redacted]

2. Name of subject [redacted]

3. Time and date of interview :

   From 11.15 to 2.00 on May [redacted] 1965

   From 2.30 to 4.30 on May [redacted] 1965

   From _____ to _____ on _____ 19___

4. Place of interview :

   Long Dinh district

5. Sex of subject : Male (XXX) Female ( )

6. Age of subject : 57

7. Ethnic background : Vietnamese

8. Place of birth :

   hamlet [redacted]

   village [redacted]

   district Long Dinh

   province Dinh Tuong

9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :

   hamlet _____

   village [redacted]

   district Long Dinh

   province Dinh Tuong

10. (a) Length of residence in last location : 6 months

    (b) Who controlled the place of residence :

    GVN ( ) VC ( ) Contested (XX) How long? _____

11. Number of brothers ( ) and sisters (2)

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : no

13. Marital status : married

14. Number of children : 3 boys and 3 girls

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age : 3

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject (XX)
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject( ) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject (XX) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject(XX) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion : Catholic

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : farmer and mats maker

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation poor farmer
(b) Landowner? _____

20. Education :
illiterate (XX)
literate ( )
schooling completed : _____

21. Any relatives in VC : no

22. Any relatives in GVN : no

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by :
(a) French
XXXX (b) GVN one son hit by a mortar shell from the [redacted] post, was killed
(c) VC

24. When became a refugee : Over 3 weeks before the interview

AGR

INTERVIEW

3

MASTER COPY

THE RAND CORPORATION

[redacted]

STUDIES OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR-3

Date of Interview : May [redacted] 1965

Subject's Category : Refugee

Area: Long-Dinh district, Dinh-Tuong province

1. How long have you been here?

   I have been here for over three months.

2. Where did you come from?

   [redacted] village, Long-Dinh district, Dinh-Tuong province.

3. How did you get here?

   I escaped at night, at 1:00 am. I walked all night and at 5:00 am I arrived at the highway. I went at once to the Village Committee.

4: What are your plans and prospects now?

   I want to settle here with my family.

5: How large was your family?

   My wife, my two daughters, and my younger brother lived together before they came here with me.

6. How many persons have left your hamlet?

   Many persons. About 60-70 persons. All escaped according to the principle "Everyone for himself!" They escaped one by one.

7. Why did they leave?

   It was impossible to live. Every day, the aircraft strafed and dropped bombs. The mortar shells fell. Life was difficult. One had to take cover in shelters continuously. Meals were interrupted.

8. How many hamlets were there in your village?

   I don't know how many hamlets my village includes. I only know [redacted] hamlet, [redacted] hamlet and [redacted] hamlet. These three hamlets were mostly Catholic. All the people of these hamlets have left, except for the wealthy people. Seven out of ten people have left.

9. Did the rich people in your village pay taxes or contributions to the Front?

   Of course, they had money and they paid taxes to the Viet Cong.

10. How big was your hamlet?

70 percent of the people were Catholics and all the Catholics have left. Many left since 1963. When I left, only 20 percent of the people still remained in my hamlet. Before the exodus, the total population of my hamlet was about 700 people.

11. How long have you lived there?

Since 1953 when I came back home from My-Tho.

12. Did the families or persons leaving your hamlet come here or go to another place?

Some came here or went to Cai-Lay and [redacted]. Others went to Saigon-Cholon. The number of people taking refuge in [redacted] is numerous. The percentage is 60 percent.

13. What did most of the people in the village you just left do to earn a living?

They gathered reeds. One person could pick 30 "lon" of reeds and sell it for 25 piasters. Reed is used for weaving bags. Ninety percent of the people in my village carried on this trade. Ten percent farmed their land, because my village had very few ricefields and moreover the soil of the ricefields is alkaline. Six out of ten people in my village were engaged in fishing. They caught such species of fish as anchovy, carp, etc.

14. Was the village prosperous or poor?

The wealthy people were the landlords, and other people worked for them as tenant farmers. There were about 20 landlords in my village. They had from 3 to 10 mau of ricefields each. Few people rented land. Ninety percent of the villagers farmed their own land.

15. What did you, your family or your parents do to earn a living?

My parents died long ago, in 1940. They rented land to farm. They picked reeds and wove reed bags as I do now.

16. What category did the Front assign to your family: rich, medium, poor, very poor or some other?

Very poor. There was no time when my life was better. My God, I was born to be poor always! I was a cyclo-driver in Saigon from 1948 to 1951. Then I worked as a mason in My-Tho from 1951 to 1953. Cyclo-driving was a toilsome job. Because

I drove the cyclo excessively, I had intestinal pains, therefore I had to give up this job although I was earning 40 to 50 piasters a day. The value of the piaster was then very high, and my living was not so bad. When I worked as a mason, I was a hired laborer, and I earned 40 piasters a day. Being a hired mason was better than catching fish with a basket net (Danh lo) in the fields, but the mason's job was irregular because it depended on the bids obtained by the contractor.

17. What was your occupation after 1953?

I was a farmer, but I spent most of my time fishing with a basket net. I tilled one mau of land for a landlord who gave me 7 gia of paddy. I farmed the land from July to September and the harvest time was in October. The annual yield was 30 to 70 gia. I earned 30 piasters from fishing. My wife wove reed bags and earned 6-7 piasters a day. She is living here and she continues to weave reed bags.

18. Did you earn enough money to support your family?

No.

19. How much education have you had? Can you read and write?

I am illiterate. I did not go to school. I have not attended any adult education courses. I cannot write and read. However I can spell words a little bit. The priest of my village explained every day so that after a long time I can now recognize the alphabet letters and I can spell them, and read a little, but I cannot write. Nor can I sign my name.

20. Did your children go to school?

My two daughters attended the village Catholic school. The priest who managed this school has moved here and my children have been admitted to his school here.

21. Was your hamlet a strategic hamlet?

No. My hamlet was neither a new life hamlet nor an agroville.

22. Was there any GVN post near your hamlet?

The [redacted] post, 1 kilometer from my hamlet, was defended by the SDC and the Civil Guard, but the latter abandoned the post two years ago. Security existed as long as the post

was stil active. In mid-1963, the people of my hamlet were urged to live near the post for three months, but when the SDCs and Civil Guards had withdrawn to another place, I went back to my village.

23. Why were you urged to live near the post?

The chief of the post said that he would guarantee those who took refuge near the post against artillery shells fired by mistake.

24. Was there anyone hit by artillery fire by mistake in your hamlet?

Two people were killed, and one wounded. A battle took place at the post. Both sides had losses but I don't know how many. There was just firing from a distance, but no close combat.

25. How many people in your hamlet were urged to live near the post?

About 100 people.

26. How strong were the SDC and Civil Guard forces in the post?

40 SDCs and over 20 Civil Guards.

27. How did the GVN village and hamlet authorities behave?

They were good people. None of them behaved badly or extorted money from the people. I liked them, and that is why I came here.

28. Who controlled your hamlet (village) a year ago?

The Front.

29. Who controlled your hamlet (village) when you left it for here?

The Front.

30. Did the Front organize its own Village Committee or a Civil Affairs Committee in your village.

There was not yet a Front Village Committee, but there was a Civil Affairs Committee which included four men.

31. Did you know any of them?

No. They were strangers. They were changed many times; some took office for one month, others for more than one month. All were not natives of my village.

32. Did the Front organize Farmers' Associations, etc.?

No. The people evacuated the village. Even the youths and women went away. Because the GVN aircraft terrorized them very much, the Front people could not organize anything at all.
Even the People and Troops Proselyting Committees were not yet established. The VC suspected many people because they often went to the GVN-controlled areas.

33. Was anyone arrested?

Yes. Some 20 people were carried away. One didn't know where. Six people were killed: a hamlet chief, and those who had relatives working in the ARVN, as well as the Village Council members. Their throats were cut. In 1962, the VC killed in the same way two men whom they suspected of having participated in the repair of the road leading from [redacted] to the pagoda.

34. Did the villagers think the killing was justified or not?

The villagers didn't think the killing was justified. Many people were dissatisfied but they dared not speak out. Once a woman went to the My-Tho market to sell her ducks and chickens to the GVN people and, upon her return to the village, she was arrested, then killed. She was accused of supplying the GVN.

35. If your village was under Front control, was it a combat village?

No. Trenches were not yet dug, nor were the fences set up. Only the foxholes were dug. They forced me and the people over 50 years old to do this job. In my hamlet, six men had to dig trenches at the entrance and exit of the hamlet. The youths were carried away to dig ponds or to do other jobs.

36. Did you have to stand guard at night?

No. I don't know whether they stood guard or not. I never knew where they lived. They passed through my hamlet sometimes during the day, sometimes at night. Groups of three to five men were seen very often, and about every one or two months, I saw groups of 70, or 100, or 200 men. They just passed through my village. I didn't know to what units they belonged, because if I had asked them, they might have suspected me.

37. To whom did you pay taxes (or contributions) during the past three years?

Other people had to pay taxes, but I didn't. The very poor people were exempted. They were forced to dig foxholes. I went to dig foxholes three times.

38. What did the people feel about the Front taxes?

Some people wept over paying taxes, which were too heavy. If I had been a landlord and I had 10,000 piasters in cash, I would have had to pay 5,000. The VC know very well for how much a man sells some goods, how many pigs he has. They know every inch of the villagers' holdings. Therefore many people are dissatisfied but they dare not speak out. They act as if they are dumb.

39. How about the religious problem?

The VC prevented me from worshipping my God. They suspected me. They said that the Catholics were the lackeys of the French, and of the Americans, that Catholicism was the religion of the French and the Americans. They stole objects from the church, and also from the pagoda. They didn't care about religion. Only the Buddhist landlords and those practicing ancestor worship still remain in my hamlet.

40. How did the Front recruit people in your village for military duty?

The Front recruited the people for military duty by force. The draftees received 6 piasters each per day, and they said that it would be better to die after enjoying life in the GVN ranks than to live with the VC and starve with them. Since the day when I came here, I have seen some refugees here ask the GVN authorities to allow them to enlist in the ARVN. Other refugees went to Cai-Lay; they could not bear the Front hardships !

41. Did the Front carry out land distribution in your hamlet?

Not yet.

42. How did you feel about land distribution?

Suppose that I take what belongs to you. You would be dissatisfied, wouldn't you. I am poor, but I want to earn my living by myself.

43. How did you or the villagers feel about the Front recruiting system?

You know, with 6 piasters a day, what can I do with so small a sum? I am old. If not, I would enlist in the ARVN. Suppose that you are a VC. You shoot at me and I am hit... but my family can enjoy the death allowance!

44. How many young men joined the Front in the last year?

Many young men have left my village. Only about 15 youths have served in the VC army, but I can promise you that they will defect or escape one by one to the last man. They were drafted by force : they were arrested in their homes, they were taken away with hands tied up, and therefore they were not satisfied.

45. Were you or any members of your family taken by the Front for "reeducation" ?

No member of my family was taken by the Front for " reeducation," except for myself. I was taken away for two days.

46. What happened?

I was taken to [redacted] village because two VC asked me to take them on my sampan and I refused on the grounds that I was very sick. A VC said : "You must go even if you are sick." As I didn't comply with his orders, he said : "If you want to oppose me, I will take you away. " His companion scolded me : "You must do what we order you to do, do you understand?" And he added : "You are old. If not, we would beat you!" The two fellows are not natives of my village. I don't know whether they are cadres or not, but I think they had some authority in my village.

47. Did the Front hold meetings with the villagers in your hamlet?

Yes. Many times. Eight to ten VC came to my village to hold meetings. The villagers turned a deaf ear to what they said. Each time, the VC boasted about this or that victory.

48. How often did they hold meetings?

Once every month or every two months.

49. Did they talk about the Front's aims?

No. They taught the methods of planting trees, of farming... They recommended never to leave the soil uncultivated. They came to my hamlet. They ate their own rice, but they made the people's houses dirty. The people dared not say a word.

50. In the meetings, did they say anything about the air strikes on North Vietnam?

No. I myself heard about them when I came here. I listened to Radio Saigon.

51. What do you feel about these attacks?

I feel happy. I think that we will have peace. In my opinion, it is necessary to attack in such a way to defeat the VC. If North Vietnam is attacked, we don't need to fight here and and they will be defeated! We have discussed among us in the new life hamlet here that we must destroy their head which is North Vietnam because their brain is there. A tree whose roots have been cut must fall down. Suppose you are my boss and you are arrested. I who am your servant shall be powerless. It is very likely that in the near future the VC must surrender.

52. Did you belong to any village organization while the Front was in control of your hamlet?

No. I am illiterate, so they didn't use me. The Front people also need literate men. Even the village guerrillas must know how to read and write.

53. How many village guerrillas were there in your hamlet?

Very few. Formerly, there were 10 guerrillas but only three of them are left now. They disbanded and ran away. I don't know where. The guerrillas were not natives of my village. They came from other places. The VC use guerrillas from other places in order to have orders executed more easily. In the same way, concerning the military duty, those drafted by the Front are sent to distant places so as to prevent them from escaping.

54. What did the Front cadres say about the increase in taxes?

They said they levied taxes to feed the troops. They explained that if they didn't have money, they couldn't fight against the enemy.

55. If you rented land, did the landlord live in your village?

Yes. He is also making preparations to liquidate his holdings, valued at about one hundred thousand piasters. He is selling them gradually before evacuating.

56. Tell me something about the history of your village during and after the Resistance period.

During the French period, the French troops burned all the villagers' houses; they burned the houses in each mopping-up operation. The villagers took refuge in the jungle, and cut trees to rebuild their houses. At that time, they dared not go to My-Tho for fear of arrest by the French troops who mopped up my village four or five times a month, but the French aircraft did not yet drop bombs.
The Viet-Minh were active in my village from 1945. After the armistice, many of them went to the North for regrouping (80 o/o) and few remained. So far as I know, I did not see any of these regroupees returning to my village. It is possible that some have come back.

57. When did the Front become active in your village?

About in 1960. When they started becoming active, they did not call themselves the Liberation Front of South Vietnam, and only in 1963 did this appellation appear.

58. How did you and other villagers feel about it?

They call themselves Liberation Front, but they don't liberate the people in any way whatsoever. The people everywhere hate them. They waged propaganda that Mr. Diem was a dictator, but they are more dictatorial than Mr. Diem.

59. Did your village receive assistance from the GVN?

The father of my village church gave aid to the villagers three or four times. Recently, he came here to distribute wheat to the refugees. Under the Diem Government, he had distributed wheat, clothes, vegetable oil, and 100 piasters to each family. Everyone in my village benefitted from this assistance program.

60. Do you know who the GVN village, district and province chiefs are?

Under the Diem Government, I knew the members of the Village Committee, the chiefs of hamlets, and inter-family groups. Order and discipline prevailed. All these officials were good. Before 1963, the Village Committee included a chairman, his deputy, a police chief and an official responsible for the issuance of certificates of births, marriages and deaths. Only Mr. [redacted], chairman of the Committee, stayed on until mid-1963 while the other officials had gone to the city to earn their living. Mr. [redacted] has come to [redacted] to work here. He has been called Village Committee Chairman ever since. The people like him very much. He has helped them obtain the necessary papers easily. He is not a corrupt official. His behavior is very good.

61. What did the people in your village think of the fall of the Diem regime?

They just overheard that because Mr. Diem was bad he was overthrown. They learned it from hearsay only, because how could they know it if they didn't live near the government?

62. Did you like him?

How could I like him if I didn't know him personally? If nobody liked him, I couldn't do otherwise. It is learned that he has been overthrown because he was dictatorial. I don't know who has replaced him.

63. Do you know the names of the actual Chief of State and Premier?

No. I don't know all the names of Mr. Diem's successors. Nor do I know the present policy.

64. Were there any military or seld-defense forces stationed in your hamlet?

The SDC and the Civil Guard of [redacted] post.

65. How did they behave towards the villagers?

They behaved well.

66. Did GVN troops pass through your hamlet?

They passed through it twice, but no fighting occurred. They did not arrest any suspects. I think they arrested suspects in other villages, but not in mine.

67. Do you know how many GVN troops passed through your hamlet each time?

They were very numerous. They fired many shots and mortar shells pounded my hamlet, but no one was hit, because everyone took cover in shelters.

68. Did the villagers blame the GVN for these attacks?

No.

69. Did the village guerrillas counterattack?

When the GVN troops came by the hundreds, the guerrillas disappeared. There was no fighting in my village or in my hamlet.

70. What have you heard about life in Front military units?

The two members of the Civil Affairs Committee said that the Front soldiers earned a daily salary of 6 piasters. They just said that and nothing else.

71. What have you heard about Front successes, defeats, and losses?

They suffered losses and they said instead that they won. They told the villagers about the Ap-Bac victory.

72. Who told you about this?

The two members of the Civil Affairs Committee.

73. What did you think of it?

I did not believe it, because I knew their losses. They buried two dead at night and next morning I saw the two new graves. A number of dead, about 27-28 men, were carried off on sampans.

74. Describe the graves you saw.

The earth on the graves was leveled and covered with grass. Scavengers birds flew over the ground on which there were no traces. The dead were buried at night and because the graves were not dug deeply, the odor attracted the scavengers.

75. Do you have any close friends serving in Front military units?

No.

76. Are any members of your family or relatives serving in the ARVN or with the GVN?

No.

77. Are any members of your family or relatives serving with the Front?

No.

78. Have you or other members of your family tried to persuade them to surrender to the GVN or to come home?

No.

79. Has any fighting taken place near or in your hamlet or village?

A battle took place at [redacted] post in 1963. I don't know the outcome of the fighting.

80. Did the Front or the GVN warn the people to take cover or to leave the area before the battle?

No.

81. Has your hamlet been attacked?

My hamlet was bombarded by artillery very often. From time to time one or two persons were killed by these bombardments. I think that the VC have suffered losses because of the artillery attacks but they conceal their losses. If there are ten killed, they say that there is only one killed. My village was also often strafed by aircraft. Even when the villagers had evacuated the village, it was strafed and bombarded by the Cormorant planes and helicopters. Many bombs totally destroyed houses. Last year, napalm bombs caused some deaths at the entrance of the village. It happened that bombs were dropped in an area when no VC were in it. It was because the aircraft had dropped leaflets recommending the people to evacuate this area (April 1964), and the aircraft strafed it when the evacuation was completed. The Province Chief had come there to welcome the evacuees, and after this event, the aircraft dropped leaflets. About 50-60 people evacuated this area which is two kilometers from my Hamlet.

82. How did you feel about the attacks?

I did not blame the GVN for these attacks. May I ask you this question? Why should I strafe you if you don't disturb me? You revolt against me and I am obliged to shoot at you! So I did not feel sad about the attacks.

83. What did other villagers say about it?

They had the same opinion as mine.

84. What did the Front people say about it?

I don't know.

85. What kinds of attacks frightened you and the other villagers most?

All kinds of attacks frightened me and the other villagers.

86. Did any persons in your hamlet (Village) join the Front because they resented the attacks?

Nobody.

87. Did any villagers move to GNV controlled areas after the attacks?

Yes. Many people. I don't know how many.

88. Did any villagers move to Front controlled areas after the attacks?

No. After the attacks, the villagers only moved to GVN controlled areas.

89. Did the attacks interfere with your work and your earning a living?

Yes. While picking reeds, I saw aircraft overhead and I feared an attack. I was also afraid of mortal shells.

90. Did the GVN warn your hamlet that it would be attacked?

No. The GVN attacks took place at any time.

91. How did you and the villagers get news about what was going on?

They got the news from the newspapers brought back by some people returning from the city. The VC had no news bulletins. I only saw VC leaflets forbidding the villagers from going to the city. These leaflets were written in ink and pasted on the trunks of trees.

92. Did you see the Front flag in your village?

Yes. I saw a Front flag near the road leading to my village. The people going to [redacted] market could see this flag for about twenty days before it was taken away by the GVN soldiers.

93. Had you or your family thought of moving to a GVN controlled area before?

Yes. We thought of moving to a GVN controlled area last year, because of the continual air and artillery attacks. My wife and I had planned to take refuge in a GVN controlled area. However, we delayed in realizing our plan because we wanted to sell our holdings before moving. So we were able to get 2,000 piasters from the sale of our furniture. What I regret most is my garden in which I planted fruit such as pineapple, plums and bananas. My garden, 20 meters wide and 50 meters long, was rented and each year I sold the fruit for 2,000 piasters.

94. Have you taken refuge or tried to take refuge in a GVN controlled area before?

No.

95. What had you heard about conditions in GVN controlled areas before you left?

I thought that my life would not be safe if I still lived in my hamlet. It would be better to move to a GVN controlled area to work as a hired laborer than to live in my hamlet where the question of life or death is uncertain. I want to live freely and to sleep quietly. For three weeks I have felt happy. I can eat and sleep whereas in my hamlet the mortar shells interrupted my sleep and my meals many times, I had to take cover in the shelter, and thus I lost freedom. When I left, I did not hear anything about the conditions in the GVN controlled areas. I was not told what the GVN would do for me and my family.
I thought that even if I had money I would leave my hamlet, because many wealthy people have left theirs, so a poor man like me has no reason to stay... I prefer to die here than to die there.

96. When and why did you or your family decide to leave your hamlet to come here?

I made up my mind on the escape in the morning and right after dark I left with my family. I had only talked with my wife about my plan of escape. I decided to leave that night because there was no moon and it was pitch dark. My house was near the river, so I took my wife and my daughters to my sampan and I rowed it to the [redacted] market where I sold my sampan for 200 piasters (I had bought it at 800 piasters before) and I took a bus with my family. We arrived at the Village Committee Office in the morning.

97. Did you hear broadcasts from aircraft or read leaflets telling you to leave?

I picked up Chieu Hoi leaflets four or five times and I threw them away immediately for fear that the VC might catch me in the act of reading them. These leaflets were effective, and because I understood what they said I wanted to escape.

98. Could you hear clearly what the broadcasts from aircraft said?

Yes. These broadcasts said: "Compatriots, you should take refuge in the district town to earn your living..."

99. When did you hear them best?

At night.

100. What did you fear most when you were considering leaving your village?

I feared most that the VC might suspect me of trying to escape. I feared that the VC might stop me en route and force me to return to my hamlet.

101. Did the Front people stop anyone trying to leave your hamlet?

Yes. Five families were stopped and forced to come back, but later they succeeded in escaping again. Taking advantage of the air strikes, many people evacuated their families. Some were stopped by the VC, but they could escape the next time.

102. Did you expect to leave your hamlet for a long or a short time?

I wanted to leave it forever.

103. What property did you or your family bring with you?

Nothing. I had only 300 piasters (from the sale of my holdings before leaving) and 200 piasters form the sale of my sampan. I had sold my holdings almost one month before I decided to leave. I stayed idle during that time. I was sad. I wanted to leave, but I had to wait for a propitious night to realize my plan.

104. Are you worried about the property you left behind?

I am worried about my garden and the fruit trees. I could not sell my house which is a small hut of 6 square meters. If I had sold my house, the VC might have discovered that I was considering leaving my village, therefore I did not sell it. Moreover, nobody in my hamlet looked after my poor hut. I have given up that house and I am given a larger hut here. My hut is 10 square meters in area.

105. What did the Front people in your hamlet say or do when you and the other villagers decided to leave?

They knew that the villagers decided to leave, but the people of my village were so numerous that they could not stop them all.

During the air and artillery attacks, the villagers evacuated to safer places while all the VC fled.

106. Has the Front threatened to punish you or other villagers for leaving the hamlet (village) or for settlingin a GVN controlled area?

The Front publicly threatened to put in jail anyone leaving the village to settle in a GVN controlled area. It did not threaten me personally.

107. How many families left the village at about the time you did?

I don't know exactly how many families have left the village. I only know that up to 80 percent of the people of my village have left.

108. How many stayed behind?

In all my village, which was very populated, only 500 people stayed behind, and most of them have moved to live near the highway so as to avoid the air attacks to some extent. Most of the people who stay behind are old people and children. The youths cannot stay behind, because they must serve in the VC army or in the GVN army.

109. Did your entire family come with you or did some members stay behind?

My entire family came with me.

110. What do you think might happen to you if you went back to your hamlet?

If I went back to my hamlet, the VC would arrest me one night and they might kill me or let me live.

111. Are there any differences between what the Front told you about life under GVN control and what you have heard and seen here?

The differences are that life is happy. I can eat and sleep quietly, and I can be free.

112. How long do you think the war will go on?

I don't know.

113. Do you blame anyone for causing you to leave your village?

No.

114. What help did the GVN authorities give you and your family after you left your hamlet?

I have borrowed 2,000 piasters from a native of my hamlet who succeeded in settling here last year and who has received assistance from the GVN. So far the GVN authorities have not yet given me any help. They have taken photographs of my family and they have issued a family census card to me.

115. What did the GVN authorities tell you they will do for you and your family?

I am told that the GVN will give 3,500 piasters to each refugee family, and each refugee will get a daily subsidy of 7 piasters for one month. Although I have not yet received this help, I am satisfied.

116. What do you think about this help?

I think that even if this help is given to us, it will be insufficient and so we must earn a living by doing some job.

117. What sort of work do you plan to do?

I will apply to the Village Committee for a permit to go to [redacted] to work there as a woodcutter. My brother who is now living in [redacted] has asked me to join him there. I intend to go to [redacted] only after I have received the help from the GVN so that my family can settle here during my absence.

118. Do you want to stay here or go back to your hamlet or move elsewhere?

I want to stay here. I will never go back to my hamlet. I prefer to die here than in the VC controlled area. I have been obliged to move here, and even if the Village Committee chases me back to my hamlet, I won't go back at all.

119. What have you heard about or from the people who stayed behind in your village?

Those who still stay behind in my village want to escape, but because they are worried about the property they must leave behind, they decide not to leave yet, although they are aware that what they own will be confiscated by the VC.

120. Did anyone try to persuade you or the other refugees to go back to your hamlet?

No.

121. Have any of the villagers who left with you moved back to your hamlet?

Nobody moved back to my hamlet. In my opinion, he who wants to live comes here, and he who wants to die can go back there to die.

122. Have you seen any Americans? What have you heard about them?

For a long time I have heard that the Americans are rich, and they lack nothing in their material life; they have oil wells, gold mines and are short of nothing at all. When I lived in Saigon and My-Tho, I seldom met Americans. But now they are very numerous.

123. How do you know they are numerous?

I have seen them pass by on the highway in jeeps and cars.

124. What do you think they are doing in Vietnam?

They come here to help us in the war. I hope that they will do so in such a way that peace will come. If not the war will...

125. What did you hear about the Americans from the cadres?

The cadres said that the Americans come here to conquer Vietnam. I did not believe them, because so far I have not seen this conquest, nor did I believe that the Americans replace the French in ruling this country. I think that they have come here to help the GVN.

126. Have you seen people from other countries other than Americans (Koreans, Filipinos, etc.) who are helping the Vietnamese?

No.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS :

The subject is a Catholic refugee who has been staying in a camp at Long-Binh with his family for over three months. He said that most of the people of his village have left to take refuge in [redacted], Cai-Lay or in the cities, because of the continual air and artillery attacks which interrupted work, meals and sleep. Although his village has been under

effective control of the Front since the withdrawal of the GVN troops from [redacted] post in mid-1953, the Front organizations were not yet set up except for the 4 member Civil Affairs Committee which did not stay permanently in the village. The VC frequently passed through his village, but they vanished as soon as aircraft came to strafe or to bomb. But many villagers took advantage of the air or artillery attacks to escape quietly without the VC's knowledge. So, in the subject's opinion, everyone in his village did the best they could to escape, and those who still stay behind, mostly the wealthy people, will sell their last holdings and property before deciding to leave.

The subject was not critical of the Diem regime, the end of which he apparently regretted. He did not know the names of any of Diem's successors. His opinions about the air strikes on North Vietnam reflected the aware, mature soul of an old Catholic refugee determined to leave and never to move back to his hamlet. However, he sometimes did not answer the interviewer's questions directly, indicating that he was not very intelligent. He was very sincere and cooperative. Since he did not join the Front, he was not well informed about Front activities in his own village.

NO. AGR 3

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

MASTER COPY

1. Name of interviewer [redacted]

2. Name of subject [redacted]

3. Time and date of interview :

   From 11:00 am to 2:00 pm on May [redacted] 1965

   From 2:30 pm to 4:30 pm on " 19 65

   From _____ to _____ on _____ 19___

4. Place of interview :

   Long Dinh district, Dinh Tuong province

5. Sex of subject : Male (X) Female ( )

6. Age of subject : 51

7. Ethnic background : Vietnamese

8. Place of birth :

   hamlet [redacted]

   village [redacted]

   district Long Dinh

   province Dinh Tuong

9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :

   hamlet [redacted]

   village [redacted]

   district Long Dinh

   province Dinh Tuong

10. (a) Length of residence in last location : _____

    (b) Who controlled the place of residence :

    GVN ( ) VC (X) Contested ( ) How long? 1 1/2 years

    (since end of 1963)

NO. AGR 3

11. Number of brothers (2) and sisters (2)

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : 2

13. Marital status : married

14. Number of children : 2

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age : none

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject (X)
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
1 Brother with subject (X) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject (X) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject (X) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion : Catholic

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : Fisherman and farmer

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation Very poor
(b) Landowner? no

20. Education :
illiterate (X)
literate ( )
schooling completed : _____

21. Any relatives in VC : No

22. Any relatives in GVN 1 brother in [redacted] (GVN controlled area) 1 nephew in Saigon (soldier) and 1 nephew in Sai-Se (ARVN)

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by :
(a) French- 1 younger brother killed by French in 1951.
(b) GVN
(c) VC

24. When became a refugee : End of April 1965

AGR

INTERVIEW

4

THE RAND CORPORATION

[redacted]

STUDIES OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT
OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR-4

Date of interview : June [redacted] 1965

Subject's Category : Refugee

Date subject became a Refugee : February, 1965

Area of Residence : [redacted] village, Gia Rai district, Bac Lieu province

1. How long have you been here?

I have been here for almost four months.

2. Where did you come from?

I came from [redacted] hamlet, [redacted] village, (Gia Rai district).

3. How did you get here?

I got here by sampan directly from my hamlet. My wife and my children had left one month before me. They got here by sampan too.

4. What are your plans and prospects now?

I would like to practise my barber's profession. But my house which I just built two months ago is very small, there is not enough space to put an armchair there for the customers. I hope to be able to find a place for it.

5. How large was your family?

I have my wife and my eight children.

6. Did all the members of your family live together before you came here?

Yes. We lived together except for my eldest daughter who, since her marriage, has been living elsewhere with her husband for four years.

7. How big was your village? How many people?

My village was fairly big. It was composed of [redacted] hamlets. I don't know how many people it had. In my hamlet there was over one hundred families.

8. Did you alway live in your hamlet before you came here?

Yes. I have lived in my hamlet since my childhood.

9. Were there families who had left your hamlet? How many families?

Many families have left my hamlet. Now, only some twenty of them are left in my hamlet.

10. Where did they go?

More than twenty families came here to live with me. The rest went elsewhere, I don't know where.

11. Do you know why these families have left the hamlet?

I think that the motivation which urged them to leave the hamlet was the same as mine: the GVN aircraft often came to bomb the hamlet; I knew well that it was not for killing the inhabitants, but everyone was afraid of being killed.

12. Aren't the twenty families who still remain in the hamlet afraid of the bombings? Why didn't they leave the hamlet like the other families?

I think that these families dared not leave the hamlet because they were afraid of not being able to find a job elsewhere. They all were people who have lived solely on fishing since their childhood. Leaving the sea is for them a very great risk.

13. What did the people in your village do to earn a living? Was their life well off or difficult?

The people in [redacted] out of [redacted] hamlets of my village were farmers. Those of the other hamlets lived by fishing. As a rule, there were no very poor people, neither were there any really rich people.

14. What did you do to earn a living? What category did the Front assign to your family: rich, medium, poor, very poor or other.?

I was a barber, and my wife was a tailor for ladies. Moreover, we bred fish in a large pond of six cong. So, we had enough to eat. The Front cadres classified us in the poor people's category.

15. Were there any changes in your economic conditions in the past years? What were they? What were the reasons for them?

We were always like that. Only when we came here did our life become difficult, because we can no longer breed fish.

16. What was your education?

I only know how to read and to write. I could not study much during my childhood, because my parents were very poor.

17. Did your children go to school before you came here? Do you plan to send your children to school here?

I have a 15-year-old boy who has reached the final year of primary school, but he left his school two years ago. I had not enough money to allow him to continue his studies. Now, he is learning dress-making to be able to assist us soon.

18. Was your hamlet a Strategic Hamlet?

No. [redacted] of the [redacted] hamlets of my village were Strategic hamlets. But the Front cadres obliged the inhabitants to destroy them a year ago.

19. Before your departure, who in effect controlled your village, the Front or the GVN?

Only one of the eight hamlets of my village was under GVN control. The other seven were contested areas.

20. How long has your hamlet been contested?

For four or five years.

21. How did the GVN authorities behave. What did the villagers think of them?

There was a Village Council and in my hamlet there was a hamlet chief. They were respectable men. Nobody had any complaints about them.

22. Since your village has become a contested area, has the Front carried out any terroristic acts or killed any of the people. What did villagers think about it?

I don't know whether the Front cadres killed any people or not. I often saw them arrest the people and carry them away. Most of the arrested people were released five to ten days later. Some were confined for 4 or 5 months. Others were kept as long as two years. Each time, the cadres tied up the victims and blindfolded them. The inhabitants were dissatisfied with it. Everyone said that it was quite useless to tie up the people and to blindfold them.

23. Do you know approximately the number of arrests last year? Has this number increased or decreased, compared with the previous years?

As a rule, for several years, there were about some one hundred arrests per year. It was the same every year.

24. Did the Front cadres justify these arrests?

They never justified the arrests. Only after the increase of the arrests did the victims say why they had been arrested. They were, in general, suspected of being anti-Front, or of having relations with the GVN authorities.

25. What did the villagers think about it?

I don't know.

26. What happened to them during their arrest?

I don't know. They never said anything.

27. Did the Front set up any organization in your village? How were the cadres? What did the villagers think of them?

I overheard that there was a Civil Affairs Committee in my village and I knew where it was installed but I don't know any details about it. I only know that everyone had to comply with the cadres' orders, and did what the latter asked them to do.

28. Did the villagers' attitudes change during the past six months?

During the past six months, my hamlet was several times attacked by the GVN aircraft. There were some dead and killed houses destroyed or burned. The inhabitants of my hamlet began complaining openly. Some people said that it was because of the cadres' presence. Others said: "Why is that the GVN aircraft only killed the people instead of killing the cadres?"

29. Did the cadres build up combat hamlets in your village?

There was one combat hamlet in my village. It was 6 kms from my hamlet.

30. When and how was it built up? How was the life of the people living in this combat hamlet?

I have forgotten when it was built up. Nor do I know how it was built up. I only saw that this hamlet was surrounded by a kind of spike-covered elevation. I never went there. I don't know how the people there lived.

31. How many young men 16 years old or more were in your hamlet? How many joined the Front in the last year? How many joined the ARVN?

There were about one hundred youths over 18 years old in my hamlet. Five youths joined the Front forces last year. Three others joined the ARVN, but over 3 years ago.

32. Do you know the reason why these five young men joined the Front?

I don't know. It seems to me that they volunteered to join Front forces.

33. How did the Front recruit people in your village for military duty? Did the Front persuade most of them through propaganda or did it order people to serve in the military forces?

I was never told about the military duty. Nor did I know about the cadres' use of propaganda to persuade people to serve in the military forces.

34. Were you or any members of your family taken by the Front for reeducation?

No one in my family was obliged to attend the reeducation courses. I was obliged to attend these courses every five or six months. The duration of each course varied from one to three days.

35. Why were you obliged to attend the reeducation courses? What did you learn in these courses?

My son-in-law is a GVN soldier. I believe that this was the reason I was obliged to attend the reeducation courses. I have forgotten what they obliged me to learn, because I never paid attention to the courses. I only remember that each time they obliged me to call back my son-in-law. But I couldn't because I didn't even know where my son-in-law's unit was stationed.

36. Did you ever refuse to attend these courses? What did you think of them?

Once, last year, I refused to attend the course on the cadres' summons, because I had had enough of it. Later, a cadre called on me to tell me that I had to go to the course upon each summons. He did not threaten me, but he had a threatening look. Since then I no longer dared to refuse to attend the courses. Like everybody, I didn't like to go because it made me waste time and affected my work. I was poor and I needed to work every day to be able to support my family.

37. Did the cadres often hold meetings in your village? How often per month?

Meetings were held in my hamlet once every month, sometimes twice a month.

38. What did they say in the meetings? What did the villagers think about what they said?

It was, as a rule, to say to the villagers that the Front worked for the people's interests while the GVN only did

harm to the people. It was also an occasion to tell about the victories won by the Front forces. There were some people who believed it. But there were also others, like myself, who didn't believe it for the simple reason that it was impossible that the Front forces had never sustained any defeats.

39. Did the villagers usually come to the meetings in large numbers? Did any of them refuse to go? Did anything happen to them?

Usually the villagers came in large numbers to each meeting. But there were always some who didn't come. If one was absent at the meetings once or twice, the cadres would say nothing. But at the third time, the cadres would come to one's house to criticize.

40. Did the cadres say anything about the bombing of North Vietnam by the GVN-American aircraft?

The cadres talked about these bombings during a meeting. They said that the U.S. was a warmongering country and the Americans liked to wage war. They also said that the Americans did not want North Vietnam to help the Front fight against the GVN. They added that the Americans had only bombed the regions close to South Vietnam, that the damage was insignificant, and that they never dared come near the Capital of the North. They didn't say why. They didn't say anything about the reaction of North Vietnam. Nobody dared ask any questions.

41. Did the villagers believe them?

There was a portion of the villagers who believed that the Americans are warmongering people who like to wage war. There were others who, not believing it, said that it was because North Vietnam had incited the Front to foment trouble and disorder in the South.

42. Did the cadres form any organizations in your village? Did you belong to any of these organization?

I overheard that there was in my village a Farmers' Association I didn't belong to it. I don't know about it in detail. It seems to me that its members were carefully selected, and they belonged to this organization in order to work for the Front. I don't know how.

43. Did you have to pay taxes or contributions to the GVN or the Front for the past three years?

For many years, nobody in my hamlet paid taxes or contributions to the GVN. But for three years most people in my hamlet had to pay a land tax and a fishing tax to the Front. I who had no ricefield and was not engaged in fishing did not have to pay taxes or contributions. Therefore, I don't know how these taxes and contributions were calculated. I only know that many inhabitants complained about the excessive amount of these taxes and contributions. But there were some people who, unable to pay the taxes in full, were sent to the reeducation courses. None of those who had to pay taxes could refuse to pay.

44. Did the taxes of last year increase or decrease as compared with those of the previous years?

I was told that the taxes in 1964 were double those in 1963.

45. What did the cadres say about this increase? What were the villagers' reactions?

The cadres said that the number of Front soldiers being much larger, more money was needed to feed them. So, the amount of taxes increased. Everybody complained about this increase and asked for reductions. But it seems to me that finally one had to pay what was due.

46. Was there any land distribution in your village?

Properly speaking, there was no land distribution. The cadres only asked the landlords who had many ricefields to distribute small portion of the ricefields to the poor who didn't have any. Among the landlords there were some who accepted, but the ricefields distributed to the poor were always of poor quality. There were also some landlords who refused in spite of the cadres' insistence.

47. Did anything happen to the landlords who refused to distribute one portion of their land to the poor?

I don't know.

48. Did those to whom the landlords distributed the ricefields on the cadres' request accept these ricefields by their own will? Were they afraid of having worries later?

I believe that they accepted with joy the ricefields given by landlords. I don't know if they were afraid of having troubles later but, in my opinion, for the poor the present counts more than the future.

49. Were there in your village any farmers who rented land?

I don't know.

50. Were there any landlords who had left the village, giving up their ricefields? What became of these ricefields?

Yes. There were some landlords who had given up their ricefields to leave the village. It seems to me that the cadres distributed these ricefields to the poor who still remained in the village.

51. Tell me something about the history of your village from the Resistance period until now.

I don't remember the details of the Resistance period. I vaguely recall that there was cease-fire, and afterwards the GVN soldiers came to set up a post in my village. We then had some peaceful years. When these soldiers left my village, abandoning the post, Front cadres came. At first they were nice, they asked for contributions from the villagers; one could give what one liked to give, one even could give nothing. But for the past three years the cadres have become tougher: they arrested the people and forced them to attend the reeducation courses; the taxes became obligatory and were increased from day to day. Finally, the GVN aircraft came to drop bombs; some people were killed, some houses burned or destroyed. The people became more and more unhappy.

52. Do you know who the GVN village, district and province chiefs are? Did they visit sometimes your village?

I don't know who the district and province chiefs are. They did not visit my village.

53. What did you hear about the fall of the Diem regime? What did the people say about it?

Everybody was kept informed of the fall of the Diem regime. The people said that Mr Diem had been very cruel. It was just that he lost power.

54. What did the cadre tell the villagers?

The cadres said that Mr Diem had been a lackey of the Americans, he was unable to do anything that would be suitable in any way he had to "fall down". They added that nobody will be able to do anything suitable, and that all those who will replace Mr Diem will fall," each in his turn."

55. Do you know who heads up the present government?

I learn from hearsay that the military now head up the government.

56. Have you heard about the present government and its policies?

No. I know nothing.

57. What do the people say about the government?

They say that the army now does the heaviest job: fighting against the VC. Therefore, it would be just to put the military at the head of the government. Besides this will facilitate so many things.

58. Could you explain that more clearly?

I only repeat to you what the people said. I have no personal idea. I can't tell you anything more about it.

59. Before being a refugee, did you know anything about the GVN assistance program to the villagers? Did you benefit from this program?

I have never heard about the GVN assistance program. I never benefitted from any assistance. How could the GVN help the villagers when no GVN official came to my village.

60. You said that at that time there was a GVN post in your village; how many men were there? How did they behave towards the villagers?

There were some twenty soldiers in the post. I don't know what kind of soldiers they were. But they behaved well. Nobody complained about them.

61. Did GVN troops pass through your hamlet?

Since there was no longer a post in my village, the GVN soldiers sometimes passed through my hamlet. Last year in particular, they came frequently, once or twice a month.

62. How did they behave towards the villagers? How did the villagers feel about the GVN troops?

They never did any harm to the villagers intentionally. However, from time to time, one or two villagers were killed by the bullets shot by the GVN. I know well that it was by mistake, because the GVN soldiers only wanted to shoot at the Front guerrillas. But the villagers couldn't help complaining about it. Everybody was afraid each time the GVN soldiers came to the village.

63. You just said that the GVN soldiers shot at the Front guerrillas in your village. Were the guerrillas numerous? Did they stay permanently in your village? What did the villagers think about them?

The Front guerrillas stayed permanently in my hamlet. There were only three or four of them. However, from their hideouts they sometimes shot at the GVN soldiers before escaping. That urged the soldiers to fire, and sometimes the villagers were the victims. That is why the people of my hamlet disliked the guerrillas. They said that the latter were incapable of doing anything except provoking the soldiers to cast the consequences on the people.

64. Did the Front soldiers sometimes pass through your village?

The Front soldiers sometimes passed through it at night, but they only passed through the other hamlets.

65. What were the villagers' attitudes toward the Front soldiers? Did their attitudes change last year?

I believe that there were some villagers who disliked the Front soldiers and others who were sympathetic to them. Those who had sympathy for them were more numerous than the others. I don't know why. I think that this attitude has not changed.

66. What have you heard about the aims of the Front?

The cadres said that the Front's aims are to liberate the people and to do it in such a way that all men are equal, no man has more power than another and no man is richer than another.

67. What do you think about it?

I don't know anything about liberation. As for men's equality in power and riches, I don't agree with what the cadres have said. I think that every man has his own abilities and talent. If by his own abilities and talent a man can produce more than another man, he must have the right to benefit from his work and in consequence, be richer than another man. Only those who have no ability and no talent wish to get as many ricefields as the others. Moreover, I have noted that the Front cadres always try to take away the freedoms of the people. For example, although I am poor, I like to practice some music to sing the "vong co", and to dress myself properly. That harms nobody. However, the cadres forbade me to do so, saying that it was not suitable in war time.

68. Do you know anything about the life of a Front soldier?

No.

69. What have you heard about the fighting of the Front forces? Have you heard about Front successes and defeats?

I don't know anything about the fightings of the Front forces. The cadres often told about their victories, but I don't remember the details. As for their defeats, they never told about them, which caused those who listened to them to suppose that the Front forces had never sustained any defeat.

70. What did you think of it, the people and you?

As I have told you, one portion of the people believed it, and another portion didn't believe it. I belonged to the latter.

71. Do you have any friends serving in the Front forces?

I don't Know.

72. Are any members of your family or relatives serving in the ARVN or with the GVN?

No member of my family serves in the GVN. As I have told you, my son-in-law- serves in the ARVN.

73. Has your son-in-law visited you at anytime? Or has any member of your family visited him? When did you see him last time?

My son-in-law and my daughter never came back home to see me. The last time I saw them was three years ago. But eight months ago, when my son-in-law was at the [redacted] post in Long-Xuyen, my wife went to see his wife in Can-Tho.

74. Do you have any member of your family or relatives serving in the Front?

My nephew, my brother's son, joined the Front over one year ago.

75. How did he join the Front? What did his parents say about it? Has he come back home to see them since his departure?

He joined the Front without his parents knowing about it. His father came to tell me so without comment. Since his departure he has not come back home.

76. What did the villagers and the cadres say about it?

Nobody said anything about it.

77. Has any fighting taken place in your village between the GVN forces and the Front forces?

No, there was no real fighting in my village. As I have told you, the GVN soldiers only came on operations. The guerrillas sometimes shot at them a few times before escaping.

78. Was your village attacked by GVN artillery or aircraft?

My hamlet was not attacked by artillery. But it was bombed three times by the aircraft: the first time at the end of last year, the second time at the beginning of this year, and the third time after my arrival here.

79. What did the villagers do during the bombardments?

Everyone took cover in the trenches.

80. Did these bombings cause much damage? Did you suffer any damage?

There were no dead, but a few wounded. But each bombing destroyed or burned from 40 to 50 houses. In the first bombing my house was burned. In the second one, the house which I had constructed again, was completely destroyed. Since I left my village to come here, I don't know the damage caused by the third bombing.

81. Did the GVN authorities warn the people before the bombings?

Never.

82. What did the people say about it?

They said that the Americans were cruel. Everybody thought that it was the Americans who flew the aircraft.

83. What did the cadres say about it?

The cadres took advantage of it to speak ill of the Americans. They said to the villagers that the Americans only destroyed and killed, and that the victims were always among the villagers. Everybody was afraid of the bombings.

84. Did anyone join the Front because they resented the attacks?

No.

85. Did any villagers move to the Front/because of the attacks? areas

No.

86. Did the attacks interfere with your work. How did you feel about them?

These bombings prevented us from working to earn a living. One did not have any house to live in. Sometimes the farmers didn't have any plows and harrows, and the fishermen had no fishing nets. More-over, the fear of being attacked worried everybody.

87. Did the people of your village get news about what was going on? Could they read the news in the newspapers or hear it over the radio?

In my hamlet, there was a small information hall where the cadres pasted on the walls news bulletins about the victories of the Front forces every fifteen or thirty days. From time to time, they distributed to the villagers some copies of the newspaper" Giai Phong" (Liberation) published by the Front. Sometimes, the villagers coming back from market brought back some GVN newpapers. There were also radio sets belonging to well off people. The cadres had forbidden them to listen to Radio Saigon. However, the people listened to it all the same without their knowing. I occasionally heard its broadcasts, but I listened more often to the "vong co" songs.

88. Had you thought of moving to a GVN controlled area before?

No. I had never thought about it. I had a fish pond which was an important source of income for me. I never thought of giving it up.

89. Before coming here, did you try to take refuge in a GVN controlled area other than that where you are now?

No.

90. What had you heard about conditions in GVN controlled areas before you left?

No. I have heard nothing about the conditions in GVN controlled areas. Nobody told about them.

91. Were you told what the GVN authorities would do for you? What did you expect them to do for you?

I had no idea what the GVN authorities would do for me. However, before leaving my hamlet I said to myself that the GVN authorities would not hesitate to come to help me if they knew that all that I had owned was destroyed by the bombings.

92. How do you expect the GVN to help you?

I hope that the GVN will allow me to till a few ricefields in order to earn something to support my family.

93. Did anyone induce you to move here?

No. I made the decision to come here myself.

94. What preparations did you make? What did you fear most when you were considering leaving your village?

I had ordered my wife and my children except for my 15-year-old son who remained and left at the same time as I, to move one month before me. What I feared most was being prevented by the cadres from leaving, and being unable to find a job here.

95. How did the cadres prevent the people from leaving the village?

Did they threaten to punish them?

The cadres forbade those who wanted to leave, saying that it was extremely difficult to earn a living in the GVN controlled areas, and consequently one might run the risk of starving there. They did not threaten anybody.

96. Did they say those who came to live in the GVN controlled areas might get trouble with the GVN authorities?

No. They didn't say so.

97. Were there any people who remained in the village just because of what the cadres had told them?

No. There were some people who feigned to believe what the cadres had told them. But when the cadres were away, they left the village.

98. Were there many families who left at the same time as you?

Not at the same time as me. There were families who had left a little time before me, and others who left a little time after me. As I have told you, only about twenty families still remain in my hamlet.

99. Does what the cadres said about the conditions in the GVN controlled areas conform to truth?

No. What the cadres said is not true. Certainly, it is not easy to find a job here, but one can find it all the same. Moreover, there is assistance from the GVN authorities. My family has received over 400 piasters from them, and my wife has obtained medicine for my children.

100. How long do you plan to stay far from your hamlet?

I have decided to stay here for ever.

101. Could you tell me why?

My family and I cannot go back to our hamlet now because we will run the risk of being attacked again by aircraft. Nor will we able to go back there after some time, because the cadres will have given our fish pond to other people, and we will have no way to earn our living. Therefore, I have decided to stay here for ever.

102. What property were you able to bring here with you?

Almost nothing. All that I had was destroyed by the bombardments. We could only bring a sow with us.

103. Did you entrust your fish pond to anyone before leaving?

No. I simply gave it up. I think that the cadres are going to give it to one of those who still stay behind in the hamlet.

104. In your opinion, would you have to worry about the cadres if you went back to your hamlet now?

If I went back now with all my family, nothing would happen to me from the cadres. But if I went back alone, I would have many troubles with them. I think that I would be obliged to attend the reeducation courses, perhaps I would be even arrested. They would certainly oblige me to call back my family.

105. When you still lived in your hamlet, did you hear broadcasts from aircraft or read leaflets?

Several times the aircraft dropped leaflets or broadcasted to the villagers. I was never able to hear clearly what they said. The leaflets said that one should not follow the VC, and that the GVN fights against the VC so that the villagers can work in peace.

106. Did the leaflets tell the villagers to leave?

No. Everybody knew that it sufficed not to work for the VC. We did not wait for the aircraft to come and attack the village. If it had been said clearly in the leaflets that we had to leave the village in order to avoid the air attacks, we would have left it long before.

107. Have you heard about the Chieu Hoi program?

The leaflets dropped by the aircraft also gave us some information about the Chieu Hoi. The leaflets said that those who had been misled in following the VC could rally to the Chieu Hoi without any worry. The authorities would forgive them for their old mistakes, and would help them remake their life.

108. What did you think about it?

I did not think about it. That didn't concern me, because I never worked for the VC.

109. In your opinion, how long will this war last? I don't know. I have no idea about it.

110. In your opinion, who will win, the Frcht or the GVN?

I can affirm nothing to you. I am not an educated man. I cannot even guess who will win.

111. Which of the two camps do you wish will be the winner?

I certainly wish that the GVN will be the winner. It is hard to live with the VC. With them there will no freedom at all.

112. Do you blame anyone for causing you to leave your village?

The bombardments by the aircraft have obliged me to leave my village. But it was because I lived with the VC. I had to bear the consequences of it. So, I don't blame the GVN. I think that South Vietnam belongs to the GVN. The Communists of the North came to incite the people to foment trouble. That is why I had to leave my village. If I had to blame anyone, I would blame the Communists.

113. What help has the GVN authorities given you since you came here? Are you satisfied?

Yes. I have received aid. As I have told you, I have obtained over 400 piasters from the authorities. But it is obviously insufficient. I could not support my family with such aid. I hope that the authorities will help me get a suitable place so that I can carry on my business as barber, or that they will give me some ricefields so I can produce enough rice for my family.

114. Did the GVN authorities promise to do anything else for you?

No. The GVN authorities did not promise anything.

115. When you left your hamlet, what did you plan to do here?

I had no definite plan. I left with the hope only to be helped by the authorities, and to be able to find a job here.

116. Do you plan to move elsewhere?

No. As I have told you, I intend to settle here.

117. Have you heard about or from the people who stayed behind in your hamlet?

No. I have heard nothing about them.

118. Did anyone try to persuade you to go back to your hamlet?

Nobody. But it seems to me that there are some people who have persuaded the refugees having no houses yet to go back to their village.

119. What were they told?

I don't know. I don't know the details.

120. Have any of the people of your hamlet who came here moved back to your hamlet?

Yes. Some villagers moved back to the hamlet. But they did so to go fishing when it was fine weather. They only stayed there for some ten days.

121. Did the cadres say or do anything during these ten days?

I don't know.

122. Could these villagers go fishing without any fear during those ten days?

It seems to me that is so.

123. Have you seen any Americans?

Yes, when we went to ask for medicine for our children. And this "American mister" who was here with you not long ago.

124. What have you heard about the Americans?

In my hamlet it was said that the Americans are cruel and they only kill and destroy, and they intend to conquer Vietnam. On the contrary, I find them very kind.

125. What do you think they are doing in Vietnam?

I think that they came to help the GVN.

126. Do you know why?

The Americans have the same ideology as the GVN, therefore they came to help the GVN. They don't want any interest. They are rich, they need nothing. It is false to say that they want to conquer our country.

127. Have you seen people from other countries other than Americans?

No. I have never seen other foreigners.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

The subject is not very intelligent, but his answers were clear and very understandable.

He was sincere and cooperative.

NO. AGR 4

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

1. Name of interviewer [redacted]

2. Name of subject [redacted]

3. Time and date of interview :

   From 14:40 to 18:30 on [redacted] 1965

   From _____ to _____ on _____ 19___

   From _____ to _____ on _____ 19___

4. Place of interview :

   Bureau du district de Gia Rai (Bac Lieu)

5. Sex of subject : Male (X) Female ( )

6. Age of subject : 49

7. Ethnic background : Vietnam

8. Place of birth :

   hamlet [redacted]

   village [redacted]

   district Gia Rai

   province Bac Lieu

9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :

   hamlet [redacted]

   village [redacted]

   district Gia Rai

   province Bac Lieu

10. (a) Length of residence in last location : _____

    (b) Who controlled the place of residence :

    GVN ( ) VC ( ) Contested (X) How long? 4 ou 5 ans

NO. AGR 4

11. Number of brothers (3) and sisters (2)

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : 3

13. Marital status : marié

14. Number of children : 8

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age : 1

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject( ) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject (X) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject(X) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion : Culte des Ancêtres

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : coiffeur et élevateur de poissons.

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation pauvre
(b) Landowner? _____

20. Education :
illiterate ( )
literate (X)
schooling completed : savoir lire et écrire

21. Any relatives in VC : un neveu se joignait au Front depuis plus d'un an

22. Any relatives in GVN : un gendre soldat de l'ARVN

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by : non
(a) French
(b) GVN
(c) VC

24. When became a refugee : 4 mois

AGR

INTERVIEW

5

THE RAND CORPORATION
[redacted]

STUDIES OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT
OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR-5

Date of Interview : June [redacted] 1965

Subject's Category : Refugee

Date subject became a Refugee : April, 1965

Area of Residence : [redacted], Gia Rai district,
Bac Lieu province

(Note : The interviewee was classified as having a 'mental disorder' but this did not appear to affect his performance in the interview.)

1. How long have you been here?

Around two months.

2. Where did you come from?

From [redacted].

3. To which village, which hamlet did [redacted] belong?

I only know that the place bears the name of [redacted]. I don't know to which village or which hamlet it belongs.

4. How did you come here?

I came by sampan. It was one of the sampans which carried merchandise. I asked the owner of the sampan to let my family travel on it free of charge. In return I helped the people to row the sampan.

5. What do you plan to do now? Do you have any prospects?

I don't have any prospects. I am only a part time worker or a jobber. I would do any work people asked me to.

6. How many members are there in your family?

I have a wife and four children.

7. Did you live together before coming here?

Yes, we all lived together. In addition to that, I had my mother-in-law and my sister-in-law (my wife's sister) with my family.

8. Are your mother-in-law and sister-in-law here with you?

Yes, they are with us. They came here several days after we did.

9. Why didn't they go at the same time you and your family did?

My mother-in-law didn't want to leave at the same time as I, because she wanted to stay there a few more days in order to sell her jars before leaving.

10. How big was [redacted]? How many people were there?

[redacted] was quite big. I don't know its population. I only know that there were around 200 houses.

11. Had you always been at [redacted] before you came here?

No, before that I had been in the province of Bien Hoa where I was born.

12. When did you come to [redacted]?

I don't remember any more. I only remember that it was during the time there were French people and Japanese.

13. Were there many families that left [redacted] during the last 12 months? How many were there? Where did they go?

At least half of the number of families left [redacted]. It seemed to me that all of them have come to settle here, in the district chief's town.

14. Do you know why these families left [redacted]?

I think because of the bombardments.

15. What did the inhabitants of [redacted] do to earn their living? Were they rich or poor?

Almost all of them lived by fishing. About 2/3 of them hardly had enough.

16. How did you earn your living?

My wife and I worked for other people. We accepted all job offers in order to make our living. We were very poor. Sometimes, working for others, we barely had enough to eat. We couldn't bring anything to our children. Therefore, we had to ask for some rice from friends to feed our children.

17. In which category did the cadres class you?

I don't understand what you mean. The cadres never said anything concerning people's categories.

18. Were there any changes in your financial condition during the last few years?

There weren't any changes in my financial condition. I have always been poor, and I remain poor.

19. Did you go to school when you were a child?

No, I have never been to school. I don't know how to read or write.

20. Was [redacted] a strategic hamlet? Were there any strategic hamlets in the vicinity of [redacted]?

No, [redacted] was not a strategic hamlet. There weren't any strategic hamlets in the vicinity of [redacted]

21. Were there any GVN officials in [redacted] prior to your departure?

No.

22. Who was in effective control of [redacted], the Front or the GVN?

Nobody controlled [redacted]. People said that it was a contested area. I don't know what the Front is.

23. Before [redacted] became a contested area, were there any GVN officials?

I don't remember.

24. How long has it been since [redacted] became a contested area?

It's been a very long time. I don't remember when it began.

25. Had the VC killed or arrested the inhabitants?

I don't know exactly. It seems to me that the VC has never killed anybody. They only threatened to cut off the people's heads. They arrested 2 persons about 2 months ago. One of the two has been released. The other has not been released yet.

26. Do you know why these two men were arrested?

No, I don't know. I think it was because they were against the VC.

27. What did the inhabitants think about this?

I don't know because no one said anything.

28. What do you yourself think about this?

I think, by so doing, the VC oppressed the people. They could oppress people because they had guns.

29. Did the people have any sympathy for the VC?

I think none of the people had any sympathy for the VC.

30. Did the VC have combat hamlets near [redacted]?

I don't know what a combat hamlet is.

31. Were there any hamlets which the VC forced people to build fences and the bunkers around?

No, there weren't any.

32. How many young men above 16 years old are there in [redacted]? Were there any of them who joined the VC forces since last year?

I don't know the number of young men above 16 years of age in [redacted] I suppose there must be some of them who worked for the VC. I only know one man who joined the GVN armed forces.

33. Did the VC force or oblige the young men to become VC soldiers?

No, I have never heard of that.

34. Were any members of your family forced by the VC to join the reeducation courses?

I have heard about some courses. Indon't know whether they were the reeducation courses that you're talking about or not. A number of inhabitants were forced to attend these courses for 10 or 15 days. Neither I nor any member of my family was forced to attend these courses.

35. Do you know why these people were forced to attend these courses?

No, I don't know. I only know that nobody liked to attend these courses because it was a waste of time.

36. Did the VC sometimes assemble the people to give a talk to them?

No, the VC never assembled the people. I believe that if they wanted to say anything to someone they just went to him.

37. Did the VC create any organization or association in [redacted]?

No, I have never heard of it.

38. Did you have to pay taxes to the VC?

No, never.

39. Did the other inhabitants have to pay taxes? How much per year?

Yes, all owners of fish nets had to pay taxes to the VC. I don't know how much.

40. Were there any who refused to pay taxes? What did the inhabitants say?

The inhabitants said that the taxes were heavy. But I think that nobody refused to pay taxes.

41. Did these taxes increase last year?

I don't know.

42. Did the VC say why the inhabitants came to pay these taxes?

The VC said it was because they need money to feed the soldiers (VC).

43. Did the Front carry out land distribution at [redacted]?

No, there wasn't any distribution of land. There were very few ricefields in [redacted]. There were a number of poor people, whom I am part of, who had asked the landlords to let them farm parts of their ricefields, but the landlords refused, saying that they were too poor to farm the ricefields. Nobody was able to obtain a single lot of ricefields. Furthermore these ricefields were of very bad quality. They didn't do us any good.

44. Didn't the VC intervene with the landlords on your behalf so that you could farm the ricefields?

No, the VC have not done anything for us.

45. Would you like to tell me the history of Ganh Hao from the Resistance period up to now.

I don't understand what the Resistance period means. Nothing special has happened at [redacted] for a very long time. Then suddenly the VC came. Then some people were arrested, the guerrillas walked around with their guns, and the people had to pay taxes. Afterwards came bombardments, houses were on fire and destroyed, men and women were wounded. Finally the families, including mine, left [redacted] to come here.

46. Do you know who your district chief and province chief are?

No, I don't know who they are. I don't know them. I have never seen them.

47. Did you hear about the fall of Diem's regime? What did the inhabitants think about that? What did the VC say?

I heard about Mr. Diem's fall a long time ago. I don't know what he did. People also say that another "Mister" has replaced him. I don't know anything further. The inhabitants didn't say anything, neither did the VC.

48. Do you know who is actually at the head of the Government? Did the VC say anything.

I don't know who is at the head of the government. I don't understand, what does government mean. Please excuse me for that.

49. Do you know anything about the government's aid program to the villagers? Did you profit from it?

I don't know anything about the aid program. It was a long time ago, I don't remember the date, I received a package of 5 liters of rice. People said it was American rice. I found it to be the same as ours.

50. Did the VC soldiers ever come to [redacted]? How did they behave?

Last year the VC passed by [redacted] twice in the night. Each time they just stopped for a little while. The first time there were from 60 to 70 persons, and the second time from 20 to 30 persons. They asked for chickens from the inhabitants. Only two families gave them any. I was able to talk to one of them. It seems to me that most of the people dislike them. I don't know why.

51. Did the GVN soldiers come to [redacted]?

They came once, about 2 or 3 years ago.

52. What did they come for? How did they behave? What did the inhabitants think about them?

They only passed by. I don't know what the inhabitants thought about them. Nobody said anything.

53. Were there any guerrillas in [redacted]?

Yes there were about half a score of them who stayed there permanently. They were all people from [redacted].

54. What were their jobs? What did the inhabitants think about them?

I don't know exactly what their jobs were. I have never seen them do anything. Except for the members of their families, I believe that all the people hated them. It was because of their arrogant manner, when they walked back and forth with their guns.

55. Do you know what the aims of the VC are?

I don't understand your question.

56. Do you know why the VC fight against the GVN?

I don't know. But I don't believe that the VC soldiers could defeat the GVN soldiers. One VC soldier told me that it would be impossible to defeat the GVN soldiers because the latter had aircraft and ships.

57. Did the VC soldier tell you anything else about the VC forces?

I don't remember any more.

58. Do you know how a VC soldier's life is?

I don't know. The VC soldier who talked with me only said that life of a VC soldier is very hard. He had to move constantly in order to avoid the GVN soldiers, and sometimes he's short of rice or medicine.

59. Do you have any friends or neighbors who were VC soldiers?

No, I have neither friends nor neighbors nor parents who were VC soldiers or who worked for the VC.

60. Do you have any friends or parents who are soldiers or officials of the GVN?

I have my wife's uncle, the brother of my mother-in-law, who is an instructor for the soldiers in Saigon, with the rank of "Quan Nam" (Colonel or Lt. Colonel).

61. Did he come to see you or did you go to see him? When was the last time you saw him?

He came to see us about four or five years ago. It was about 9 months ago when my mother-in-law went to see him in Saigon. The journey cost her a hundred piasters and my uncle gave her five thousand piasters.

62. Were there any battles engaged between the VC soldiers and the GVN soldiers in [redacted] or in its vicinity?

No, there has never been any battle.

63. Has [redacted] ever been bombarded by GVN artillery?

No, never.

64. Were there any air attacks?

[redacted] has been air attacked four times since the beginning of the year. There wasn't anyone killed, but there were some wounded. The houses were on fire at each bombing. My house was on fire at the 3rd bombing. Then I left [redacted] with my family. The fourth bombardment happened when I was already here. One woman whom I know had burns on her body and her face. Her 2 children had too. They all have already come here. People no longer recognize their faces.

65. What did the inhabitants say?

The inhabitants said that if our houses were burned we would only go to live with the GVN.

66. Did they complain about that?

I didn't hear them complain. Furthermore, why should we complain? I saw a big fishing boat which was bombed and burned. The owner didn't complain. Why should we complain then since our houses cost nothing in comparison with the boat.

67. How and why was the boat bombed?

The boat came back from fishing. Suddenly the planes came and dropped bombs on it. The boat caught fire and sank. Nobody understood why. The owner said that he only could ask those "Sirs" (GVN authorities) to give him something to build another boat.

68. What do you yourself think about the damages which you suffered?

I don't think anything about that. It was only a question of bad luck. The planes didn't drop bombs on my house. It was on another house. That house was on fire and the flame set fire to mine.

69. After those bombardments, did any families go towards the VC controlled areas?

As I told you before, all the families that left [redacted] after the bombardments have come here to settle.

70. Were there any people who began to work for the VC because they were discontented with those bombardments?

No, I haven't seen any.

71. Did the bombardments hinder your daily work?

When people went fishing they asked me to help them, so I had some work to do. But the bombardments frightened the people so much that they no longer dared to go fishing. So I had no more work.

72. Did the GVN authorities warn the people about the bombardments?

Never. If we had known that we were going to be bombarded, we would have left our houses much sooner before the bombardments.

73. Did the inhabitants of [redacted] read the newspapers?

I have never seen the newspapers in [redacted]. Furthermore, I don't know how to read or write.

74. Were there any radio receivers?

There were many radio sets. I often listened to the vong cô songs (classical theatrical songs). The VC forbade the inhabitants to listen to the vong co songs, but they listened to them anyway.

75. Did the inhabitants listen to anything else on the radio?

I don't know. I myself only listened to the vong co songs.

76. Why did the VC forbid you to listen to vong co songs?

I don't know why. Moreover, they also discouraged us from raising dogs without telling us why. I have two little dogs. The VC came and told me not to feed them. I told them that if they wanted to take away those dogs, then just give me five hundred piasters. So I just kept on raising those dogs.

77. Before, did you have any intention to go and live in a GVN controlled area?

Right after the first bombardment I proposed to my wife to come and live here. My wife told me that we had to sell the house before leaving. That was the reason why we tarried. But we couldn't find a buyer. At the third bombardment my house was burned.

78. Did you try to take refuge in another GVN controlled area before coming here?

No, I came directly here.

79. Before coming here, did you know how life is in the GVN controlled areas?

No, I didn't know. Nobody ever told me.

80. Did you know how the GVN authorities were going to receive you?

No, I didn't know. But I saw many families that came to settle here before me. I could tell that they received aid from the GVN authorities. Therefore, I decided to leave.

81. What do you expect the authorities to do for you?

Before I could find a regular job to provide for my family, I expected the authorities to give me, from time to time, a little rice so that my family would not starve.

82. Did someone urge you to come here?

No, I myself decided to come.

83. When you decided to come here, were you afraid of anything?

When my house was on fire, I lost all my papers. I was only afraid of not having the papers with me when I came here. But then, I said to myself that there were quite a number of people I knew who had come here before me; they could witness to the GVN authorities that I wasn't a VC.

84. Weren't you afraid of having enemies from the VC side?

I arranged to go when the VC weren't present.

85. Did the planes come to drop leaflets or speak to the inhabitants?

The planes came several times to drop the leaflets and to speak loudly to the inhabitants. But I couldn't pick up what they said. Concerning the leaflets, most of them were taken away by the wind.

86. Were there any people who could read the leaflets?

Yes, there were some people who could read the leaflets. They said that in the leaflets the GVN authorities asked the inhabitants to come and live in the GVN controlled areas.

87. What was the reaction of the inhabitants?

I don't know exactly. I think that the majority of them would like to come and live in the GVN controlled areas, but like myself, they couldn't decide to leave their houses and gardens. I often heard the children sing :

"Old ladies" (L.19) who fly in the blue sky
Shoot here, shoot there so that we can go to
the cities.

88. Have you heard of the Chieu Hoi program?

No, I have never heard of it.

89. How long do you think you are going to stay here?

Forever, didn't you hear me? We have no house yet. Actually we are allowed to stay at a house of a certain organization which is a few kilometers from here. But the chief of the hamlet promised to help me build a shed for my family.

90. Why do you want to stay here forever?

If I now returned to [redacted], it would be certain that I could not find a job. Here I can find some work. I go to the market every morning to carry the merchandise, or to push the small carriages of merchandise. That helps me get some money, and the members of my family have some rice for everyday.

91. What could you bring with you over here?

All my property was burned during the bombardment. Each member of my family just had the clothes which they wore at the time of the fire. As for me, I just had a pair of shorts on, for I was trying to catch the crabs in the ricefields. We only were able to take out a small vase of rice which we brought with us.

92. You left nothing in [redacted] then?

I still have three big jars which I hid in a trench.

93. Do you want to bring them here with you?

I would like very much to have them here with me, but I dare not go back to [redacted] to bring them here.

94. What would happen to you if you went back to [redacted] now?

I don't know what would happen to me. But I am sure that something would happen to me from the VC. They would certainly ask me embarrassing questions. They would ask me, why I left [redacted] and perhaps they would arrest me.

95. Did the VC try to prevent the people from leaving?

I don't know. I haven't seen them do that.

96. Did the VC threaten to punish those who left?

No, they didn't threaten anybody. But I am sure that those who left were afraid that the VC would know about it. I don't know why.

97. You said that half of the number of the families at [redacted] still stay there. Do you know why?

As I told you, I think that those families cannot decide to give up their houses and their gardens.

98. Are there many young people who stay at [redacted]?

Certainly those who have their families at [redacted] must stay with them.

99. Did the VC say anything about life in GVN controlled areas?

No, I have never heard the VC say anything about life in GVN controlled areas.

100. Didn't the VC tell the inhabitants that they would have annoyances from the GVN authorities as they come here?

No, the VC didn't tell them that.

101. In your opinion, will this war last for a long time?

I don't know.

102. In your opinion, who will win this war, the GVN or the VC?

I don't know anything about war, but I'm sure that the GVN will win. It was a VC soldier who told me that the VC could never overcome the GVN, for the latter possess airplanes and vessels.

103. When you came here, did you blame anyone as the cause?

No, I didn't blame anybody. It was fate.

104. When you came, did you receive any aid from the GVN authorities? Are you satisfied?

The authorities gave me 290 piasters. I am contented, and I am grateful towards the authorities.

105. Did the authorities promise to do anything else for you?

No, the authorities didn't promise me anything. Only the chief of the hamlet promised to help me build a shed.

106. What do you think about this promise?

It is very kind of the chief of the hamlet. I must be grateful to him. But when he said he would help me build a shed, he meant that he would be able to buy the leaves (for the roof) and wood (for the construction) at a low price. So he meant that with the small jobs that I can get now, I would have enough money for the labor. But I don't know when I can save enough money for the construction.

107. Since you've been here, have you received any news concerning those who still stay at [redacted]?

No, I have had no news concerning them.

108. Since you've been here, did anybody try to urge you to return to [redacted]

Nobody did.

109. Did you try to urge some of your friends who still stay at [redacted] to come here?

No, there is no way to contact them.

110. Among those who came here, did anyone go back to [redacted]?

No, I believe that nobody has gone back to [redacted].

111. Are you afraid that the VC might come right to this place?

No, they dare not come here. They could make the sunshine and the rain at [redacted] because they have guns and the people don't. But here the GVN soldiers are everywhere. They would risk being killed if they came close to here.

112. Have you seen the Americans?

I have seen many since I've been here.

113. What do the Americans want to do here in Vietnam, in your opinion?

I don't know. I heard that the Americans help the GVN, but I don't know anything.

114. What do you think about the Americans?

I don't know them personally. But I guess that they are very kind. They often give out fruit to the children who like them very much and also like to play with them.

115. Have you seen other nationalities in Vietnam?

No, I haven't.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

The subject is illiterate, ignorant, and has an intelligence much inferior to the average, therefore he knew almost nothing about what he was asked. He hardly understood the questions which the interviewer asked and the latter had to explain again and again each time. He didn't even know the usual words such as Mat Tran (Front) Muc-dich (aims) Nghia vu Quan su (military service), khang chien (Resistance) chinh phu (government). Trying to get some information on the members of his family, the interviewer found out that he even forgot his wife's age, his children's ages, and even the name of his last daughter. It was only after the interview that the interviewer found on the subject's "refugee license" the remark saying "Benh Khung" (mental disorder).

NO. AGR 5

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

1. Name of interviewer [redacted]

2. Name of subject [redacted]

3. Time and date of interview :
   From 8:30 to 11:45 on June [redacted] 1965
   From _____ to _____ on _____ 19 ___
   From _____ to _____ on _____ 19 ___

4. Place of interview :
   _____ _____

5. Sex of subject : Male (X) Female ( )

6. Age of subject : 47

7. Ethnic background : Vietnamese

8. Place of birth :
   hamlet _____)
   village _____) The subject has forgotten
   district _____
   province Bien Hoa

9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :
   hamlet _____)
   village _____) [redacted]
   district Gia Rai
   province Bac Lieu

10. (a) Length of residence in last location : _____
    (b) Who controlled the place of residence :
    GVN ( ) VC ( ) Contested (X) How long? Very long ago.
    (The subject doesn't remember)

NO. AGR 5

11. Number of brothers (0) and sisters (0)

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : _____

13. Marital status : Married

14. Number of children : 4

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age : 0

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject( ) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject (X) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject(X) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion : None

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : Hired laborer

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation Very poor
(b) Landowner.? _____

20. Education :
illiterate (X)
literate ( )
schooling completed : _____

21. Any relatives in VC : No

22. Any relatives in GVN : His wife's uncle (in ARVN)

23. Any relatives (How many.? When.?) killed by : No
(a) French
(b) GVN
(c) VC

24. When became a refugee : About 2 months

AGR

INTERVIEW

6

THE RAND CORPORATION

[redacted]

STUDIES OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT
OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR-6

Date of Interview : June [redacted] 1965

Subject's category : Refugee

Area of residence : Gia-Rai district, Bac-Lieu province

1. When you came to take refuge here, did you come directly from your hamlet?

   Yes.

2. How did you get here?

   I had a small boat and I came directly here with my family.

3. Did anyone try to stop you?

   No. When my house was hit by a bomb and set afire at about five o'clock I took my wife and children into the boat and we left everything behind.

4. Did many people leave at the same time as you?

   No. I came here with only my family.

5. What are your plans and prospects now?

   I now live in [redacted] (in Gia-Rai district) where my sons have built a small pagoda for me. I spend my time saying prayers and preparing Chinese medicine to be given to the people there. In return I receive some money. I have no other occupation.

6. Before you came here did all the members of your family live together?

   Yes, we lived in the same house.

7. Did all the members of your family come here together with you?

   Yes.

8. How big was your hamlet?

   It was a small hamlet. There were only a few dozen houses.

9. How many families have left your hamlet up to now?

   Everybody has left my hamlet. There were only one or two families remaining there.

10. Why did they leave?

    After aircraft bombed the hamlet, all the houses were burned and the people had no place in which to live.

11. When did the people start leaving? Were you the first one to leave?

    I was the first to leave my hamlet. Since then, people have moved out in small numbers.

12. Where did they go? Did they all go to Gia-Rai?

    They went to places other than Gia-Rai.

13. Why did you go to Gia-Rai? Was it because it is the most convenient place for you to come, or was it because you have a special arrangement here?

While in my old hamlet I spent the time saying prayers in my pagoda. The government soldiers who came in by helicopters to carry out operations in the area did not cause me any trouble. They said to me : " Don't be afraid and continue your prayers". Then one day my hamlet was bombed by aircraft and my house was set on fire, and I had to leave. I did not know of any place to go other than Gia-Rai.

14. What caused the other people to move ... to other places?

They went where they had relatives, either to Bao-Dieu, Gia-Rai, or [redacted] After their houses had been burned they had to move out. Where could they go if not to their relatives? They had no means of making a living out here, and they must stay with relatives.

15. Did other people in your hamlet run into difficulties when they left? Did you hear of anyone trying to stop them from leaving?

Since I came here I have not dared to go back to my hamlet, therefore I do not know the answer.

16. Have you heard of people having trouble leaving your hamlet?

Yes. I was told that some people were prevented from moving out. They were stopped on their way out by the Communists who told them : " What good is it for you people to move out? Once out, all of you will be arrested and forced to enlist in the ARVN. Therefore why are you moving out?" This is only what I have heard. I dare not go back to my hamlet.

17. What was the occupation of most people in your old hamlet?

They lived mostly by fishing. Some people had ricefields but people lived mostly on fishing.

18. Was your hamlet prosperous?

They were not rich. There were many poor people. All the rich people left long before to go to commercial centers such as market places. Only the poor remained behind at the time I left.

19. Why were most of the people poor? Were they hampered in their fishing or was it because the catch was poor?

Because the catch was poor. People were so poor that they wore miserable clothing. Some did not even have money to buy food.

20. When these poor people left, where did they go? What happened to them? Are any of them still in your hamlet?

They remained in the village until about a month ago. Then the operations and the bombing became so frequent that everybody left the hamlet, including the very young. In the hamlet they managed to earn from 40 to 50 piasters a day. They are very poor out here. They have to work as hired laborers.

21. When did aircraft first bomb your hamlet?

I do not remember. I was too busy with meditation in my hamlet. There was another bombing a few days ago, but I do not remember which day. I am like a man without a soul. Since the day my house was burned and I barely escaped death I do not remember anything. It is just as if I had lost everything inside me.

22. Can you explain why you do not remember?

Since the day my house was bombed I am like a man with his soul in the clouds. My house was burning and I had to crawl out to escape death. That is why I cannot remember anything.

23. Had your village been bombed before the time your house burned?

It was the first time the village was bombed. About nine or ten were killed that time, and I left my village immediately afterward. The bombing was carried out by sixteen or seventeen aircraft.

24. What were the people's reactions after the bombing? Were they angry at the GVN?

I heard people say the GVN bombed the village only because the VC were there. I heard nothing else.

25. Did the people resent the VC for being in the village, thus causing the bombing?

Yes. It was because of the VC that people had to leave their houses. Life was peaceful in the hamlet a few years ago before the VC made their appearance.

26. Did the people tell the VC they were not welcome in the hamlet?

They dared not do that or else they would be arrested and led away with their eyes blindfolded.

27. How long were these people kept away by the VC?

They were kept away for five days or ten days or three months or even one year. After that they were released.

28. How were they treated during that time?

I do not know. No one among my relatives had been subject to such arrest, therefore I do not know how the people arrested were treated.

29. Do you have any close friends who were arrested by the VC?

No.

30. Were many people arrested by the VC and led away?

I saw only two persons arrested by the VC. The VC usually came at night to make arrests. therefore it is hard for me to tell how many people were arrested.

31. In addition to the two men you saw arrested, how many people in all were arrested by the VC? Even if they were arrested at night, their families must have let the villagers know about their arrests?

I know only of two men arrested by the VC.

32. How long ago was that?

They were arrested lastyear, at the time of the bombing. (Note : The subject said he took refuge at the time of the 1965 Lunar New Year, i.e in early February 1965, just after his house was bombed. It was the first time his hamlet was bombed, therefore by referring to "last year" in his answer he probably meant the lunar year which ended on February 1, 1965).

33. Did the people who were arrested ever come back to their hamlet?

They had not been released at the time I left but they were released afterward. They too left the hamlet.

34. Are they now living in Gia-Rai?

No, they went to Bac Lieu.

35. Do you know their names and where they live, as I would like to talk to them.

I know only that they went to Bac-Lieu but I do not know in what part of the city.

36. Did you hear stories about how they were treated while they were kept by the VC?

They dared not speak about their ordeal for fear of being arrested again by the VC.

37. Who supported your family? Was it your son?

I had a piece of land on which I built a small pagoda. My wife and children did some trade while I spent my time in prayers and meditation. I have lived in retirement for 19 or 20 years now with my prayers.

38. What did your wife and children sell?

They sold miscellaneous things.

39. How much land did you own?

I had only two or three "cong" of land on which I built my pagoda. I also had a small orchard in which I grew some fruit.

40. Have there been any changes in your family's economic condition in the past few years? Were they better off or were they poorer?

We were neither rich nor poor. Our income was just adequate, and it was always like that. I busied myself with my meditation and prayers while my wife ran her business. She came out here to buy goods to be sold in my hamlet. I have been living as a hermit, and I paid taxes to no one.

41. Did your children go to school?

No.

42. Are your children going to school here?

I have one daughter who is learning how to make clothes.

43. Do you have grandchildren?

Yes, I have more than ten grandchildren.

44. How old is the eldest, and how old is the youngest?

My eldest grandchild must be 16 or 18 years old by now and my youngest grandchild is only two years old. My son left his son for me to take care of.

45. Are your grandchildren going to school?

Yes.

46. Are they going to school in Gia-Rai?

They go to the hamlet school of [redacted] where I live.

47. Was there any strategic hamlet near yours?

There was no strategic hamlet in the area I left.

48. Were there GVN authorities in your village?

There were GVN soldiers who came to my hamlet from time to time. They came every one, two, or three months.

49. Were there GVN hamlet chiefs or a village chief in your village?

No.

50. When the GVN troops came into your hamlet, how did they behave?

They were very nice. They paid for the food they ate.

51. What did the villagers think of them?

I do not know.

52. What did the villagers say about the VC?

They dared say nothing about the VC. If they disliked the VC, they kept it to themselves.

53. What did the villagers say about the GVN soldiers?

The GVN soldiers gave them no cause for complaint. They were very nice. Each time they went on operations into the hamlet, they told the people : " Don't be afraid ! Go ahead with your work !"

Note : While the interviewer was busy changing the tape on the tape recorder, the subject took the opportunity to have a small chat with the interviewer. He said he was very frightened when his hamlet chief came to see him and asked him to come immediately to the district office to be interviewed. He was afraid because it was the first time he had been summoned to a government office. The interviewer expressed his wish to visit the subject in his home. The subject was very pleased and described his life in his new hamlet called [redacted] near the district town of Gia-Rai. He had a small pagoda built for him and lives the life of a hermit there. He said he intended to live there until he died, saying prayers for the health of those people who came to worship Buddha and donate money to the pagoda. The Buddhist Association had asked him to set up a drugstore in his pagoda to treat the people and give Chinese drugs to the sick. He said he had not received any drugs to give to the people during the epidemic of diarrhea that broke out a few days ago.

54. If we gave some money to you, would you pray for us?

You must give me your name. I would write it on a slip of paper and at night I would light some joss sticks and pray and bow to Buddha. I would say in my prayers how much money you had donated and ask Buddha to protect you. I do that whenever someone donates money to worship. I could not take the money and do nothing because Buddha witnesses all my deeds. I am a religious man and that is why I was able to live after my house was hit by a bomb and set fire to. People said that if it were not for my being a religious man, I would have never escaped death that day. More than ten people were killed, but I managed to crawl out of my house unscathed.

55. Did you notice whether or not the people who were killed were religious people?

Those who were not religious died very easily.

56. How did this affect the VC? Were they very religious people?

Not a single VC believes in religion. If I had medicine I would give it to the people and bring luck to them.

57. You would give medicine to the VC so that they would have luck, is this what you mean?

I mean the people in my new hamlet. What is the use to give medicine to the VC? For heavens' sake, I would not dare go back to my old hamlet for fear of being arrested.

58. I thought maybe you wanted to give medicine to the VC to make them more religious and peaceful.

I would not do that. I dare not go back to my old hamlet for fear of being arrested. I left all my property behind, and as for me the VC can take it, I do not care.

59. Do you think it would do any good to pray for the VC? Do you think it might make them become more religious and more peaceful?

I do not know. I pray for myself, for my relatives, and for the people. My present life is very hard, and I pray for a better life after reincarnation. I also pray so that my relatives can have good health and so that war will end soon.

60. In your opinion, how will the VC fare in their reincarnation?

How can I know? I cannot see in the future. I pray to Heaven to stop this war and bring peace to the people soon.

61. What about the rest of the people in your hamlet? Were they religious?

No, they were not religious. At the start of the uprising they even destroyed pagodas to prevent others from going there to pray. When I came here and built a pagoda, the district chief was very pleased and he voiced his approval.

62. When did the VC first start destroying pagodas?

About five years ago, but my pagoda was spared.

63. Did they ever consider destroying your pagoda?

No. As a hermit I was liked by everybody. The GVN did not levy any tax on the land on which my pagoda was built.

64. Were the people VC who made their appearance in your hamlet five years ago?

They came at night, and I could not see their faces. They came to talk to the people and then disappeared.

65. Did the situation change very much between five years ago and last February when you left?

The situation did not change. The VC continued to come at night to say a few words to the people and then they would depart. Since they came at night I could not see them. They dared not come during the day.

66. What did the VC tell the people during these visits?

They said many things but I cannot remember a single thing. I have a very poor memory now. Suppose I leave an object here, after a while I would not be able to remember where I had left it. I am now like a man without a soul.

67. What did the people say when the VC came and talked to them at night? What were their reactions to what the VC said? What did they say the next day? Did they say the VC said interesting things or had interesting ideas or did they say they were not interested in what the VC had to say?

They said many things, but I cannot remember what they said.

68. Were the people favorable to the VC or did they dislike them?

People were very afraid of the VC. They were frightened at the very sight of VC coming toward their homes.

69. Did the VC carry out terroristic acts in your hamlet?

Not during the time I lived there. My hamlet was only five or six kilometers from [redacted] village, and the VC dared

not carry out terroristic acts. They would not even stay in the hamlet. They came at night just long enough for you to smoke a cigarette and then they disappeared.

70. During those five years, did you see any changes in the attitude of the people toward the VC?

There were people who liked the VC, and there were those who disliked them. Those who liked them said so, but those who disliked them had to keep their feelings to themselves or else they would be accused of being pro-GVN.

71. Do you know why some people liked the VC?

I do not know why they liked the VC. I only heard them say good things about the VC. I spent all my time in the pagoda, and I was busy with my prayers during the evening.

72. Did any of the young men in your hamlet ever join the VC?

Yes, and some also joined the ARVN out here. I saw two or three young men bringing their weapons to the GVN.

73. Do you mean young men who were VC came over to the GVN to turn in their weapons?

Yes.

74. How did the VC recruit the young men in your hamlet?

I do not know. They would not let me know these things. If they had asked me to join them I would have refused, saying that I was busy with my prayers.

75. You have a grandchild who is 18 years old now. Were you concerned about him being recruited by the VC?

No, because she is a girl.

76. How old is your eldest grandson?

Fourteen years old.

77. How did the VC persuade these young men to join them?

I do not know because I did not hear what they said to these young men. The VC called them out of the hamlet into the forest. They talked to them there, and I could not possibly hear what they said.

78. How did the villagers feel about the VC coming and taking their young sons away?

The VC did not take the young men away.

79. Do you mean that those young men who joined the VC stayed in the hamlet? Is that correct?

No, they left the hamlet and I never saw them again.

80. What about the parents of these young men? What did they say? Did they express regret or were they proud of having a son serving in the Front?

I do not know how they felt. I do not even know who had left or when they had left. I did not mind other people's business. I cared only about my prayers and my meditation. I did not have to worry because all the members of my family were with me.

81. How often did the VC come to the hamlet at night to hold meetings?

They were unpredictable. They did not let the people know when they would come.

82. Did they come very often?

No, they rarely came to my hamlet, and they never came to my pagoda. They did not like me.

83. Have you heard about the bombing of North Vietnam?

I heard nothing like that when I lived in my old hamlet, but since I came here I have listened to the radio and I have heard about the bombing of North Vietnam.

84. What do you think about that bombing?

I do not know.

85. Do you think it will have any effect on the war in the South?

The events in North Vietnam happen too far away to have consequences in South Vietnam. I heard on the radio that such and such places have been bombed, that is all I know. I do not give thought to that news.

86. Did you have a radio when you were in your old hamlet?

No.

87. Did many people in the hamlet have radios?

Very few had radios. They did not have the money to buy them because radios were expensive. There were at most one or two radios in the hamlet. People did not even have money to buy rice, how could they buy radios?

88. Did you belong to any organization other than the Buddhist Association?

No.

89. Could you tell me something about the Buddhist Association?

I live in retirement with my prayers. I am a member of the Buddhist Association Chapter in [redacted] village. There is a big pagoda in [redacted] and I must go there from time to time.

90. What are the purposes of the Buddhist Association?

I do not know what the purposes of the Association are.

Note : At this time the subject showed his membership card in the Buddhist Association with an old picture of him taken in his forties.

91. Do you remember the French when they were in Vietnam?

No, I am unable to remember anything.

92. How many people are members of the Buddhist Association?

I am not a member of the Buddhist Association. I was given this card to keep in my wallet so that people can recognize me.

93. What are the qualifications for membership in the Buddhist Association?

There are no requirements. Anyone who wants to become a hermit and spend his life in prayers can come to the pagoda and receive such a card.

94. Would you like to become a full-fledged member of the Buddhist Association?

I only want to spend my time praying. I will do that until I die.

95. You said you did not have to pay taxes in your old hamlet, is that correct?

No, I did not pay any tax. My land was given me by my landlord who lives in Bac Lieu. A few years ago he came to see me in my hamlet and gave the land to me to build a pagoda. He said that from then on the land was mine and nobody could demand any tax from me for it. When the VC came to ask me to pay my tax I said : "No, this land was given to me, therefore I do not have to pay any tax on it."

106. Did you know who was the district chief when you were still living in your old hamlet?

No. I rarely went to my village office. I went there only to have my papers changed. I knew nothing about the public officials.

107. Did you know who the village chief was?

Yes, at that time Mr. [redacted] was the village chief, and Mr. [redacted] was the police chief. Now Mr. [redacted] has resigned his position.

108. Did these officials often come to your hamlet?

Yes. Mr. [redacted] the village chief, came to the hamlet, and he was very polite. Sometimes he came to have dinner with me.

109. What about the National Government? Did you know about President Diem?

No, I rarely left my pagoda therefore I am not well informed.

110. Did the VC ever tell the villagers about Ngo Dinh Diem?

The VC never invited me out of my pagoda, and I had very little contact with them. They never came to my pagoda to speak to me, and I do not know what they said to the people.

111. Have you heard about the recent change in the National Government?

No.

112. Do you know anything about Air Marshall Nguyen Cao Ky?

Heavens ! If you ask me such questions I certainly cannot answer. On these problems I am like a deaf-and-dumb person.

113. Back in your old hamlet, did the GVN carry out any program to help the villagers?

Yes, I heard that the government lent money to the people. But it lent only to those who owned some land. I did not have any land, therefore I did not borrow any money from the government.

114. Were there any other government programs?

I did not see any other programs.

115. What did the villagers think about these programs?

I did not hear them say anything about that.

116. How often did the GVN troops pass through your hamlet?

As I told you earlier, the GVN troops came to my hamlet every one, two, or three months, or even once every seven or eight months.

117. You said before that they were very polite when they came to your hamlet. Were there any occasions when they were not polite toward the villagers?

Only one or two soldiers were not polite.

118. How were they impolite?

Sometimes they robbed the people.

119. When did that happen?

Last year or the year before, I do not remember.

120. How did the villagers react to this? Did they just dislike the few individuals who did this, or did they condemn the whole contingent of GVN troops?

People said some soldiers were impolite, but they recognized that some were polite and they said so. It is not correct to say a man is impolite when he actually is polite.

121. Were people afraid when they saw GVN troops coming?

No.

122. Did they think there might be a firefight between the GVN troops and the VC?

No, because there had never been a firefight between the GVN troops and the VC in my hamlet.

123. What did you hear about the aims of the VC? What do they want? Why do they fight?

I do not know.

124. Have you heard about how life is for those who are with the VC?

I heard nothing on that subject, but I know they receive no money.

125. Have you heard about the VC successes, defeats, or losses?

I have not heard about that. I am sincere.

126. Do you know whether the VC are winning or losing the war?

I do not know. I only hear on the radio that North Vietnam is bombed and such and such places are destroyed, but I do not study the matter.

127. Tell me about your son who is in the ARVN in Bac Lieu.

Since he joined the ARVN he has not come home yet.

128. When did he join?

A few months ago after I came here. He left his family for me to look after. I am very sad.

129. Have you heard from him by other means?

Yes.

130. What did you hear from him?

I heard that he works in Bac-Lieu for some high-ranking man in the secret police. He moves around all the time and has not come to see me.

131. When do you think you will see him again?

I do not know. He can come home at anytime. For the time being I must raise his children.

132. You said there had been no fighting around your hamlet during the past five years, is that correct?

Yes. I have never seen any fighting around my hamlet.

133. Did you often see aircraft flying over your hamlet?

Yes, they flew over all the time.

134. Did it frighten the people in the hamlet when they saw aircraft flying over?

They dug foxholes and ran to take cover underground. Now no one dares to live in the hamlet anymore. That is far from the situation a few years ago. At that time people ran out of their houses to watch aircraft flying by. Today it is entirely different. At the very sound of aircraft, people run to take refuge underground and it is very dangerous there. They might be bitten by snakes.

135. How often do aircraft bomb your hamlet?

The bombing becomes very frequent these days. The hamlet is now bombed every two or three days but I had left my hamlet right after the first bombing. Very recently, about a few days ago, my hamlet was again bombed and more than ten people were killed.

136. Why was there so much bombing in your old hamlet?

I do not know. I am very lucky. Since I left my hamlet it has been continuously bombed.

137. How did the people react to this? Why do they think their hamlet is being bombed?

The villagers lamented that they did not see any reason for the bombing. They did nothing but work for a living, but nevertheless their hamlet was bombed continuously. One day, people were busy fishing along the coast. They stretched their arms to cast their nets and there came an aircraft with its propeller on its back. It flew at low altitude, fired at them and killed them. Now nobody dares go out of the hamlet to work.

138. Who do the people think fly the aircraft?

They do not know.

139. What did the VC say about this?

I did not hear the VC saying anything about this but people said some of the pilots were Vietnamese and some were Americans.

Note : At this time in the interview, the subject appeared to be very impatient to see the interview terminated. He pointed to a man outside the district office and asked the interviewer to interview that man instead. He said; " I have a very poor memory and remember nothing. You would do better to ask questions of that man. He has a better memory than I have. He is also a refugee and he has been asked to come here along with me." He also complained about his having a headache, therefore the interviewer decided to close the interview.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS :

The subject is an old Chinese. He came to Vietnam as a young child and speaks Vietnamese very well. However, due to his old age and being in retirement he appeared not to be well informed about the situation in his old hamlet. He appeared to have below average intelligence, and seemed to have no trouble at all in his new place of residence.

NO. AGR 6

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

1. Name of interviewer [redacted] (interpreter)
2. Name of subject [redacted]
3. Time and date of interview :
   From 1430 to 1645 on June [redacted] 196 5
   From _____ to _____ on _____ _____ 19 ___
   From _____ to _____ on _____ 19___
4. Place of interview :
   GIA RAI district, BAC LIEU province
5. Sex of subject : Male (X) Female ( )
6. Age of subject : 74 (born in 1891)
7. Ethnic background : Chinese
8. Place of birth : China. Came to Vietnam at the age of 2
   hamlet [redacted]
   village [redacted]
   district Gia-Rai
   province Bac-Lieu
9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :
   hamlet _____
   village _____
   district _____
   province _____
10. (a) Length of residence in last location : 72 years
    (b) Who controlled the place of residence :
    GVN ( ) VC ( ) Contested ( ) How long? one year

NO. AGR_____

11. Number of brothers (1) and sisters (3)

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : one aged 60

13. Marital status : Married

14. Number of children : six

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age : Two in their 30s and 40s

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject (X)
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject( ) or not with subject (X)
Wife with subject (X) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject(X) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion : Buddhism

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : Lived retired in a pagoda

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation None
(b) Landowner? No

20. Education :
illiterate ( )
literate (X)
schooling completed : No schooling

21. Any relatives in VC : No

22. Any relatives in GVN : One son joined ARVN after having taken refuge.

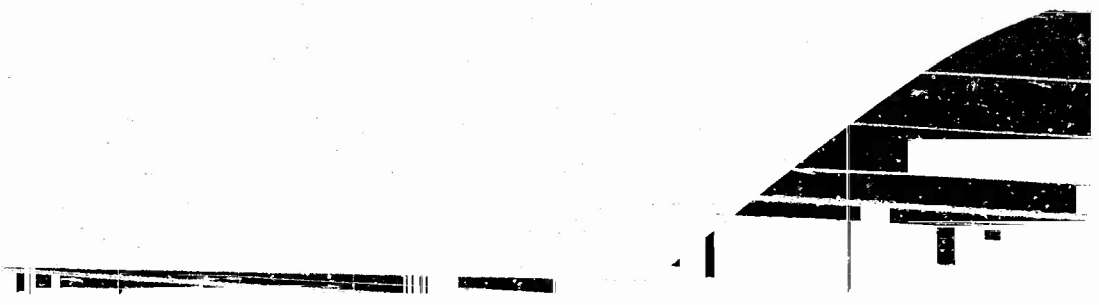
23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by :
(a) French No
(b) GVN No
(c) VC No

24. When became a refugee : Early February 1965

AGR

INTERVIEW

7



THE RAND CORPORATION

[redacted]

STUDIES OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT
OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR-7

Date of Interview : June [redacted], 1965

Subject's Category : Refugee - February 1965

1. When you became a refugee back in February of this year, how did you get here?

I made my way from [redacted] hamlet by sampan and by bus. The first part of the trip was made by sampan on the [redacted] canal. The second part of the trip was made by bus to [redacted] hamlet in Gia Rai district.

2. Did you have any trouble while making the trip? Did anyone stop you on your way here?

No, no one stopped me. There was so much bombing that everybody managed to leave on his own.

3. What are yourplans and prospects now?

I plan to run a shop and do some retail trade.

4. Are you doing it now?

Yes.

5. Did you set it up as soon as you came from your old hamlet?

I had to wait for about a month before I could set up my shop.

6. Why did you have to wait?

When I first came out from my old hamlet, I did not have a house. I had to wait for people to build a house and then I rented it. I still do not own my house, I rent it.

7. Did all the members of your family live together before you came here?

Yes, but life was too dangerous there and we had to move to [redacted] hamlet. We did not have any house to live in when we came to [redacted] We had to sleep on the ground. We looked for houses under construction and we asked the workers to let us sleep on the floor inside the house.

8. But you have a house now, is that right?

Yes, I live now in a rented house.

9. How big was the hamlet you left?

The hamlet was not very big but people from all around the area came there to buy goods. We did good business there.

10. How long did you live there?

For nine years.

11. Where did you live previously?

I stayed there a long time. At first I lived right next to the coast but afterward I moved farther inland to my old hamlet.

12. What were the circumstances under which you left China to come to Vietnam?

I was still young when I left China. I was only fifteen or seventeen years old. Life was hard in China and there was also a war going on, therefore people had to look for another place to live. At that time there were Japanese invaders who came to China to kill the Chinese. I came to Vietnam with my parents to start a new life here.

13. How did you come to Vietnam?

By ship. It was a very big ship which could carry up to one thousand persons.

14. How was life in your old hamlet? Describe life under VC control?

I had a shop and I did retail trade. I had to do what the VC told me to do in order to carry on my trade. I did not pay any heavy tax to the VC. They came now and then to my shop and asked for 20 piasters each time. I also gave them food whenever they were hungry. If I disobeyed them they would close my shop.

15. When did the VC first come to your hamlet?

It must be over three years now.

16. Have they been there continuously?

No, they came and went repeatedly. They did not live there.

17. What is the composition of the VC? How many of them did you see? Were they military or civilian cadres? How often did they come?

I am not well-informed about that. I was busy with earning a living for my family. But they wore they same clothes as the people.

18. Did they come in large groups?

They seldom came in large groups. When they came in large groups they did not come into the hamlet. I only saw them passing by on the river. Those who came into the hamlet were in small groups. The small groups were more frequent than the large groups.

19. How often did they come?

They always came after I had gone to bed, therefore I do not know how often they came.

20. When did aircraft first start flying over your hamlet?

They came more frequently since January of this year.

21. What about previous years? Did you see aircraft then?

Yes, I saw aircraft during previous years too but they did not attack the hamlet. There was no bombing or strafing then.

22. Describe the time aircraft came to your hamlet in January. How many aircraft were there? How long did they stay over your hamlet? What kinds of weapons did they use?

At that time I was preparing to come out here but I had not left yet when my hamlet was bombed. The attack was made on the part of the hamlet facing the coast by seven or eight aircraft. They were Cormorant aircraft and "Old Lady" aircraft. All the houses in that part of the hamlet were set on fire. That is why I decided to come here. The planes used napalm bombs and I saw the flames distinctly.

23. How many innocent people were killed?

Many innocent people were killed that day. All told, more than thirty innocent people in [redacted] village were killed.

24. What were the reactions of the villagers?

People moved out as soon as possible. They moved out by the [redacted] canal, and went to [redacted]

25. How did the villagers feel about the airstrikes? Were they angry at those who flew the aircraft?

People were very sad. The attack was so unpredictable that it destroyed all their houses and property and forced them to leave with only the clothes they were wearing at the time. When they arrived in [redacted] they were so poor that they did not even have the money to buy rice.

26. How did they feel toward the people who were flying the aircraft? Why did they think the airstrike took place?

People said it was because the American pilots were so cruel that they bombed the village.

27. Is that the only reason for the bombing?

People also said it was because the VC had fired at the aircraft and had caused them to drop bombs on the people's houses.

28. Did this cause the villagers to get angry at the VC?

People said they were busy all around and could not understand why the VC had fired at the aircraft. This forced the American pilots to bomb the people. People said they cared only about their working for a living. Even if they were angry at the VC they still would not dare to make known their anger for fear of being immediately arrested.

29. Is it correct that people were both mad at the aircraft for striking and mad at the VC for causing the aircraft to strike?

People wanted only to be left in peace to work for their living.

30. What did the Front cadres say about the airstrikes?

After the people had been bombed, the cadres came and told the people that the aircraft were very cruel, that they dropped bombs on innocent people who did nothing but work for a living. The cadres said : "Now that your houses were destroyed you had better find another place to build new houses".

31. Did the people believe what the VC cadres said?

They said nothing and kept silent.

32. Did these bombings cause anyone to join the Front in anger to strike back at the GVN?

This is improbable because since the bombings started, more than two hundred families have moved out to [redacted] hamlet.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

The subject did not speak Vietnamese very clearly and it was hard for the interviewer to understand him well. However the interview was recorded on tape and is reported faithfully here. The subject appeared to be of average intelligence but was not well informed. He enjoyed the interview very much and seemed at ease. The interview was closed because the subject had to go back to his home and it seemed not worthwhile to continue with him on the next day.

NO. ASR 7

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

1. Name of interviewer [redacted] (interpreter)
2. Name of subject [redacted]
3. Time and date of interview :
   From 4:45 pm to 5:30 on June [redacted] 1965
   From _____ to _____ on _____ 19 ___
   From _____ to _____ on _____ 19___
4. Place of interview :
   Gia Rai district, Bac Lieu province
5. Sex of subject : Male (v) Female ( )
6. Age of subject : 41
7. Ethnic background : Chinese
8. Place of birth : ~~Southern~~ Southern China, came to Vietnam in 1936
   hamlet _____
   village _____
   district _____
   province _____
9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :
   hamlet [redacted]
   village [redacted]
   district Gia Rai
   province Bac Lieu
10. (a) Length of residence in last location : Nine years.
    (b) Who controlled the place of residence :
    GVN ( ) VC (v) Contested ( ) How long? 3 years

11. Number of brothers (one) and sisters (zero)

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : one aged 40

13. Marital status : Married

14. Number of children : Seven

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age : Two aged 16 and 17

16. Parents with subject (v) or not with subject ( )
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers witn subject(v) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject (v) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject(v) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion : Buddhism

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : Merchant

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation Small merchant
(b) Landowner? No

20. Education :
illiterate ( )
literate (v)
schooling completed : No schooling

21. Any relatives in VC : No

22. Any relatives in GVN : Three or four cousins in the civil service.

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by :
(a) French One cousin killed by a bomb ten years ago
(b) GVN No
(c) VC No

24. When became a refugee : February 1965

AGR

INTERVIEW

8

MASTER COPY

THE RAND CORPORATION
[redacted]

STUDIES OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT
OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR-8

Date of Interview : June [redacted], 1965

Subject's Category : Refugee

Date Subject became a Refugee : June [redacted], 1965

Area of Residence : [redacted] village, Gia Rai district, Bac Lieu province.

1. How did you get here?

I had raised some poultry. When I decided to leave my hamlet I sold the poultry to get the money for the trip out. I had to leave behind my house and all my other property. I came here with my wife and children. First we took a passenger boat to the road. The fare was 120 piasters for the entire family. When we arrived at the road we took a bus heading toward Camau and we came to Gia Rai. The ride cost us 60 piasters.

2. Did anyone try to stop you on your way to Gia Rai?

I was stopped when I moved out of my hamlet. I was asked : "Where are you going like that with all your family."
I replied that we were going to visit a relative. After that incident I went to a pagoda to ask for some papers. When I got them I came here directly.

3. Where were you stopped?

I was stopped by a group of VC who told me to go back to my home. I told them we were going to see a relative. They did not allow me to go with my family, therefore I had to send my wife and children ahead of me. I rejoined them later and we took the passenger boat and came here.

4. But where were you stopped by the group of VC?

Let me tell you my story. We were about over one kilometer from my house when we were stopped by the VC. They asked me where I was going. After that incident I went to a pagoda to ask for some papers for my wife and myself. I did not have any papers at that time. When I got the papers I came here immediately.
(Note : The subject took from his pocket two cards. They were issued on June [redacted], 1965, by the Unified Buddhist Association and they certified that the holders were Buddhist believers. There was no photograph attached to the cards issued to the subject and his wife. The subject said that people in his hamlet were not allowed to have any papers, his included.)

5. Did the people in the pagoda know what you were planning to do?

No, they did not know.

6. Why did they think you wanted the papers?

At that time I did not have any papers in my possession. I lived in a VC controlled area and I did not have any papers. Without papers I would not know what to say to GVN people who would ask me. Therefore, I had to have papers, any kind of papers. I decided to come to the pagoda and ask for papers certifying that I am a Buddhist.

7. What did you tell the people in the pagoda?

I told them I wanted to become a Buddhist. My younger brother is also a Buddhist and he recommended me to a monk in the pagoda. The monk agreed to give me the papers I asked for only after I agreed to spend the night in the pagoda meditating over my past deeds. I bought joss sticks, rice cakes and some tea to be served as offerings to Buddha. The monk gave me my papers in the morning and I left immediately with my wife and children for the boat stop. Life was impossible under the VC and that made me decide to go and live under the GVN. Back in my hamlet the VC forced me to do collective labor all the time. They asked me to go into the forest and cut trees in order to build grain storage facilities for them. They collected paddy from the villagers and kept it in their grain storage. My wife and children could not bear that life any longer, therefore, we decided to leave.

8. How big was the grain storage?

The grain storage could store over one thousand gia of paddy. The paddy was collected from all the villagers. Not only the rice farmers were asked to contribute but even those who lived on fishing or on growing bananas were also asked to contribute. As for me, I harvested one hundred gia per year. I was asked to contribute twenty gia to the VC. My family used sixty gia for food and the remainder was used to feed the poultry. The VC asked so much from the people.

9. How long ago did you help build this grain storage for the VC?

This year. Although I had already contributed paddy to the VC, they still made me cut the trees for them to build the grain storage. Everybody had to take part in that collective labor.

10. Where is the grain storage located? Is it inside the hamlet or outside?

I do not know where the grain storage was located. One day the VC made the people go and work in one place and the next day they made people work in another place. People dared not complain about these changes.

11. How many grain storages were built in your area?

People contributed either money or paddy. The rice farmers contributed paddy and the fishermen contributed money.

12. How many grain storages did you help build in your area?

My hamlet was composed of thirty houses and the contributions were made half in paddy and half in cash. Those who did not have paddy contributed with cash. I harvested one hundred gia per year. I contributed twenty gia, my family ate sixty gia and I fed the poultry with the remaining twenty gia. (Note : The subject was very good-humored and very talkative. He appeared to be preoccupied by his own thoughts and he did not pay strict attention to the question he was asked.)

13. You said the VC built places to store grain, is that right?

Yes, they stored the paddy contributed by the people but those who did not have paddy contributed in cash.

14. How many grain storages were built in your hamlet?

I do not know because the VC asked the people to contribute trees and leaves but did not ask them to build the grain storages. People living in the same neighborhood contributed the prescribed amount of trees and leaves. The VC then came and carried all that material away to build their grain storage. The VC did not keep their paddy inside the hamlet. For instance, if they kept their paddy in my house what would I say to the GVN soldiers who came into the hamlet and asked me why I kept so much paddy inside my house. I kept only an adequate amount of paddy for my family's use.

15. Do you know where some of the storages were built?

I do not know. The VC would not let people know such things. I only know that, at harvest time, people living in the same neighborhood put their contributions together and the paddy was then taken away by the VC. Those who did not have paddy contributed in cash at the rate of seventy piasters per gia of paddy.

16. Where was the grain storage located that you helped build? Was it inside your hamlet?

It was in my neighborhood.

17. Was it close to your house?

No, it was far from my house. We carried the paddy to a place alongside the canal and left it there. As a farmer I was too busy with my work to pay attention to the location of the grain storage.

18. What are your prospects now?

When I came here, the hamlet chief was touched by my poor situation. He promised he would help me find employment at the factory here where I can get a 1,500 piaster salary per month. I am very poor. When I came here I was able to bring with me only two potfulls of rice and nothing else but the clothes we were wearing at the time.

19. How big was your old village and hamlet?

My village extended from the river to the [redacted] market. My hamlet was composed of about [redacted] sections and each section was tightly separated from the other. People were not allowed to cross from one section to the other. My section had about thirty families living there. We had our houses, our ricefields, and our fishing grounds there. We did not cross to another section and people from another section did not come to ours.

20. How could you move from one section to another? Did you have to ask permission?

Relatives were allowed to visit one another in different sections. Whenever I had a relative coming to see me, I had to report it to the VC or otherwise the VC would send him back to his section and would not let him stay with me. Only relatives were allowed to come to another section, they had to be recognized and received by the people in that section.

21. How did you feel about being restricted to one section of the hamlet?

I found that it was difficult for me to live under the VC. If I wanted to travel from one section to the other I should ask for a written permission from the VC in my section.

If I was caught in another section without my permit I would be kept there. The VC would send for my relatives living there to recognize me and they would also send for the VC in my section to come and take me back.

22. What did the rest of the people in the hamlet think about this?

The VC explained that they did that only to prevent strangers from coming into the hamlet.

23. Did the people accept this situation?

People back in my hamlet were very dissatisfied about their life there. Many families had left to take refuge in the GVN-controlled areas. Three families out of ten had already left. Life was impossible back in my hamlet. People could not work for a living anymore because of the frequent government operations and airstrikes. People were afraid of being killed and they moved out to make a living in the GVN controlled areas. They all moved out without hesitation.

24. Did all the people who left go to GVN-controlled areas?

Yes, they all moved to GVN-controlled areas. Take my family for example. We all moved out to a GVN-controlled area. Two of my brothers also moved out. I still have three of my brothers living back in my hamlet. They are very rich. They own cattle and as many as 100 "cong" of ricefields. Their belongings amount to 100,000 piasters and they are reluctant to leave all that behind. But I think they will have to move out sooner or later if the airstrikes and the operations continue. I had asked them to come with me but they did not want to leave their property. What good is it for them when they will be killed by a bomb. The VC will come and take the property for themselves. I prefer to have 2,000 piasters and live here to profit from my money.

25. Why, in your opinion, did the people who left your hamlet choose to come to a GVN-controlled area?

I think the people find it safer to live in a GVN-controlled area. They do not risk being killed because there are neither operations nor airstrikes carried out here. That is why they moved their wives and children here. They want to have a peaceful life here.

26. How long did you live in your old hamlet?

I came here on the [redacted] day of the fifth month (i.e. June [redacted], 1965). Prior to taking refuge, I had lived in my hamlet for seventeen years. My parents died and were buried there, all my brothers lived there and I was reluctant to leave them. If it had not been for them I would have moved out long ago. Life was very dangerous back in my hamlet. The GVN soldiers carried out very frequent operations in that area and aircraft attacked almost continuously. People could not work because they had to run for cover all the time. I could not bear that life any longer and I decided to bring my wife and children here. I wish I had listened to the GVN soldiers who came to my hamlet some time ago. They told the people to move to a strategic hamlet. But at that time I could not bring myself to leave all my property behind and I am now very sorry. I remained behind until all my cattle were killed and my property was destroyed. Helicopters and aircraft had done a lot of damage to my hamlet and almost everybody had to move out. People who moved out earlier are luckier than I. They have money and they live near the market place. I know the hamlet chief here because he has been my landlord. He let me stay in his hamlet. He was the only one I knew in my new hamlet before I went there, the others are all strangers to me. Yesterday I was given twenty piasters by a big man and was told to come to the district office at 8 a.m. I have spent the money to buy food for my children and I am now left with only one piaster. To tell the truth, I was very afraid of GVN people. I am a farmer and I know nothing but work. Back in my old hamlet I was very afraid of GVN soldiers. I had to hide myself whenever I heard the GVN soldiers coming. I came out of my hiding place only after they had left. But since I came here I am not worried about my wife and children being killed anymore. Back in my old hamlet there were many VC and life was not free. People had to get permission whenever they wanted to leave their neighborhood, therefore, I rarely left my home. My 16 year old daughter was also very afraid and she dared not go to the market. That is why we people in the countryside are very simple-minded and very honest.

27. Where did you live previously?

I was born in the hamlet where I lived before I came here. Then I went to live in [redacted] village and got married there. I stayed there for some time and then went back to my native hamlet because I could not live far from my parents. I missed them so much while in [redacted] village.

When I came back to my native hamlet I decided to stay there forever. All told I lived there seventeen years. I had ten children but only four are living. I am now 48 years old.

28. What did most of the people in the hamlet you just left do to earn a living?

People lived on many things. They grew rice, bananas, coconuts. They raised poultry and hogs. But they lived mostly on the fish they caught in the muddy fields. I managed to earn as much as 6,000 piasters a year from the fish I caught in my two muddy fields.

29. As a whole, was the hamlet prosperous or poor?

The majority of the people there were rich. They have lived in the hamlet for a long time and some of them have as much as 100,000 piasters of property.

30. Were there any changes in your economic condition in the past few years?

Yes, there were a few changes. I had a big sampan back in my old hamlet. I had used it to transport timber from the forests in that area. But some time ago the VC forbade the people to come into the forests and fell the trees. Therefore my big sampan was left idle and my income was reduced to the rice I grew and the fish I caught. I was not allowed to live on the timber any longer.

31. Why were you forbidden to go out and fell trees in the forests?

The VC did not allow people to go out and fell trees because they did not want to bare the forests. People were allowed only to gather fallen branches. Those who disobeyed the VC orders were arrested and had their sampans confiscated.

32. Did the GVN carry out defoliation operations in your area?

Yes, the GVN destroyed all the trees along the [redacted] canal. Even coconut trees were destroyed. All the leaves were burned. People were not allowed to fell trees to sell the timber. However, after the defoliation had been carried out, people were forced to move their houses farther from the canal and they were allowed by the VC to go out and get timber from the forests. That timber was used for the sole purpose of building people's houses. The people were not allowed to sell it under pain of arrest.

38. Did the defoliation hamper the VC in any way?

Yes, the defoliation caused difficulties for the VC in this way : All the coconut trees were killed by the defoliant and people were forced to move farther from the canal. But it was very difficult for the people to ask permission to cut trees and leaves to build new houses. People said to the VC : "We paid taxes on our rice, our coconuts, our bananas, our fish, etc... All those taxes were paid to you. Why don't you let us go and cut trees and leaves to build houses?" Because of these difficulties many people left the area for good. If the people went ahead and cut trees without permission, they would be arrested and led away blindfolded. They would be kept in prison for an unknown length of time.

34. Did this happen to many people?

Yes. Strangers were not permitted to come into the hamlet. They had to be recognized by their relatives before they were allowed into the hamlet. Their relatives had to report them to the VC too. Complete strangers such as traders who came to the hamlet to buy duck feathers were not allowed in there.

35. What happened to those who were arrested by the VC?

Whenever a stranger came to the hamlet, he was stopped by the VC who asked him : "Where are you going?" If the man replied that he came to visit a relative, the VC would send for his relative to come and recognize him. Strangers who came from the cities were arrested and kept there by the VC.

36. What about the people who lived in the hamlet? Were any of them ever arrested?

Whenever the GVN soldiers came to the hamlet, all the men ran away and hid themselves. They came back to the hamlet only after the soldiers had departed.

37. Were any people who lived in the hamlet arrested by the VC?

I was arrested by the VC for five days. I had gone to the market in the strategic hamlet and I had done some gambling. The first time I was admonished by the VC and released. But the second time I was kept for five days. From then on I dared not gamble again.

38. What happened to you during those five days?

They scolded me for having gambled. They said : "You do not apply yourself to work for a living in order to be able to contribute. Instead you waste your money in gambling!"

39. How were you treated during those five days?

I was not beaten. They said to me : "You do not spend your money to buy weapons and ammunition for us. Instead you spend it in gambling. It is just as if you gave the money directly to the GVN to fight back at us." That is what they said to me. They said nothing else.

40. What did you do during those five days? Did they keep you confined?

I was kept there for five days. I had to eat and sleep there. The food was brought to me by my wife and children. I was not beaten. I had only to attend reeducation courses. I was told to change my habits - to stop gambling and to pay more attention to my work. The VC said that the next time they caught me they would take me to distant places.

41. How often had you been to that strategic hamlet?

I went to the market in the strategic hamlet from time to time. However, I was not allowed to stay there overnight. I had to be back in the afternoon.

42. How far was the strategic hamlet from your hamlet?

About three kilometers.

43. Did many people from your hamlet go to the strategic hamlet from time to time?

Yes. Those who had relatives living in the strategic hamlet were allowed to go there to visit them or to attend ancestor worship services. However, even these people were not allowed to spend the night there. They had to come home in the afternoon and go back to the strategic hamlet again in the morning.

44. Did you have any friends who lived in that strategic hamlet?

No, I had no friends living there.

45. Do you have any idea how people like living in a strategic hamlet?

Some time ago, GVN soldiers came to my area and asked people to move to the strategic hamlet where they could find security. But very few people moved there because they were sorry to have to leave their houses. Afterward, the soldiers came back again and forced all the people to move to the strategic hamlet.

46. What did the people think about moving to the strategic hamlet? Did they get used to the idea of living in a strategic hamlet? Did they continue to be dissatisfied?

I was told that people who moved there were given food and clothing by the government. They were also given houses in which to live. Life is not hard for them anymore, they do not fear being killed anymore. That is why all the people have moved to strategic hamlets. It is quite different in the VC-controlled areas. Government aircraft came all the time. Suppose that people were draining a muddy field in order to catch fish and then suddenly aircraft came. People had to run for cover. During that time the water flowed back into the muddy field and people had to start draining all over again. That is why people were dissatisfied and they moved to GVN-controlled areas. As for myself, I would rather have 2,000 piasters here than 10,000 piasters back in my hamlet. I was worried all the time about the safety of my family. But since I have lived in a strategic hamlet here, I am very happy.

47. So, now you live in a strategic hamlet. I did not know that.

Yes, I am now living in a strategic hamlet and I intend to stay there with my wife and children forever. I am waiting for identity cards to be delivered to me and my wife. When I came here I had no papers except for the two Buddhist cards. I am also waiting for the government to give me money to build a small house.

48. What about the other people who moved to strategic hamlets? Did they seem to be content? Did they seem to have the same attitude you do?

Those who are rich can have a small business going here, while people who are poor like I am must find employment at the factory. While waiting to work at the factory, I occupy myself with some minor work at the market in order

to support my family. I intend to stay here forever. I have no regret for all the things I left behind when I moved out. My wife and children think as I do.

49. What about the strategic hamlet close to your old hamlet? Did you ever hear people in your old hamlet express a desire to move into that strategic hamlet which was close by?

Yes, because the GVN soldiers carried out so many operations in that area that people could not work for a living anymore. People took their houses to pieces and rebuilt the pieces inside the strategic hamlet. They had no regret for the ricefields and the orchards they left behind.

50. How often did GVN troops pass through your hamlet?

GVN troops came to my hamlet every two or three months. Everytime they came, the villagers fled the hamlet.

51. How did they behave towards the villagers?

They behaved well toward the people. They did not run after the poultry to catch them. People gave them coconuts when they were thirsty. I had twenty coconut trees and each time they came I gave them seven or eight coconuts. They always thanked me for the coconuts. They never killed civilians. In fact they told people to continue to tend to their work. But they did kill the VC who were dressed in black. Only guerrillas were dressed in black and the GVN troops ran after them and killed them.

52. You said before that people fled whenever the GVN troops came to your hamlet. Now, tell me who fled and who remained in the hamlet?

We had to run because we were afraid of being killed by bullets but then the GVN troops told the people they had nothing to fear and they should stay and work. The GVN troops only passed through my hamlet, they did not stay there long. When they were hungry their lieutenant asked people to cook a meal for them. After they had finished the meal they thanked the people and moved out of the hamlet. They did no damage to the people. Those who fled were killed but those who remained behind were not harmed. People realized that the government was kind to the people and that is why they wanted to live with the government. As for the Revolution people, they crushed the people with their heavy taxes. I have thought over the situation.

I am now 48 years old and I think very much. I saw that the government does not oppress and does not brutalize people. After I had thought over the situation. I made up my mind to go and live under the GVN. My wife is also determined to stay here forever.

53. How did the Revolution people behave towards the villagers?

They did nothing but apply themselves to collecting as much taxes as they could. They wanted the people to be as destitute as possible. They saw that the people were prosperous and they wanted them to contribute as much as possible. I do not know how they made use of the taxes they collected. I do not know whether they took the money to North Vietnam or South Vietnam but I did not see them build any school in the hamlet. All the while, the people had to work as hard as slaves. People were dissatisfied and they all left. They had not a single thought for the Revolution. Now I want to live with the GVN until the day I die.

54. Were the guerrillas the only ones in the hamlet who were dressed in black?

Yes.

55. Did the villagers dare not dress in black or did the VC tell them not to dress in black?

People in my hamlet have always dressed themselves in white to work. Only the guerrillas were dressed in black. If some people were unfortunate enough to be dressed in black when the GVN troops came to the hamlet, they risked being killed by the troops. That is why people dared not dress themselves in black. The guerrillas always decamped when government troops came but the rest of the time they were very arrogant. They came armed with rifles and asked people why they did not join the others in doing collective labor. If the people answered that they had not finished their dinners, they would hear harsh words from the guerrillas. The guerrillas acted as if they were fathers of everybody. That is why people left the hamlet out of discontent with the VC guerrillas.

56. Did the guerrillas ever dress in white?

Never.

57. Why do you think they did that? It seems to me that the guerrillas should recognize that it would be to their advantage to look like the rest of the people.

They had always dressed in black and the GVN soldiers could recognize them as people belonging to the Revolution. Only those dressed in black had to run when the GVN soldiers came to the hamlet. The people were dressed in white and they could remain and work. There were only two or three guerrillas in my hamlet and whenever the GVN soldiers moved in, they killed those who failed to escape. The other guerrillas took their weapons and ran away as fast as they could.

58. Tell me something about the presence of the VC in your old hamlet. How many stayed there continuously. How often did other VC come into the hamlet.

I do not know how many VC were in my hamlet. The people cared only about their work. Whenever the VC came and asked them to go and do collective labor, the people had no choice but to follow them. As for the guerrillas, they were very arrogant. When the day came to do collective labor and I had tried to pretend to have a headache to dodge the work, the guerrillas would say to me : "If you do not like to do collective labor, then bring some food with you and come with us. You need a few days of reeducation." They said only that, and I always had to join in the collective labor.

59. How often did the VC come and request you to do collective labor.

Sometimes we did collective labor once every two weeks and sometimes once every two or three months. There were also instances when we started again another collective work immediately after we had finished the first.

60. How long would you normally have to stay away doing this labor.

Each person had to work for two days. I had to bring with me enough food to last for two days. I came back to my home only after two days.

61. How did the people react to the operations carried out in that area. If the GVN troops came through and the guerrillas fired on them and ran, what did the people think about this.

When the people heard firing, they ran to take cover because they were afraid of being killed. As for the guerrillas

they fled as soon as the GVN soldiers came to within 3,000 meters from the hamlet. Afterward, when they came back to have meal with the people, the villagers laughed at them. People said : "Where have you been while the soldiers were here? You have collected so many taxes from us and that has not prevented you from running away from the soldiers." People scolded them so much that they were ashamed and some wanted to resign.

62. Did any firefights ever take place around your hamlet?

No, there has never been any firefight around my hamlet between the guerrillas and the GVN soldiers. The guerrillas always fled when the GVN soldiers came in. But as soon as the soldiers left the people would immediately see the guerrillas reappear. When the guerrillas came to the people's houses to have meals with them, they were laughed at and they were very ashamed of their behavior. They wanted to give up living as guerrillas and move to the GVN-controlled area.

63. Did the VC Main Force ever come through your hamlet?

Yes, every two or three months these people did pass through my hamlet. They did nothing but pass through the hamlet. They did not stay there and they never came into the people's houses to have meals.

64. When did the Main Force first appear in your hamlet?

It was very long ago. They came in by sampans and the people stayed inside their houses and looked at them and said nothing. The VC did not say anything either. They just passed by in their sampans.

65. Over these years, have you noticed any changes in the behavior, or the way the VC Main Force operates, or the way it looks as it comes through?

I saw them dressed in khaki uniforms and they had many weapons with them. People dared ask them nothing. They could go wherever they wanted to go and people asked them nothing. People were too busy working for a living.

66. Was it the same Main Force unit that passed through your hamlet or were they different Main Force units?

People did not ask questions from these VC. Anyway a long time passed between each passage.

67. You mean when they passed through they would never stop and say anything to the people. Is that correct?

No, they did not stop and they said nothing to the people. On the other hand, people said nothing to them either.

68. Was your hamlet chief a VC?

There was no hamlet chief back in my hamlet.

69. Did you ever have a hamlet chief?

No, there has never been a hamlet chief in my hamlet. But the families living there were organized in groups of five families, each with a man at its head. People who wanted to travel had to report to him first.

70. Were the heads of family groups Viet Cong or pro-Viet Cong?

They were good people. They were not pro-VC but they were forced by the VC to hold this position.

71. Did the VC ever attack the strategic hamlet which was located near your old hamlet?

Never.

72. Did many young people from your hamlet join the VC?

The VC did not make young men join them by force but the young men did volunteer to join them.

73. Why did they volunteer to join the VC? What were their motives?

I do not know.

74. Did the VC come to the hamlet often to persuade the young men to join them?

I do not know, but I am certain that the VC did not come to them and take them away. The young men were free to join or not join.

75. Did the VC come to your hamlet and hold propaganda sessions?

Many young men in my neighborhood were in the ARVN. Those in my hamlet did not want to join the VC because they knew they would have to hold a gun and kill their friends and relatives in the ARVN. That is why they refused to join the VC and escaped to the GVN-controlled area. One of them even said that the VC will never succeed in having

him join them. He said he would still refuse even if the VC blindfolded him. Up to 25 young men from my neighborhood have joined the ARVN, that is why the men remaining in the hamlet refused to work for the VC.

76. Did the Front come and hold propaganda sessions? Did they make speeches and try to make the young men to join them?

Yes, Front people came to my hamlet from time to time, about once every one or two months. But people did not pay attention to what they said. People had to care about their work in order to be able to pay taxes. They could not be asked to go and listen to the Front people all the time, therefore the latter came not often to my hamlet.

77. Did the VC come and put on stage shows and sing folk songs for the people?

No, the VC do not do that anymore. Once they put on such a show. The place was brightly lit with kerosene lamps, therefore it was bombarded by GVN artillery from the [redacted] post. Two VC and a few people were killed that time. From then on the VC did not organize such sessions any more.

78. Did the VC carry out any terroristic acts in your hamlet?

I have not seen any terroristic acts done by the VC.

79. How many young men from your hamlet joined the VC? Was it a rare thing or did it happen all the time?

Twenty five young men from my neighborhood had already joined the ARVN. Those who remained behind were dissatisfied about having to join the VC and they all refused to join them. They did not want to kill their brothers or relatives in the ARVN. When the VC demanded that they join them, they escaped to the GVN-controlled area.

80. You said a while ago that some of the young men had joined the VC, is it right?

Yes, some had joined the VC but the majority of the young men had joined the ARVN. Only youths of 16 or 17 years old were too young to join either side and they stayed at home. I do not know about my whole hamlet but in my neighborhood, 25 young men had joined the ARVN, and two or three were VC guerrillas. The guerrillas had been insulted and scorned

by the people and they all wanted to leave the hamlet for the GVN-controlled area. They always fled to remote areas whenever the GVN troops came and the rest of the time they had meals with the people and treated themselves to the people's coconuts. That is why people disliked them so much. When the guerrillas came to have meals with them, the people said they would rather give their food to their dogs than give it to the guerrillas. The latter were very ashamed and all wanted to leave for the GVN-controlled area.

81. Were the guerrillas natives of the hamlet?

Yes, they were people of the hamlet.

82. You said your hamlet was hit by artillery once, is that right?

Yes, it happened while a stage show was going on in the hamlet. The [redacted] outpost detected lights in the hamlet and fired artillery shells which killed two VC and three civilians. The civilians were attending the show at that time. The kerosene lamps were completely destroyed. Since that time the VC have not put on any more stage shows.

83. How long ago did this happen?

It was long ago. I myself had attended the show that night. When the shelling started I ran toward the canal and swam my way home. I was lucky that I did not bring with me my 16 year-old daughter that night because she would certainly have been killed.

84. How did the people feel about this shelling? Were they mad at the GVN soldiers in the outpost for shelling the hamlet that night?

Front people had asked the people to attend the celebration that night, but the people were reluctant to go. They were afraid the outpost might fire artillery on the hamlet. Only thirty or forty people out of one hundred attended the stage show and in my opinion it was not a success. Those who came to attend did so only out of fear of being arrested by the VC if they did not comply with the VC's wishes. They were very afraid of being shelled.

85. Did the people become angry at the GVN soldiers in the outpost?

They were not angry at the GVN soldiers for firing shells at them. They were angry at the VC who forced them to come

and see the show. People had known beforehand that they risked being shelled.

86. When did the airplanes first start flying over your village?

It was on the [redacted] day of the fifth month (June [redacted], 1965). It was raining hard that day and the GVN was conducting a big operation in that area. Aircraft came and bombed furiously. Everybody in the hamlet was frightened to death. My wife burned some joss sticks and she prayed to Buddha to save us from the bombing. We left our hamlet five days later (June [redacted] 1965).

87. Was it the first time that aircraft appeared over your hamlet?

Yes, it was the first time and it happened on the [redacted] day of the fifth month of the lunar year. I remember the day very precisely because it was after the holiday of the [redacted] day of the fifth month. It was raining hard from the [redacted] to the [redacted] and the GVN conducted an important operation that time. My hamlet was bombed on the [redacted] and I decided to leave all my property and leave the hamlet on the [redacted]

88. How did the people feel about this attack? Were they angry at the GVN for dropping the bombs?

Let me explain to you what happened that day. The GVN operation had ended but the VC guerrillas suddenly fired at aircraft from the edge of the hamlet and caused catastrophy to the hamlet. All was in ruins and people had to leave. How could the guerrillas expect to hit aircraft. All that they achieved was make the people run for safety when the hamlet was bombed. There was another airstrike carried out against my hamlet on the [redacted] Aircraft dropped illumination flares that time and strafed the hamlet. During the airstrike on the [redacted] all the people moved out of the hamlet to take cover inside the [redacted] pagoda. They came to the pagoda by sampans and some people were so frightened they left their hamlet for good and all and went to live in Camau. You should understand that it was impossible to live in my hamlet. My hamlet was continuously attacked, from the [redacted] to the [redacted] How could you bear that. People were hungry on these days and those who had a few thousand piasters with them decided to leave for good. As for myself, I can assure you that I will live with the government until the day I die. I want all my sons to serve

in the ARVN. I resent very much the VC for causing my hamlet to be destroyed. If it were not for them my hamlet would still be as it was. Now it is completely destroyed. Even poultry and hogs are dead, and all the people have moved to towns and cities. You can go and see for yourself in Camau. Hundreds of people from my hamlet have settled there. I had nothing left, therefore, I moved to Gia Rai where I know a hamlet chief. I plan to stay here forever working in the rice factory or doing small work in the hamlet. I am waiting for the government to let me build a house and to let me have identity papers. I swear I will never return to my old hamlet. Two of my brothers have already left my hamlet. Three are still remaining there but I expect them to move out soon if the airstrikes are continued. You were not in my old hamlet on the [redacted] and you do not know but I do know. Heavens! it was all "Wham! Wham!" all the time and we ran like hell!

89. Was it the first time that the guerrillas had fired on aircraft?

It was the first time and it happened on the [redacted] day of the fifth month. The guerrillas fired on the aircraft and the aircraft fired back, killing poultry and hogs and destroying everything. My hamlet was also attacked by aircraft on the morning of the [redacted]

90. What did the people say about the guerrillas who fired at aircraft?

I did not hear them say anything.

91. Why did you choose Gia Rai as a place for refuge?

Back in my hamlet I worked the land which belonged to my present hamlet chief. I was formerly his tenant farmer. I knew that he is the hamlet chief here and I hoped he would help me. That is indeed what he promises me. He promises he will help me find work at the rice factory for a salary of 1,500 piasters a month.

92. Tell me something about the history of your village during and after the Resistance period.

I do not hide anything from you, but the truth is that as a farmer I had no time to care about anything other than my farming. I know nothing about the history of my village. I have never been to school and I did not have money to send my children to school. Some time ago, people in my

hamlet were asked to move to the strategic hamlet nearby. There they were given vegetable oil and money to settle down. That is quite different from the VC in my hamlet. They gave nothing to the people and on the contrary they levied heavy taxes. I had to pay taxes on everything I grew or raised. That is why I did not have money to send my children to school. All my children are now illiterate. I have been quite dissatisfied with the VC.

93. Do you plan to send your children to school here?

I have three sons and a 17 year-old daughter. They have never been to school and they are illiterate. I hope that the government will be touched by my situation and let my children go to school. I want all my children to be educated in order to serve the country. I shall work in the rice factory to allow them to go to school.

94. Describe the history of your village since the war against the French up to now. Was it under French control during the Resistance? When did the VC first appear in your village? Was there a period of time when it was under GVN control?

It was too long ago and I did not pay attention in order to remember. I was too busy working. The French controlled my village in the forties but I do not remember the events afterward. You should understand my poor situation. I had ten children to raise. I do not remember anything regarding the past.

95. Back in your old hamlet, did you know who the village chief was?

I seldom went out of my hamlet. I spent all my time in the ricefields and the forests, therefore, I did not know who the village chief or district chief were. I did not have regular papers to come to the towns and cities. I had wanted to come out of my hamlet to cast my ballot in the recent election but I did not have the regular papers to do so.

96. What did the people back in your old hamlet think about the overthrow of the Ngo Dinh Diem government?

I was not well informed. The only thing I know about him is that he was killed. I was too busy with my work to be well informed. I had ten children to raise and I worked all the time. Look at my hands and my feet. Their nails cannot grow because of the hard work I did.

97. What do you think of the present prime minister, Air Marshall Nguyen Cao Ky.?

What is his name?

98. Nguyen Cao Ky.

I did not know that he is prime minister because on election day I was not able to come out to cast my ballot although I wanted very much to do it, therefore I did not know who is leading the government. But as a citizen I am happy no matter who leads the government. I am pleased with any man who leads the government.

99. What are the aims of the Viet Cong? What are they fighting for?

I am not educated and I cannot explain this war. But I can see that as long as there is one brother on one side and another brother on the other side, the killings will continue until the day the country is reunified. That is all I know.

100. Has anyone ever told you about the aims of the Liberation Front?

I know nothing about the aims of the Front. I know only about events which happened in my neighborhood. There is one thing I know and that is the government is very kind to the people, like the other day when I did not have money to take a bus home, a GVN soldier let me ride the bus without paying. That is why I am always happy to hear about anyone being given a high office in the government.

101. What, in your opinion, are the Americans doing in Vietnam?

The Americans are kind toward the people and they came here to govern us. All the Americans I happen to see have been very kind toward me. They give money whenever the people need it. You can be assured that I will stay here and not return to my hamlet.

102. Had anyone in your old hamlet joined the VC out of resentment toward the GVN for having attacked the hamlet?

People had resentment only toward the VC. The aircraft did not went to bomb the hamlet, they just flew by. But the guerrillas fired at them and forced them to bomb the hamlet and destroy it. People will never forget their hatred for the VC and that is why they moved out to live with the government.

103. Did you ever hear broadcasts from airplanes? Did you ever see leaflets dropped from airplanes?

Yes, I have seen leaflets dropped by aircraft. I did not read them but people who had read them told me that the GVN ordered people to move out and live with the government or else their houses and property would be destroyed. I discussed with my wife the idea of leaving the hamlet for a GVN-controlled area. We decided that it is better to have 2,000 piasters in a GVN-controlled area than to have 10,000 piasters in the hamlet. We have decided to stay here forever and never live again in a VC-controlled area. Although I have left my hamlet I still have hatred for the guerrillas who had fired at the aircraft and caused the bombing.

104. Did the leaflets tell you where to go?

No, the leaflets did not tell me where to go. I came here because I know the hamlet chief here who was my former landlord. I hoped that he would give me help. He has promised to give me all the necessary papers and to help me find work at the rice factory. He is the only one I know here. If I had come to Bac Lieu, where I know nobody, I would certainly be in distress.

105. When did you first see the leaflets?

Some time ago. It must be two months ago. I am very happy to live here. People are very nice to me and my family. They lend us cooking pots and bowls to prepare our meals.

106. At the time you left your old hamlet, did you expect some day you might go back to your hamlet?

I want to stay here forever. I want my sons to grow up and join the ARVN. I do not want to go back to my hamlet where I risk being arrested by the VC.

107. How many families left your hamlet at about the time you did?

All the people left at that time. Two of my brothers went to Bac Lieu. Some people went to live near the outpost there and some people took the boat directly to Camau. Nobody dared to remain in the hamlet, they risked being attacked by aircraft anytime.

108. What were your expectations at the time you left your hamlet? How did you see life in GVN-controlled areas?

I thought about two things when I left my hamlet. First I would receive help from every GVN soldier and every American there. Secondly I would get rid of all the VC once I was in a GVN controlled area. That is why I want to stay here and have my sons join the ARVN.

109. Has anyone tried to persuade you to go back to your hamlet since you have been here?

No, I told you I want to stay here and I challenge anybody who can make me go back to my hamlet.

110. How did the VC explain why they collected taxes from the people?

The VC said the taxes are used to feed the fighters. People were asked to contribute in order to buy food and ammunition for the army. People were told that if they did not contribute then the GVN would take their property anyway. I did not want to contribute but I had to, that is why I was dissatisfied. Now that I live here, the GVN can ask anything from me, I will be ready to do anything. But the VC can ask nothing from me from now on.

111. Are you afraid the VC might come here?

No, I am not afraid.

112. Why are you not afraid of the VC anymore?

Because I live near the market and I never go out. If they came they would be chased away by the GVN soldiers. I am not worried about their coming here. But it was not the same when I lived in a VC-controlled area. The GVN soldiers could move in anytime they liked to shoot and kill, while the VC would never dare to come to a GVN-controlled area. Now that I live here, it is just as if my mother has given birth to me a second time.

113. What do you think of your present hamlet chief?

The present hamlet chief is a very kind man. He cares very much about the people and I like him very much. I want to thank also the higher GVN officials who let me settle here. I promise you that I shall never return to my old hamlet. I want to stay here forever and have all my sons enlist in the ARVN when they grow up.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

The subject appeared to be a very charming man. He has below average intelligence. He did not listen to the questions he was asked but he was very, very talkative. That made up his charm but it was difficult for the interviewer to get a precise and direct answer to each question. Sometimes the subject proceeded with his previous answer although a new question had been asked. His mind remained preoccupied by that topic for a while and he continued to elaborate on it without paying attention to the course of the interview. He appeared to be well informed, but the information he gave seemed doubtful. He had not been a refugee long and perhaps he wanted to show himself to be a good citizen. Therefore, it seemed that he depreciated the VC to a degree too excessively unusual to be true. However, this interview has yielded some very interesting information, such as the fact that a refugee, in taking refuge in a GVN-controlled area, needs some kind of safe-conduct. It seems very important to him to have some official looking papers to make up for his identity card. As for the subject, he had asked for a certificate from the Buddhist Association which made him feel secure although it did not have his photograph on it.

NO. AGR 8

MASTER COPY

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

1. Name of interviewer [redacted] (interpreter)
2. Name of subject [redacted]
3. Time and date of interview :
   From 0900 to 1230 on June [redacted] 196 5
   From _____ to _____ on _____ 19 __
   From _____ to _____ on _____ 19___
4. Place of interview :
   GIA RAI district, BAC LIEU province
5. Sex of subject : Male (X) Female ( )
6. Age of subject : 48
7. Ethnic background : Vietnamese
8. Place of birth :
   hamlet _____
   village [redacted]
   district Gia Rai
   province Bac Lieu
9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :
   hamlet [redacted]
   village [redacted]
   district Gia Rai
   province Bac Lieu
10. (a) Length of residence in last location : 17 years
    (b) Who controlled the place of residence :
    GVN ( ) VC (X) Contested ( ) How long, 17 years

NO. AGR 8

11. Number of brothers (Five) and sisters (zero)

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : Five

13. Marital status : Married

14. Number of children : Ten, living four (3 sons + 1 daughter)

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age : One aged 17

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject (X)
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject( ) or not with subject (X)
Wife with subject (X) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject(X) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion : Buddhism

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : Farming and Fishing

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation Rich farmer
(b) Landowner? No

20. Education :
illiterate ( )
literate (X)
schooling completed : No schooling

21. Any relatives in VC : One brother-in-law had been with VC, then defected and then captured by VC, fate unknown.

22. Any relatives in GVN : No.

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by :
(a) French No
(b) GVN No
(c) VC No

24. When became a refugee : June [redacted], 1965

AGR

INTERVIEW

9

THE RAND CORPORATION
[redacted]

STUDIES OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR-9

Date of Interview : July [redacted], 1965

Subject's Category : Refugee - June [redacted], 1965

1. How long have you been here?

   I have been here for twenty days now.

2. Where did you come from?

   I came from Dong Xoai. I am now staying at the Social Welfare Center on Vinh Vien street in Cholon.

3. Did you live in Dong Xoai district or in the district town of Dong Xoai?

   I lived just outside the district town of Dong Xoai. My house was located [redacted]

4. How did you get here?

   I went on foot from Dong Xoai to Binh Duong province. There I took the bus to Saigon.

5. What are your plans and prospects now?

   I rely entirely now on the Social Welfare Ministry to help me find work so that I can support my family. I lost everything when my house was burned down in Dong Xoai.

6. What was your occupation prior to taking refuge?

   I was a tailor and I ran a tailor shop in Dong Xoai.

7. How many tailors did you employ in your shop?

   I hired two sewers. I did not sew, I cut the fabric for them to sew.

8. How was your business?

   I earned enough for my family to have an easy life.

9. Do you intend to continue your tailor business in Saigon?

   I have made a written request to the Social Welfare Ministry. I hope the ministry will find work for me. I do not intend to work as a tailor in the immediate future.

10. What kind of work do you hope the ministry will find for you?

I shall be grateful to the ministry to find for me any kind of work.

11. How large was your family?

My family is composed of seven members-- my old mother, my wife and myself, my three children and my younger sister.

12. Do you have any relatives in Saigon?

No.

13. Did all the members of your family live together before you came here or were some living apart?

We all lived together before we came here to take refuge from the Communists.

14. How big was your village in Dong Xoai? How many hamlets were there? How many people lived there?

I lived in [redacted] village and there were about five thousand eligible voters there.

15. Who was in effective control of your village? Was it controlled by the government or the Front? Was it a contested area?

My village has been under government control for many years.

16. How far from the district town of Dong Xoai was your village?

My village was [redacted] from the district town.

17. How long have you lived there?

I have lived in Dong Xoai for two years.

18. Where did you live previously?

I lived previously in the Buon Ar Pa land development center ("Khu Dinh Dien" in Vietnamese).

19. Why did you move to Dong Xoai?

I earned some money in Buon Ar Pa and I decided to move to Dong Xoai and open a tailor shop there.

20. What was your occupation in Buon Ar Pa?

I grew rubber trees according to the land development program of the government.

21. Did you grow rubber trees or did you work in a rubber plantation?

I grew rubber trees.

22. How many families or persons have left your village in the past years?

At first, my village had a small population but it had flourished into a prosperous community with a large population. No one had thought of leaving it. When I left, my village had large streets bordered by modern-style houses.

23. How many people left Dong Xoai at the same time you did?

About 80% of the population of Dong Xoai left to take refuge from the Communists.

24. Why did they leave? Where did they go?

The majority of the inhabitants of Dong Xoai had their property destroyed. They had nothing left and aside from that, they feared another attack by the Communists. They were worried about their family's safety and they decided to start a new life in Saigon.

25. Why was the people's property destroyed in Dong Xoai?

The Viet Cong attacked Dong Xoai and invaded the town. This caused the aircraft to strike. The battle raged from June 10 to June 12, 1965.

26. Aside from your occupation as a tailor, did you earn a living on farming?

While in Dong Xoai, I lived only on my occupation as a tailor. I did not engage in farming.

27. Were there any changes in your economic condition in the past years?

When I moved from the land development center to Dong Xoai, my economic condition was in bad shape but since then my business had prospered.

28. Do you know the reasons for your prosperity? Was it your skill as a tailor or something else?

To be true, I credit only part of my success on my skill. I owed it to the kindness of my clients who came in numbers to my shop. I found it easier for me to earn a living in Dong Xoai than in the land development center.

29. How much education have you had?

I have attended school and have completed my second year of secondary school. I left school because my family did not have the resources to let me carry on my education. I left school in 1957. It was a private school in Mo Duc (Quang Ngai).

30. Did your children go to school in Dong Xoai?

My eldest son, aged ten, attended school in Dong Xoai. He was in the third year of elementary school. It was a public school.

31. Do you plan to send your children to school here?

I have already enrolled my eldest son in the fourth year of elementary school at a private school here.

32. Did you live in a strategic hamlet in Dong Xoai?

Yes, it was a well-defended and well-fortified strategic hamlet.

33. When was it organized?

It was built in 1960. It had many lines of fences and its earth walls were very solid.

34. Was it ever destroyed by the Front?

The strategic hamlet in Dong Xoai had never been destroyed by the VC from 1960 to 1965. But recently, at the start of the battle of Dong Xoai on June 10, 1965, the VC came and destroyed it.

35. How did living in a strategic hamlet affect your life and earnings?

People in Dong Xoai had an easy life thanks to the timberland. Most of the people who worked the forests were drivers of timber-carrying trucks. They had fairly adequate incomes.

36. How about you? How did living in a strategic hamlet affect your life and earnings?

My income increased by perhaps 90% when I moved to Dong Xoai.

37. What did you like about life in a strategic hamlet?

I appreciated the security that the strategic hamlet had given my family. I could work in peace.

38. What did you dislike about life in a strategic hamlet?

In accordance with government policy, life there did not cause any dissatisfaction among the population.

39. Did the village and hamlet authorities reside in the strategic hamlet?

It was a very secure area and there was a full staff of village and hamlet officials. They all received salaries for their work.

40. How did they behave?

I do not know how they behaved toward other people but they behaved very well toward me.

41. What did the villagers think of the GVN village and hamlet authorities? did they have any complaints about them?

As for myself I had no complaints about them. On the contrary, I appreciated their work very much and I welcomed a sound and strong government. The majority of the population also liked the officials. The villagers did what they had been told by the village and hamlet officials and they never had a complaint. Take the case of the building of the strategic hamlet: they did very good work without any flaws.

42. Describe the building of the strategic hamlet.

The building of the strategic hamlet was decided upon by the village authorities. Each family group was assigned a section of the defensive perimeter to build. Each family was assigned

a few meters of earth walls and fences to build. People were very enthusiastic in their work and everybody competed to finish his section as fast as possible. My family did the work in only two days. The strategic hamlet was built in three phases. It had three lines of fences -- one outer fence made of bamboo and two inner fences made of barbed wire.

43. How many families composed a family group?

Five families.

44. Were you remunerated for the work you had done to build the strategic hamlet?

No, but it was the duty of the citizens to build the strategic hamlet to give security to their families. There was no need for a remuneration.

45. How did the villagers feel when they had to sacrifice a few days of work to build the strategic hamlet?

I did not hear them complain about it. They were assigned their part of the work and I saw them try to do it as fast as possible in order to return to their regular work.

46. How many soldiers were there to protect the strategic hamlet?

There were so many soldiers that I cannot say the exact figure. There were two regular army battalions and many popular and regional forces. Regarding weapons, the area was protected by two 105mm. howitzers and six armored cars. You can almost say that Dong Xoai was as well defended as the Phuoc Long province capital.

47. Where were the soldiers stationed, i.e. inside or outside the strategic hamlet?

They were stationed outside the strategic hamlet and inside their posts.

48. How did the soldiers behave? Were there any differences in the behavior of the regular, regional and popular forces?

To say the truth, the Rangers and the regional forces behaved well but the "Biet kich" (Strike Forces) were somehow disturbing. The villagers were a little troubled by this bad behavior.

49. What kinds of trouble did the Biet kich cause to the villagers?

The new battalion of Biet kich which had been transferred there lately was composed mostly of young roudies and they were very quarrelsome. They caused some troubles to the villagers but there was nothing serious. They did not quarrel with the villagers but they quarreled with other infantry units or with the regional forces. There happened to be some big fights in the bar rooms or in the streets. People were afraid of them but did nothing to stop them.

50. Had the people filed any complaints about the bad behavior of the Biet kich ?

People complained only among themselves. They did not know how to file their protest, therefore they had to bear it.

51. Why didn't they go to the village council and ask it to intervene?

The village council could do nothing because those people were military. The villagers knew it was useless to complain and they kept silent. Also, they did not know who in the military they should see to make known their complaint.

52. How many men in the popular forces were there in your hamlet?

The [redacted] strategic hamlet had a platoon of popular forces.

53. How did they behave?

They behaved well because the majority of them were natives from the village.

54. Were there any VC activities in your strategic hamlet?

Until recently no VC activities could be seen in my strategic hamlet. So much firepower was kept there that the VC dared not come in. I cannot tell about their underground activities, but the first time they attacked Dong Xoai was on June 10, 1965.

55. Did the VC ever come there to collect taxes?

No.

56. Did the VC carry out any terroristic acts in your village or kill any of the people?

There were no VC at all in that area. They did not carry out

any terroristic acts and they never came to make propaganda.

57. Do you know if any people in your village had their sons in the Front?

No one in [redacted] village had sons in the VC.

58. Do you know if any people in your village had their sons in the government army?

Yes, many people let their sons join the popular forces. They did so because they wanted their sons to be stationed near them. A small number of the young men joined the Ranger units.

59. Could you estimate the total number of the men from your hamlet who had joined the GVN armed forces?

My hamlet had about two hundred young men and almost 40% had joined the GVN armed forces.

60. Do you know if any people from your hamlet had been abducted by the VC?

A number of people who went into the forests were indeed abducted by the VC. They were released after a few days. The VC also seized their trucks very often.

61. Do you know what happened to them during the time they were in the custody of the VC? How were they treated and what did the VC ask them to do?

I do not know because I have not been in their situations.

62. To whom did you pay taxes during your stay in Dong Xoai?

During the two years I spent in Dong Xoai, I had to pay taxes only on my tailor shop. I paid 450 piasters a year.

63. Did this tax increase during the past years?

It remained the same, year after year.

64. How did you feel about the tax you paid?

I found it reasonable.

65. Describe the history of your village during and after the resistance period.

Dong Xoai has existed since 1954 but I stayed there for only two years and I know very little about its history. I only know that it has always been under GVN control.

66. Do you know who the GVN village chief was in Dong Xoai?

Yes, it was Mr. [redacted] and he still is the village chief there. He is officially called the chairman of the village administrative committee.

67. What do you think of him?

He was nice and he was always willing to serve the people. The people could see him anywhere -- at his office or at his home -- and at any time. He always answered politely the questions asked by the villagers.

68. How long has he been a village chief?

He was elected two years ago. I remember it was in 1964 when the village administration changed from a village council to a village administrative committee.

69. Did you vote in that election?

Yes and all my family voted too.

70. How well did you know the candidates before you cast your ballot?

There were many candidates and I do not remember their names. I chose Mr. [redacted] because I knew he was strongly progovernment. He was also very eloquent because he had once been a VIS representative.

71. Did Mr. [redacted] campaign before the election?

Yes, he made speeches to the villagers. He exposed his curriculum vitae to them and asked for their votes. He promised to do his best to serve the people if he was elected.

72. Do you know who the district chief of Dong Xoai was?

When I just moved to Dong Xoai, Captain Vui was the district chief there. After some time he was transferred and replaced by Captain Can. I do not remember the names of the district chiefs who came after him but one was a major and one was a captain.

There were five district chiefs in all during the two years I lived there. Of the five, Captain Vui held his position for the longest time, then Captain Cao took over for seven or eight months. When I arrived in Dong Xoai Captain Vui had already been its district chief for one year and he held this position for another year.

73. Do you know why there were so many transfers lately among the district chiefs of Dong Xoai?

No, I do not know.

74. Do you think this is because of the frequent changes of governments in Saigon?

I do not know but the transfers were decided from above and were not due to any requests from the district chiefs themselves. Whatever the reasons of the transfers, all the district chiefs were well liked by the people because they had frequent contacts with them. They often visited the people in their houses and were in no way arrogant or pretentious because of their ranks.

75. What about yourself? Did you have frequent contacts with the district chiefs?

They came very often to my shop to have their clothes made. They were all very nice and treated me as their equal.

76. Do you know who the province chief was?

Previously it was Mr Do Dinh Duy. I do not know the name of the new province chief. They often came to visit the district office but not the strategic hamlet.

77. How often did the province chief visit the district office?

He did not come regularly but whenever his trips brought him to the area, he would stop by Dong Xoai. When I lived there he came once and chatted gently with the people.

78. What did you think of the GVN administration?

I had noticed that government employees have become hard working since the Revolutionary Council came to power. They work twice as much as before and they satisfy every wish of the people.

79. What did the people in your village think of the fall of the Diem regime?

People in my village did not know much about this subject but they noticed that they received more help with the coming to power of the Revolutionary Council. The government built schools and cared for the well-being of the people living in the strategic hamlet. The poor living there were often given rice free by the government.

80. What help did the people receive from the government under President Diem?

As a citizen I could not think of anything that Mr Diem did to help the people.

81. Do you know who heads the present government?

I regularly read newspapers and I know that the present government is headed by General Nguyen Cao Ky.

82. Was there a Vietnamese Information Service office in Dong Xoai?

Yes, Every day, loudspeakers mounted in the center of the district town made their broadcasts and gave the people information on what had happened in the past day.

83. What other communication media were available at the VIS office? Were there any printed matters?

Printed matters were read over the loudspeakers and people listened.

84. Were there any newspapers on sale in your village?

The village did not receive newspapers from Saigon regularly because of the frequent roadblocks. But it did receive them regularly when the road was safe.

85. Did you read newspapers regularly?

Yes. I regularly bought newspapers to be read by my customers and I read them every day.

86. What have you heard about the present government and its policies?

I read in the newspapers that General Nguyen Cao Ky strives to serve the rights of the poor, to give them prosperity. In comparison to the Diem government, the one headed by General Ky is much more clearsighted in this difficult time.

87. Do you know who headed the government prior to General Ky?

It was Mr. Khanh.

88. Did the GVN carry out any programs in your hamlet to help the people?

The government gave rice supplied by American aid and gave clothes to the poor of Dong Xoai. About two weeks ago, after the battle of Dong Xoai, the poor people there received many clothes from the government. Aside from the rice and the clothes, the government also helped the people by giving them all the authorizations which were necessary to do business such as travel papers or authorizations to draw timber from the forests.

89. What did the villagers think of the help they received from the government?

The villagers as a whole applauded these measures which contributed to making their life easy. As for myself I was not a poor person to receive rice and clothes but I appreciated very much the papers I received from the government. The government was always ready to grant me permission to buy all I needed for my tailor shop. I often went to Saigon to buy fabrics.

90. What did the villagers think in general of the GVN troops stationed in Dong Xoai? How did they feel toward them? Were they afraid of these troops?

People were most afraid of the American Strike Forces (Biet Kich My) who were reputed to be quarrelsome. As for the Rangers and the Regional and Popular Forces, they were well-liked by the people because they behaved well.

91. What do you mean by American Strike Forces? Were they all Americans?

No, the majority which composed the Strike Forces were young Vietnamese. There were only a few Americans who were very good toward the children. In return, the children liked to play with them very much.

92. Describe the battle of Dong Xoai.

At about 10 minutes to midnight on the night between June 9 and 10, 1965 the VC from outside started to shell the area.

I woke up from a sound sleep and brought all my family into the shelter. This shelter was dug inside the house for such an emergency. The aircraft came one hour later to give support to the ground troops. They dropped flares. Another hour went by and fighter-bombers came to bomb the surrounding forests to hamper the VC advance. When I realized that too many bombs were dropped, I moved my family to the shelter outside of the house. All the people in Dong Xoai dug two kinds of shelters. The shelters inside the houses were destined for emergencies while the outside shelters were more solid. My neighbor and I put money together and had a safe shelter dug outside our houses. We stayed motionless inside the shelter because we were too afraid. The bombing got fiercer and fiercer and the night was illuminated like daylight. Aircraft bombed my village throughout the night and throughout the next day. At noon of that day, the VC went from house to house to look for young men. They came to the entrance of my shelter and ordered all the young men to come out. The shelter had the shape of an S. The neighbor and I sat in the center of the shelter and with us were some soldiers who had come there to take refuge. We had our women and children sit near the entrance of the shelter and the VC could not see us. When the VC ordered us out, our women begged them and told them there were only women and children inside the shelter and that they were afraid of being killed by aircraft if they got out. The VC then left for another house. We remained inside the shelter for another night and, during that time, aircraft never ceased their bombing and strafing. There were jet aircraft and helicopters throughout the night. By seven o'clock the next morning, government troops came to liberate Dong Xoai district. Only then did we get out of our shelter. In all we stayed inside our shelter for one day and two nights. During the morning there was talk that the government would provide planes to evacuate the people out of Dong Xoai and all the people gathered on the soccer field to await evacuation. But planes were not available because they were too busy supplying the troops. We went home to have a bath and to have lunch and at about one o'clock in the afternoon we decided to leave by our own means. We hired two oxcarts for the price of six hundred piasters each to carry our two or three families to Binh Duong. From there to Saigon we rode on the bus. We arrived at the social welfare center in Cholon to be given help by the social welfare ministry. I do not know the casualty figure of that battle because we left very soon after the end of the fighting.

93. What did you do during the two nights and one day that you stayed in the shelter?

We had nothing to eat during that time and we could not get out because all the houses had been burned down. Both sides of the main street going through the district town were bared by destruction, not a single house was not in ruins. All our property including our clothes was destroyed along with our house. We came here with only the clothes we had on our bodies at that time, we had to be given additional clothes by people here.

94. How many persons composed your group when you left Dong Xoai to take refuge.

Of the people who left Dong Xoai by road, I cannot tell the figure because there were so many of them forming a long line on the road. Our group went together and we were three families. We hired two oxcarts with our own money to spare the walk to the children.

95. What damage did you and your family suffer as a result of this battle.

We had labored hard to put up my tailor shop which in the end constituted an asset of at least 100,000 piasters and that did not include the real estate. The shop was completely destroyed by bombs that night. Three or four large show-cases, two sewing machines and my entire stock of fabrics, all went up in flames. Nothing was left except the piece of real estate on which the shop was built. I brought with me only my watch and my transistor radio. It is because I always had my radio next to my bed for some entertainment at night that I could save it and carry it with me into the shelter. We were too confident about the superiority of the GVN forces stationed there and we had not prepared in advance a single bundle of our most precious belongings. Such a bundle would help us very much when we had to leave in a hurry.

96. How many houses in your village were destroyed in that battle.

About 40o/o of Dong Xoai was set on fire.

97. You said that 80o/o of the population left Dong Xoai to take refuge from the Communists. Do you know why some people remained there.

I do not know but it may be that they still had land and cattle or some other property left and they did not want to leave Dong Xoai. As for my family, we had nothing left and we moved out very easily. That is also the case of all those who lived on business.

98. Describe the two shelters that you had made to protect your family.

I hired people for four hundred piasters to dig the shelter which was inside my house. It was large enough to install a makeshift bed made out of some lumber boards I had retrieved from the saw-mill. All seven of us could sit at ease in that shelter which was covered by lumber boards. For the shelter outside my house, the cost of digging was six hundred piasters, i.e. one hundred piasters for each cubic meter of earth. It was covered with boards and a layer of earth. It was very solid. Only a direct bomb hit could kill us. We were not afraid of bullets when inside that shelter. The shelter inside the house was not covered by a layer of earth but I installed a bed above it.

99. Did you build your shelters on your own initiative or were you told to do so?

The villagers were ordered by the government to build shelters to be used in case of danger. The government asked us only to have a shelter where we thought fit, but I wanted safety for my family. Therefore, I had two shelters made. The one inside the house was used at the start of the fighting. It was convenient to have a shelter next to your bed. The one outside the house was used when the house was afire. I had this second shelter made because I thought we might have to take cover for a long time or we might have our house set afire during an attack. In the battle of Dong Xoai, if we had not had this second shelter, my family would have been killed to its last member. Think of it. If we had to lie on the ground after the house was burned we would have been killed.

100. How long before the battle of Dong Xoai did you complete the shelters?

About two weeks before.

101. You said that government officials had ordered the people to make shelters to be used in case of danger. Was life in Dong Xoai dangerous?

Not very dangerous. There had been some shelling by the VC before but it was not serious. It was prudence which made the government officialss remind the people to have shelters.

102. Describe the shelling by the VC on your village.

There had been no shelling before which was as important as that during the battle of Dong Xoai. Previously the VC lobbed only one or two shells on the perimeter of the strategic hamlet. This caused no damage to the villagers.

103. What did the people feel about these attacks?

I do not know what other people felt but for myself I disliked them 100% because I could not live in peace.

104. How did you feel about your house being destroyed by the bombs? Were you mad at the GVN for dropping bombs?

No, I was not angry at the GVN because it was the Communists who fired at aircraft and caused them to drop bombs. I knew the aircraft did not drop bombs on my house purposely. The sole purpose for dropping bombs was to repulse the VC.

105. How did other people feel?

I do not know. After I got out of the shelter I was too busy with my own business to care about other people's business. When we were on our way out of Dong Xoai, the two families which went together with us did not show anger or any other feelings although their houses had been burned too. One of the men is my cousin who had also come from Quang Ngai. He worked for the police of Dong Xoai and he lived next to my house.

106. Describe why you had moved from Quang Ngai to the Southern part of South Vietnam.

Life was difficult in Quang Ngai and I decided to move from place to place in search for a place to settle down where life is easy.

107. If it were not for the battle of Dong Xoai which destroyed your house, would you leave for another place?

I had been in Dong Xoai for only two years and I had managed to have a prosperous business. I could have worked for a few more years and be able to afford a car. I liked life there very much and I would not have left for another place. I had bought lately a 13,000-piaster house there and my income was very adequate. I bought the house because I had intended to stay there forever. It was the same house where my shop was. I bought it from my landlord. My customers liked my shop very much and they came in numbers. I had two employees and I earned from four to five hundred piasters daily.

108. What did the VC do during the short time they were in control of Dong Xoai?

I do not know because I did not dare to leave the shelter for fear of being killed or arrested. I got out only at seven o'clock on the morning of the second day when the town was liberated by our troops. I know only that the VC came to my shelter and said all young men and all soldiers should get out or else get killed.

109. When all was quiet, do you know how many young men had been arrested by the VC?

I do not know because the town was in a state of confusion. Everybody was trying to see if he could salvage something to carry with him to safety. Everybody was busy doing that and also asking his friends to come together with him. People were afraid the VC might come back and they wanted to move out as soon as possible. Many people left on that day.

110. What have you heard about the Liberation Front and its aims?

I have always lived in a secure area and I have heard nothing about the Liberation Front of South Vietnam. My only experience was that battle of Dong Xoai when the VC came into the town.

111. As an ordinary civilian, do you know why the VC fight the GVN?

No, I do not know. I have not heard enough about that subject to know anything. I only heard that it is the policy of the government to fight the Communists but I would have to live under the VC to know about their policy.

112. Do you know why the government fights the Communists?

The government fights the Communists because they make people miserable, they block roads to hamper traffic and to prevent people from doing business and they follow a Party-rule dictatorship.

113. What is the name of the Party?

I read in the newspapers that it is the Communist Party.

114. What have you heard about life in VC military units?

It is necessary to be a VC to know how his life is. I am not a VC, therefore I do not know.

115. Do you have any close friends serving in VC military units?

No.

116. Are any members of your family or relatives serving in the ARVN or with the GVN?

Not in my family, but my wife has an uncle who has been serving as a hamlet chief for many years. She also had one cousin who was killed in action when he was doing his military service. Another cousin of hers is still living and doing his military service.

117. Have they visited you and your wife?

No, one is now in Pleiku and the other was killed a few years ago.

118. In the battle of Dong Xoai, did the Front warn the people to take cover or to leave the area before the fight?

No, I received no warning. If the GVN had known in advance and had taken precautions then how could the VC possibly have penetrated the town?

119. What about previous attacks? Did the VC warn the people to take cover?

No. The shells landed on the outer limit of the hamlet and caused only slight damage to a garden. No one was injured. Before the battle of Dong Xoai, the VC shelled the village only three times.

120. How did the people feel about these shellings?

People were angry because they could not sleep in peace and had to take cover in trenches and because the shellings had scared them. People resented the VC for their shellings and their roadblocks which denied the people a peaceful life. The VC also harassed those who went into the forests to cut the trees. They confiscated their timber-carrying trucks and forbade them to work there.

121. Do you know why the VC forbade the people to work in the forests?

I do not know because I was not in this situation. I was told by the people how many trucks had been seized by the VC on

that day, that is all I know. Nobody was killed by the VC, they only seized the trucks which were later taken back by government soldiers.

122. Describe in detail the bombing of Dong Hoai by government aircraft.

I was staying inside the shelter and I heard and made out that the majority of the aircraft taking part in the airstrikes was composed of jet aircraft and helicopters. They dropped all kinds of bombs and rockets and strafed with heavy machine guns. People there were deeply afraid of that bombing and they quivered at the very sound of aircraft.

123. Did the government warn the people that their village was going to be bombed?

I do not know because at the first shot fired I immediately took cover in the shelter and I heard nothing which seemed like a warning by the government.

124. You said you had a radio; what station did you listen to?

I listened to the Voice of the ARVN and to Radio Saigon. The signals came in very clear.

125. Did you listen to Radio Hanoi?

No, it was impossible because my house was close to the police station. However, I did not feel the need to listen to Radio Hanoi because I liked most to hear news broadcasts and folk music and I always tuned in to the Voice of the ARVN and Radio Saigon for these.

126. Which did you prefer? To be informed through the newspapers or through the news broadcasts?

I was informed by both media. I bought newspaperrs regularly to be read by myself and my customers and I also turned the radio on in my shop to entertain them.

127. What information did the village office of the Vietnamese Information Service give the villagers?

There was no reading room but the information office did distribute news bulletins to the villagers from time to time. These bulletins gave news about what was going on in the province. People were also given pamphlets and documents sent

by
in the Information Ministry.

128. When you left your village were told what the GVN would do for you and your family?

When I arrived here I was given shelter by the Social Welfare ministry. My family was given mosquito nets and blankets and since that day we have been given room and board by the Social Welfare ministry. We are comforted by this. As for the reparations I would receive for the destruction of my house, I have not heard anything yet. When I left Dong Xoai I chose to go to Saigon to work there. I thought that it would be easy to find employment in Saigon. I did not dream of getting rich there but it would be easy to earn a decent income. While in Dong Xoai, the government did not tell the people where to go or what help they would receive. The people left on their own because the government was too busy with the events.

129. Why did you know to bring your family here to the Social Welfare Center?

When I arrived in Saigon, people directed me to go to the Social Welfare ministry to ask for help. We had no money and we asked the ministry to help us for some time until I can get a job. I do not want to be a burden to the ministry for a long time. I am still hunting for a job but I have not been successful yet.

130. Describe your trip to Saigon. Make sure to point out what directions you had received and from whom.

My family made the trip together with the families of two neighbors, one of whom was a policeman. I suggested that they come with me to Saigon. We went on foot for about twenty kilometers to Song Be. We spent the night there. The next morning we hired two oxcarts to go to Binh Duong. We slept in the market that night and took the bus to Saigon the next day. We spent that night sleeping at the bus station. People around the bus station said that refugees from the Communists could go to the Social Welfare ministry to ask for help. Some policemen showed me the way to the ministry and officials there brought my family to this Social Welfare Center. We have been staying here for twenty days now. My neighbor who was policeman in Dong Xoai had reported for duty at the Directorate of National Police in Saigon and his family does not live here anymore.

131. Why did you choose Saigon to take refuge?

Because it is a safe area and because it seems easy to find employment.

132. What did you fear most when you decided to leave your village?

I worried whether I could give a decent life to my family in Saigon.

133. Did you fear the VC might stop you from leaving Dong Xoai?

Yes, I was very afraid of being stopped by the VC on my way to Saigon. I am a young man and I was afraid they would take me away with them. Fortunately we were not stopped.

134. Did you expect to leave your village for a long or a short time or forever?

When I left Dong Xoai I expected to leave forever because I had nothing left and I had no money to start business again. I decided to go to Saigon to live from day to day there. However, if I had some money I would return to Dong Xoai. I still have an orchard in the back of my house there.

135. What property did you or your family bring with you?

We did not foresee that we would have to leave our house, therefore we did not make any preparations and all our property was burned to ashes. We had only the clothes we wore on our bodies. I was in my underwear when the fighting began and I brought with me only my watch and my radio. We were given some clothes by charitable people in Binh Duong. As for money, I had not much left. I had just gone to Saigon to buy clothing material for my shop. A good tailor must have plenty of material for the customers to choose and the "Biet kich" soldiers were my best customers. I filled my shop with material only three days before the battle of Dong Xoai and I used almost all my cash for this. The "Biet kich" were very fond of fine shirts and tight pants because they were young. When I left I had only a few thousand piasters which were almost eaten up during the trip to Saigon. My wife brought with her some gold jewels which she always carried on her.

136. Are you worried about the property you left behind?

I am not worried about the property I left behind. I left behind my orchard and two partly burned sewing machines. The sewing machines were consigned to my

neighbor's house which was not completely destroyed. I considered this property as lost and I did not expect to return there, therefore, I am not worried. I put my sewing machines in my neighbor's house and closed the door and he went with me to Saigon.

137. If your neighbor's house was not destroyed, then why did he leave?

He left to report to the Police Directorate in Saigon. The Police chief of Dong Xoai also left for Saigon. I do not know whether my neighbor will return to Dong Xoai or not. But he came to Saigon with all his family because he was afraid the VC might attack Dong Xoai again.

138. Did your entire family come with you or did some members stay behind?

My entire family came with me -- my mother, my wife, my younger sister and my three children.

139. What do you think might happen to you if you went back to your village?

I have not thought about this because I do not intend to go back.

140. How long do you think the war will go on?

I do not know exactly when this war will end but I guess it will be long.

141. Would you go back to Dong Xoai when the war ends?

When peace is restored I may return to Dong Xoai to do business. In peacetime Dong Xoai can be very prosperous thanks to the forest riches, and I can earn very easily four or five hundred piasters a day as a tailor.

142. Whom do you blame for causing you to leave Dong Xoai?

My family and all the people of Dong Xoai blamed it on the VC. If it had not been for the VC who had fired on aircraft, my house would not have been burned. Now I hate the VC for a thousand years.

143. Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the help you received?

My entire family are fed by the Social Welfare ministry and we have been given a well-aerated room. The government officials have been nice toward the refugees and I am satisfied.

144. Have you received any news from the people who remained in Dong Xoai?

No. Since I came here I have not met anyone who comes from Dong Xoai, therefore I have no news from there.

145. Did anyone try to persuade you or the other refugees to go back to your village?

No, but even if that were the case I would still not go back because I have lost all means of living in Dong Xoai.

146. Have any of the villagers who left with you moved back to your village?

Six families are now living together in my room and no one intends to move back to Dong Xoai.

147. While in Dong Xoai, what did you hear the people say about the Americans they saw?

I do not know what other people said but I think the Americans are one of many friendly peoples to give military aid to us.

148. What do you think they are doing in Vietnam?

They are in Vietnam to help us fight the Communists.

149. In addition to the U.S. , what other friendly countries are now helping us?

There are so many countries that I do not remember all of them. I remember only the U.S. and the Philippines. They help us with men and materiel so that we can proceed more vigourously our anti-Communist fight. The other day I visited the zoo and I saw some Filipinos and some Asians who resembled us very much except for their language. I do not know their language. I do not know their nationality.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS.

The subject, although a refugee; had not lived in an area controlled by the VC and therefore was not informed about Front activities. He appeared to have above average intelligence. It seemed to the interviewer that the subject tried to give as little information as possible although he appeared to be relaxed through the interview. He appeared to be sincerely pro-GVN but he avoided talking about feelings and attitude of other people in his village.

MASTER COPY

NO. AGR 9

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

1. Name of interviewer [redacted]
2. Name of subject [redacted]
3. Time and date of interview :
   From 15.50 to 17.00 on July [redacted] 1965
   From 16.00 to 17.15 on July [redacted] 1965
   From _____ to _____ on _____ 19___
4. Place of interview :
   Social welfare Center in Chelon
5. Sex of subject : Male (v) Female ( )
6. Age of subject : 33 (born in 1932)
7. Ethnic background : Vietnamese
8. Place of birth :
   hamlet [redacted]
   village [redacted]
   district Mo Duc
   province Quang Ngai
9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :
   hamlet _____
   village [redacted]
   district Dong Xoai
   province Phuoc Long
10. (a) Length of residence in last location : Two years
    (b) Who controlled the place of residence :
    GVN (v) VC ( ) Contested ( ) How long? Since 1954

NO. AGR 9

11. Number of brothers (zero) and sisters (one)

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : zero

13. Marital status : Married

14. Number of children : One son aged 10 and two daughters

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age : zero

16. Parents with subject (v) or not with subject ( )
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject( ) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject (v) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject(v) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion : Buddhism

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : Tailor

19. Economic status : Well-to-do
(a) VC designation
(b) Landowner? No

20. Education :
illiterate ( )
literate (v)
schooling completed : Two years of secondary school

21. Any relatives in VC : No

22. Any relatives in GVN : No

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by :
(a) French No
(b) GVN No
(c) VC No

24. When became a refugee : June [redacted], 1965

AGR

INTERVIEW

10

THE RAND CORPORATION

[redacted]

STUDIES OF THE NATIONAL FRONT FOR THE LIBERATION OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR-10

Date of Interview: [redacted] July 1965

Subject's Category: Refugee

Rank or Function:

Area of Operation:

1. How long have you been here?

I don't remember. About twenty days.

2. Did you come straight from Dong Xoai?

I came straight to Saigon from Dong Xoai. When I was at the bus station, someone told me how to get to the Social Welfare Ministry. Then the Social Welfare Ministry sent me to this place.

3. Did the GVN provide you with transportation to Saigon?

After the Dong Xoai battle, I walked to Saigon. The GVN didn't take me to Saigon. After the battle, the GVN was too busy transporting the families of the ARVN soldiers back to Saigon

4. You said you were born in Bac Lieu. Tell us how you managed to go to Dong Xoai?

I could not make a living in my native village. I was too poor, so I left for Dong Xoai.

(Did the GVN send you there?)

At that time, the situation was still secure, I went there on my own.

5. When did you leave your village for Dong Xoai?

I left my village in 1960.

6. What kind of occupation did you have prior to leaving Bac Lieu? What have you done during the year or so prior to leaving?

I worked as a hired laborer, since I didn't have any ricefield. I heard that I would earn more working as a wood cutter, so I left for Dong Xoai.

7. How much were you able to make in Bac Lieu as a hired laborer?

I don't remember. I spent all the money I earned.

8. How old is your daughter? Is she your only child?

I had two children. My oldest child, a son, was killed by the Militia. After my son was killed I was so sad that I left my village for Dong Xoai.

9. Could you describe the circumstances under which he lost his life?

My son was at that time still very young. He went around to play and passed by the office guarded by the Militia. The guard did not know that his rifle was loaded, so he aimed at my son and pulled the trigger for fun. The bullet went off and killed him. My son was them 15 years old.

10. What happened as a result of this accident? Did you think that it was an accident? Was there a trial?

The care was brought to court. The tribunal said it had been manslaughter through negligence and condemned the Militiaman to eight months in jail. I was told to file a petition to the Higher Court in Saigon to ask for compensation, since I had only one son on whom I could rely for support. However the matter is still pending before the Administrative court. It was an accident, not a murder.

11. Did this accident take place in 1960?

Yes.

12. What did the people in your village think about this? Were the Militia otherwise well behaved? Did accidents like this happen very often?

At that time the situation was still secure, and no accident had ever happened. The Militiaman was still young, about 17 years old, and he loved to play. When he took over the guard duty he didn't know that the rifle which was handed to him was loaded.

13. Did the judge tell you how much to expect in compensation?

The court down in my area did not have the authority to decide on the amount of compensation. I was told by the Higher Court that the GVN would pay the compensation. Since that time I have been too busy earning a living, and I didn't have time to go and make out a petition to the GVN. Under the Diem regime, no action was taken on that. Recently the Court has considered my dossier and summoned me to court to fill out all the necesary papers.

14. Tell me more about the area in which you lived prior to going to Dong Xoai. Did you know the village chief?

Yes, I knew the village chief.

(What did you think of him and of the rest of the GVN officials?)

I didn't do anything which offended or angered them so they were nice to me. Their behavior towards me was correct.

15. At that time did you hear about the uprisings conducted by the VC in other provinces?

When I was in the village, it was very secure and I didn't hear anything about the uprisings. For the past few years, I have been away, so I don't know anything about the situation in my village.

16. Prior to 1954, did you hear anything about or witness any military operations in your area?

No. My village was a secure area during the Resistance because it was near the market place, and the district seat. For the years I was in Dong Xoai I was relatively well off because I could earn enough to eat. After the Dong Xoai battle I fled from the area. I have never lived in a VC controlled area. I have never been caught in any fighting except for the battle at Dong Xoai.

17. What do you think of the war which has been taking place in this country for the past four or five years?

As a civilian I don't know anything about military matters. I am only concerned with my own work.

18. Let us talk about the battle of Dong Xoai. When did you first see any indications there was going to be a fight there?

No, I didn't see any indications to that effect. If we did, none of the people there would have been killed. At night, when we heard shots, we took cover in shelters. The battle continued for that night and the next day. When things had calmed down a little, we fled to the forest and left for Saigon.

19. Were you living within the district town, or outside the district town?

I lived outside the district town, but my place of residence was close to the district town. I lived in the [redacted] which bordered the route leading to [redacted]

20. When did you know there was a battle going on? When you heard explosions or before you heard explosions?

Usually, during rainy nights for example, we heard shots fired. The night of the attack, we heard deafening explosions, so we knew a big battle was going on. Before, occasionally we

heard explosions from GVN artillery or mortar shellings, or shots fired by the ARVN on guard duty to warn the VC off.

21. Did the ARVN soldiers often fire warning shots? Did that happen frequently in the past?

Only occasionally. When the night was pitch dark and the guards heard suspicious noises, they fired some warning shots. The night of the attack, the firing continued for over one hour and by then we realized a big battle was going on.

22. Did any civilians ever get hurt by accident during this time?

No. The soldiers only opened fire at night, not during the day. At night, all the people were at home, and nobody has ever been hurt by these shots.

23. Did the people know who the GVN soldiers were firing at and why?

No. Sometimes at night, when we heard shots, we were startled. But usually we only heard one or two shots and things quieted down again. So we never bothered to take cover in trenches when we heard shots. The day of the battle, we heard loud explosions from heavy weapons, and we had to take cover.

24. To what extent were the people in your place aware of the presence of the VC in surrounding areas? What was their attitude? What did they think of the VC?

There were no VC in my area. The night of the attack, the VC came from we don't know where. The people there didn't go very far to fell down trees or to till the land. They went as far as two kilometers from our place only.

(Did the people know the VC were near where they lived?)

Yes. The people knew the VC were about 15 or 20 kilometers from the area. They never dared to go to the area where they suspected the VC were living. They were afraid the VC would capture them.

(What did the people think of the VC?)

I didn't hear them say anything about the VC. They were only concerned with their work or with their business. They only said they were afraid to go to the area near the VC region lest the VC capture them.

25. Did any of the people ever say good things about the VC?

Even if they liked the VC, they would not dare to say anything about this, because they lived under the GVN. I don't know what they thought about the VC. As a civilian and a worker,

I was not afraid of any sides, but I didn't dare to venture far into the area near the VC region, because I heard that the VC would not allow me to cut down trees there and that they would fine me or capture me.

26. During the three or four years that you lived in Dong Xoai, you never saw any VC? Did the VC ever come through your area on propaganda missions? Did they ever conduct any military operations in that area?

I was stopped by the VC once, while I was riding on a bus going to Saigon. On the way, the bus was stopped and the VC told the driver to turn around because they had built blocks along the way.

27. Did the VC take the passengers inside the jungle to make propaganda?

Quite frequently, the VC stopped the cars and forced the passengers to go inside the jungle to attend a propaganda meeting. But the time I was stopped by them, they just forced us to turn around and go back.

28. How did the people in the bus react to this?

The people were mad, and some insulted them in secret. Because they could not go on their business trip, they were mad at the VC.

29. Did the VC themselves come out and stop the bus or was it because the road was destroyed that the bus could not proceed?

The VC told us to turn around. Even if they had not been there, the bus could not have proceeded because of all the roadblocks. The VC told the driver that road had been blocked in many sections, so we had better go back.

30. Was that all they said?

Yes. The driver was afraid and went back. If he had not obeyed the VC, the latter would fire at the tires.

31. Tell me about your situation now. Could you describe for us how you like it here. Are you satisfied?

The GVN provides my family with two meals per day. But I have to think of my future. I have to think of having a house for my family. I don't feel at ease living here, because I have to find a job and make my own living. I have submitted an application at the Social Welfare Ministry, and I have asked them to get me a job as a laborer in whichever agency has such an opening.

32. Do you plan to stay in Saigon?

I made my living by tilling the soil, but now I can no longer live in the countryside where the war is deadly. Now that I am here in Saigon, I plan to stay if I can find a job here.

33. How long will you stay here?

I don't know. It is up to the Social Welfare Ministry. I don't know when I will get a job.

INTERVIEWVER'S COMMENTS

The interview was terminated after a brief session because the subject had never lived in a VC controlled area nor had he experienced any prolonged contact with the VC

NO. AGR 10

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

1. Name of interviewer [redacted]
2. Name of subject [redacted]
3. Time and date of interview :
   From 4PM to 5PM on June [redacted] 1965
   From _____ to _____ on _____ 19 ___
   From _____ to _____ on _____ 19___
4. Place of interview :
   SOCIAL WELFARE CENTER (CHO LON)
5. Sex of subject : Male (X) Female ( )
6. Age of subject : 51
7. Ethnic background : Vietnamese
8. Place of birth :
   hamlet [redacted]
   village [redacted]
   district Chau Thanh
   province Bac Lieu
9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :
   hamlet _____
   village Dong Xoai
   district Dong Lung
   province Phuoc Long
10. (a) Length of residence in last location : 3 years
    (b) Who controlled the place of residence :
    GVN (X) VC ( ) Contested ( ) How long? Till the present time

NO. AGR 10

11. Number of brothers ( ) and sisters ( )

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : _____

13. Marital status : Married

14. Number of children : 1 daughter

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age : _____

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject( ) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject (X) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject(X) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion : Buddhism

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : Wood-cutter

19. Economic status : Poor Farmers (GVN classification)
(a) VC designation _____
(b) Landowner? _____

20. Education :
illiterate ( )
literate (X)
schooling completed : _____

21. Any relatives in VC : No

22. Any relatives in GVN : No

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by : No
(a) French
(b) GVN
(c) VC

24. When became a refugee : Following Dong Xoai battle

AGR

INTERVIEW

11

THE RAND CORPORATION
[redacted]

STUDIES OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR-11

Date of Interview	:	July [redacted], 1965
Subject's Category	:	Refugee - February 1965
Area of Residence	:	[redacted] village Ben-Tranh district Dinh Tuong province

1. How long have you been here ?

I came here in February and I have been here five months.

2. Where did you come from ?

I was from [redacted] hamlet, [redacted] village in Ben Tranh district.

3. How did you get here ?

I came here by sampan. I did not take the canal because it was under close surveillance by the VC. The river was less tightly controlled, that is why I chose to escape by river. Anyway, I had to sneak out at night for fear of being stopped by the VC. (What time of night did you leave and how long did it take you to reach here ?) I set out at about 8 p.m. in near darkness. I took my wife and children into my sampan and we made our way to the river. After some time we met a barrage which the VC had put up to prevent traffic on the river. I pulled my sampan over it and we continued on our way. I felt more relaxed after we had crossed that point. We arrived here at about 10 p.m. the same night. There are reception centers here and I met many friends who had come out before me. They were happy to see me and they helped me in every way. They gave me hospitality for some time while I filed a request to the government in order to be allowed to settle here in the newly-created resettlement center. I was accepted into the center by the village authorities who gave me a piece of land. I have built a temporary hut in which I am now living.

4. What are your plans and prospects now ?

Back in my old hamlet, my wife and I lived on fishing and on weaving mats. We cannot live anymore on fishing because there are no ponds around here, therefore, we live only on weaving reeds to make mats. This trade is profitable only if you weave your own reeds. I do not have enough capital to do it, I should have three or four thousand piasters to start with. Now I have made an arrangement with a mat dealer who gives me the reeds to weave at home and I take the mats back to him for a price of twenty or thirty piasters a pair.

5. How large is your family ?

I am married and have seven children. My eldest son is now fourteen years old.

6. Did all the members of your family live together before you came here or were some living apart ?

We lived together.

7. How big was your hamlet and village ? How many hamlets did it have ? How many people lived in your hamlet and village ?

My village was very large. I do not know how many people lived there nor how many hamlets it had. I have a large family and was very busy. I know only about my own hamlet and a few nearby hamlets. About five hundred people lived in my hamlet.

8. How long had you lived there ? Where did you live previously ?

I lived there for two and a half years. Previously I lived in a village in Can Tho (Phong Dinh province) and I left for [redacted] in Dinh Tuong province when the VC began their activities. They forced people to dig up the roads, to erect obstacles and I realized that life would not be quiet there. I then left for [redacted] which was secure at that time. Life was quiet and easy. I found that fishing and weaving mats were lucrative and I had thought of living there for the rest of my life. But then the VC came and it started all over again. I could not bear their activities and had to move to a more secure area here. (So the first time you left, there had not actually been any fighting or bombing but you just foresaw it, didn't you ?) Yes. Previously I lived in [redacted] village in Can Tho. The VC had just begun their activities in the area. At night they beat drums and herded the people out of the village and told them to go and sabotage National Road no. 4. We were forced to dig up the road and erect obstacles. I became worried and decided to go elsewhere to live a quieter life. There had not been any serious fighting or any bombing at that time. The VC only engaged in harassment of small and remote GVN outposts

9. What did the people think of these VC activities ?

They were extremely concerned when they saw that. They talked anxiously about the future and were worried about future troubles which might come. They thought perhaps other regions might be quieter than their own and they wished to move there. It was the same story which happened again at the second place. It was bearable at first and then came the time when the people risked any difficulty and hardship to get out. They had to sneak out of their village and they faced punishment if they were captured. (In general, what did the people think about the VC themselves ? Some of the VC must have been local

people, what did the villages say about them and the way they thought ?) In regard to VC, the people in my village as a whole knew them too well. We were refugees from North Vietnam and we had experienced life under the Communists. In North Vietnam, I lived in a region controlled by the Communists for twelve consecutive years with only rare occupations by the GVN for no more than two or three months at a time, this is to say how strong the Communists were in my region. I was well acquainted with their policies and the way they led the people toward slavery under Communism. As a result, my conscience can never let me live in harmony with the VC.

10. How many families left your village in Can Tho when you did ?

At the time I left my village in Can Tho, about ten families left together for the same reason. Of these ten families, about five or six families have again taken refuge here in Long-Dinh. The others have dispersed in all directions. (The first time you left, how many families stayed behind ?) [redacted] village in Can Tho was a very large village with a population of about four or five thousand people. It was a large village because it was located near the district town. I do not know how many people remained behind in my village. As for my hamlet, it had a population of about five hundred people, of which about three hundred remained behind. (What about the second time you took refuge, i.e. when you came here ?) My hamlet in [redacted] village had been inhabited by about five hundred persons. At about the time I left to come here, there were only about one hundred persons left there. (How many had left in the past years ? Why did they leave and where did they go ?) Only a very few people had left in previous years. They really began to leave in 1964 and particularly in 1965 when over half of the population took refuge. They left their hamlet because they could not bear the increase in activities of the VC. The majority of them came to settle here with help from the government which has given us houses to live in. The rest of the refugees went to other places where they had relatives or friends. We left because we could not live under the VC who made us attend meetings where they taught us their policies. To tell the truth, I do not know what made other people leave. I know only my own motives but I could guess they were similar to the motives of the rest of the refugees. It was impossible for me to know why they left their hamlet because it was dangerous to ask them this while living under the VC. We were free to talk only with our close relatives. Nobody had enough courage to discuss the matter of leaving or not leaving.

11. Had your hamlet been bombed or shelled at the time you left ?

To tell the truth, I did not leave my hamlet until a great number of people and cattle had died, a great number of houses had been destroyed by bombs, artillery and mortar shells.

12. Did this cause any of the people to become angry at the GVN and join the Front ?

The bombing and shelling were obviously caused by the VC. Whenever aircraft flew over my hamlet, the VC stood right among the people and fired at the aircraft. When aircraft came to bomb the hamlet, the VC had disappeared long before and it was the people who were the targets of the bombs. The guerrillas suffered only two or three killed during all this time while the people bore the major part of the casualties. As a result, we could not like the VC and their activities.

13. How many times was your village attacked ?

I cannot remember all the times my village was attacked because there were so many. I remember only the more serious attacks my village had suffered from bombs and shells and these attacks numbered about three or four. (Describe those important attacks for us.) One day a large group of VC came to our hamlet at about 10 a.m. Then ARVN soldiers carried out an operation in that area and when they came close to our hamlet they sighted two or three VC. They fired mortar shells for some time at the suspected VC positions and when they saw that all was quiet, they began to move into the hamlet. The VC opened fire at them when they came close. I must recognize that the VC fought very hard. The ARVN soldiers called in mortar and artillery support and also air support. The VC fired fiercely at aircraft which came to bomb them. Of course, during the battle, people dared not come up from their shelters. In spite of this, a number of houses were destroyed and a number of people were killed.

14. What did your parents do to earn a living ?

My parents lived in North Vietnam on rice farming. They also lived secondarily on fishing and for two months a year they wove mats. I also lived on these same trades.

15. Why did you choose to come South ? How did you make the trip ?

After the defeat at Dien Bien Phu the country was to be partitioned. The GVN at that time told the people to choose between the regimes of the Communists and the Nationalists. Those who chose the Communist regime had to remain in the North and those who chose the Nationalist regime had to live for the South. My past experience with the Communists made me decide to go South because I could not live under Communism and also because the choice was free. The Communists tried to stop the people in my region from leaving but they failed because we were too numerous and we were determined to leave. We went on foot for five days and our group formed a long line which looked like the flow of a river. I had brought with me some belongings but then my children were so tired that I had to throw my belongings away. After we arrived in Hanoi, we were greeted by government officials who put us into trucks and drove us to a refugee center. From there, the other refugees were taken to South Vietnam by government aircraft. I did not go with them because I met some of my relatives in the GVN army, and they offered to recognize us as military dependents. Consequently, I made the trip to South Vietnam in a more comfortable manner with my relatives on an American warship.

16. How much education have you had ? Can you read and write ?

I am very grateful to my parents for the education they had given me while in North Vietnam. I was in my last year of elementary school in Vietnamese and I also had three years of Chinese character study. (Did your children go to school in [redacted] village ?) When I arrived in the South, I was very poor and could not send my children to school. They did not attend school until three or four years ago. (Did you plan to send your children to school here ?) Yes. I want very much to have them attend school here. I have seven children, of whom five are of school age. But we are in a difficult situation and we need some of our children at home to help us with our work, therefore, I can manage to send only three of my children to school.

17. What did you think of the GVN village and hamlet authorities ?

The village chief as well as the hamlet chief were pro-GVN people and they were fairly dedicated to the people in my village. They tried rather successfully to win the villagers over to the GVN side but when the VC became more active over there, the village chief and the hamlet chief had to leave to take refuge here. They are still living here and as far as I know still strongly pro-GVN. (What did the

villagers think of them ?) I can tell you only about the people living in my neighborhood. I lived with my fellow North Vietnamese refugees in a particular section of my hamlet and I could see that they were all faithful to the GVN and its officials.

18. Who controlled your hamlet a year ago ?

My hamlet was still under GVN control a year ago. The VC came only occasionally and furtively. They had done nothing serious to us yet nor had they imposed any oppression on us yet. (Who controlled it when you left it for here ?) The situation worsened every day during the past year. The guerrillas operated more and more openly. The GVN tried as best it could to restore security by setting up night ambushes and by carrying out military operations. We, the people, saw the danger increase every day. We thought the day would come when we could not bear the VC oppression any more and would be driven toward the VC side. There was also the danger of being killed by accident during the fighting. All these reasons pushed us to leave our hamlet and come here to take refuge.

19. How did the GVN troops behave when they passed through your hamlet ? Did their behavior change during the past years ?

Previously the GVN troops had been very friendly toward us. There were always a few North Vietnamese among them and we were very happy to engage in conversation with them and they were happy too. Previously they had always been willing to chat gently with us but during the past year their attitude has changed. They acted as if they did not have time to waste with us. Every time they came to our neighborhood, they had one excuse or another for declining to engage in conversation with us. This is the only change in their attitude that I have noticed. I recognize that they were kept more and more busy by the war and that they had to be more prudent. I also recognize that the war has become more and more extensive and conspicuous every day. (How did the villagers feel about the GVN troops ? Has there been any instance of bad behavior from the GVN troops ?) I do not want to flatter excessively but the truth is that we were very happy every time the GVN troops came to our hamlet because we then felt protected and safe from VC oppression and coercion. When GVN troops were there we did not have to attend meetings organized by the VC during which they lectured us on Communist policies.

20. What forms did the VC activities take in your hamlet ?

They controlled and carried out a census on the population of the hamlet. They divided the villagers into different categories such as young men, old men and women, etc, and made a count of each category. They also made a survey to know how much property each person had, e.g. how much land, how many cattle.

21. How often did GVN troops pass through your hamlet ?

This varied. Sometimes the troops passed through every two or three days and sometimes not for several months. Regarding the Regional and the Popular Forces troops, they stayed permanently in my village. (Were there Regional and Popular Forces in your village at the time you left to come here ?) There were no GVN soldiers there anymore. The outpost itself was destroyed. Only civilians stay there now.

22. Did the Front carry out any terroristic acts in your village or kill any of the people ?

I lived in a section of my hamlet together with other North Vietnamese refugees and with only a very few South Vietnamese. We lived rather apart from the rest of the hamlet and the VC were not very active there. None of our people have been killed or arrested by the VC who just showed up from time to time. (Have you been aware of terroristic acts committed by the VC ?) From the time to time the VC sneaked into my hamlet to make propaganda to us. They urged us to return to the North. They said the North Vietnamese government would be kind to us if we agreed to be loyal to it. The VC also promised that the government would provide us means to return to our native country. But this propaganda had no appeal to us because we knew the Communists too well. We realized quite clearly that this was only one of the numerous VC plots to deceive. However, we listened passively to their propaganda to please them.

23. After it took over your hamlet, did the Front set up their administration there ?

I was not aware of this and I have not seen any of their activities regarding this. I only saw their military activities around my hamlet.

24. Did your attitude and that of other villagers toward the Front change during the past year ?

As far as I know, the North Vietnamese in my hamlet had a firmer stand than the South Vietnamese in regard to VC activities. We were steadfast in our position and we showed no fear toward the VC. On the contrary, the South Vietnamese people were somehow anguished and discouraged when they were faced with ever increasing VC activities and they showed some sympathy for them. (If you say that they were sympathetic to the VC, then has their number grown or diminished ?) I cannot tell about the situation prior to the VC take-over. They must have had a number of secret sympathizers but as a whole the villagers appeared to me to have the same attitude as any people of other villages, i.e. they looked peaceful to me. However, this situation has changed during the past year. While the North Vietnamese showed their disagreement with the VC policies by leaving the hamlet to take refuge elsewhere, the South Vietnamese remained behind, partly because this was their home but also because one or two of them out of ten showed sympathy for the VC. (What about the remaining eight ?) According to me, and I base my opinion on their outside appearance, they were still with the GVN but they remained because they were forced to by their situation. The GVN had nobody there to protect them anymore and they were forced to obey the VC.

25. Why do you think the North Vietnamese could leave more easily than the South Vietnamese ?

Only a small number of South Vietnamese have left their hamlet to come here because it was harder for them to leave their property and their established way of life. Back in their hamlet, they had their ricefields and their houses, they could live on some handicraft and some fishing, they were accustomed to their way of life. Out here, they lose all these opportunities. No more land, no more fishing, no more handicraft, and it is difficult to earn a livelihood. Therefore, they preferred to remain in their hamlet. It is somewhat easier for the North Vietnamese to move out because they have always been living from day to day. They have always been poor and their residences have been only temporary, therefore, they can go wherever the legitimate government is and wherever their minds can be at peace.

26. Who were your best friends in your hamlet ?

My best friends were among the North Vietnamese refugees. We lived next to one another and we had frequent contacts. I must admit that the South Vietnamese living in my neighborhood were not among my close friends and our

relations were just neighborly. Many of my friends in my hamlet have taken refuge here. (Could you talk freely to them about all matters that concerned you ?) Yes, I was free to talk to my best friends about all matters. I knew we were in the same situation and we had the same attitude and I could open my heart to them. We discussed the coming and going of the VC in the hamlet. However, I refrained from discussing such matters when the VC were there. (Where and when did you usually talk with them ?) We lived not far from one another, no farther than fifty or seventy meters, and we made frequent visits to one another. It was during these visits that I usually talked to my close friends. We usually made these visits during the day, between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. because it was very dangerous to assemble after dark. Both the GVN soldiers and the VC soldiers would cause us trouble if they saw this happen after dark. We would certainly be suspected of doing politics then. (Was there any danger that they would report you if you criticized the VC or violated VC regulations ?) No, because they are North Vietnamese refugees like me. We were in the same situation and we had confidence in one another. We often informed one another on the current VC plots and we discussed the situation in our hamlet. We never feared that this might be reported to the VC.

27. Here is a picture of a ladder. The bottom rung is numbered ten, and the top rung is numbered one. Now, let's say that the top rung represents the best life you can imagine, and the bottom rung represents the worst life you can imagine. Where on this ladder would you say that your life was before you left your village ?

Considering my situation back in my hamlet, I do not hesitate to put my life then on the bottom rung. I had nothing. I did not own any land, my house was a shaky hut. (How about your present life ?) Perhaps my life has improved by one rung and now stands on rung no. 9. Since I took refuge, I have received some help from the government and I am now allowed to work freely. Although I had nothing with me when I arrived here, I have managed to put into use my skill at weaving mats. I do not have any capital to start with but I am getting a small income by weaving reeds into mats for the rich trader. This small income allows me to support my family. I have nothing else beside this handicraft work. (And how about five years from now ?) I think my life will remain the same as it is now. I can see nothing which can improve my present life. My family is now eating up the small income that I earn and I even fear that my life might get worse. The best I

can imagine will be for my life to stay at its present level.

28. Could you talk freely to all members of your family?

Yes, I could talk freely to the members of my family. (Were there other families that you could trust ?) Yes, those were the families of my close friends and of my relatives. (Is everything that is known to one member of a family also known to the others in the family ?) I told everything I knew to my relatives and to my brothers. We kept the things we knew to ourselves even after the VC had extended their control over our hamlet because it was unthinkable that some of us might go over to the VC, we had quite an experience with the Communists. (Do women know everything the men know ?) We, the men, we think that women are often not careful and they are not able to keep a secret, therefore, I talked freely only with my close friends and my brothers and dared not let my wife into our discussions.

29. Which subjects do you think your wife should not be aware of ?

There were many. Take the instance of the VC - organized meetings, I discussed with my friends and my brothers and we tried to find a way to avoid having to attend these meetings. We discussed this in secret because we did not want it to come to the ears of the VC and bring troubles to us. If we had let our wives on this subject, chances were that this might be reported to the VC. Women cannot keep secrets to themselves. They might divulge them to strangers in the midst of an animated conversation. Once this had been reported to the VC, we would have certainly been reprimanded for distributing harmful propaganda. They would have told us :"You have not only committed the crime of staying away from the meetings but your crime is more serious when you try to make other people follow your bad example ! What could we do them ? We lived in an area deserted by the GVN and we had to keep these things a secret.

30. Did other families or individuals help you or your family when you were in trouble, say when you were reprimanded or bullied by the VC ?

No one could have helped me in this situation. The VC usually came at night and they were very discreet and silent. Although we lived close to one another, our houses were not adjoining one another. Suppose that a group of VC came to my house at night and knocked on my door. I

would have no other alternative but to open it and let them into my house. And if they talked quietly, they would not be heard by my neighbors. And even if my neighbors knew about it, they would not have the daring to come out of their houses because it would be too dangerous. You would not have dared it if you heard noises at night. It might be the VC and it might also be GVN security forces. In either case you were likely to get into troubles. That is why even brothers could not have helped one another in such cases. (What about other troubles which did not originate from the VC ?) In that case, you can expect your neighbors and relatives to come to your help. For instance, you are injured by a bomb or a bullet or in other kinds of accidents, then you will likely be given care or medicine by your friends and, if necessary, they can carry you to the hospital or to a nurse.

31. Who would you say was the most important person in your village after the village chief ?

I can think of no one being important in my village at the time I left. There has been no GVN administration since the outpost was overrun by the VC; all the GVN officials have left with other villagers. There has not been a VC administration either and they have not set up a new village chief. Previously, most important person in my village after the village chief was the hamlet chief. He too has left the village. (Why was he important ?) He was important because he led the people toward the GVN side and because he was the head of the hamlet.

32. Were there other people whose opinions were particularly respected ? For instance, who among the North Vietnamese refugees was the most respected person ?

The hamlet chief was the most respected person because we had elected him to be hamlet chief. We took refuge not long after he did.

33. Who would you say was the most energetic person in your village when it was a matter of getting things done - repairing roads, asking for governmental action, and so on ?

I think the hamlet chief, and after him the outpost commander was the only one who could help the people get these things. Whenever a villager had a request for something, he went to the hamlet chief who would try to satisfy him.

34. Who do you think were the best-informed people in your hamlet about what was going on in the hamlet ?

I think the hamlet chief was the best-informed person in the hamlet. Whenever a villager saw or heard something, it was his duty to report it to the hamlet chief, thus making him the best-informed man in the hamlet. In retnrn, the hamlet chief also informed the villagers on matters which concerned them. (Who do you think are best-informed about what is going on in Saigon ?) No one was really informed about what was going on in Saigon because we did not have any information of this kind. Back in my village, I was a friend of the hamlet chief and I often visited him. Because of the conversations we had during these visits, I could consider myself to be the second best-informed person after the hamlet chief himself. (And how about Hanoi, Who do you think was best-informed about what was going on there ?) We were not informed about what was going on there. (And what about the world outside of Vietnam ?) We could be well-informed only if we had had a radio and back in my hamlet radios were very scarce. The only ways of getting news about what was going on was by word of mouth.

35. When you lived in your hamlet, how did you usually learn about what was going on ?

I have told you we were informed by word of mouth. We lived in a close relationship with each other and we shared our information very rapidly. (What people did you talk to most frequently ?) I usually talked to those I visited frequently and they were my relatives or my close friends.

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INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

The subject appeared to have average intelligence and to be well-informed. He was cooperative and honest. Lack of time prevented a more extensive interview.

NO. AGR 11

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

1. Name of interviewer [redacted]

2. Name of subject [redacted]

3. Time and date of interview :

   From 10:45 a.m to 11:45 a.m on July [redacted] 1965

   From 2:45 p.m to 4:25 p.m on July [redacted] 1965

   From _____ to _____ on _____ 19___

4. Place of interview :

   Long Dinh district (Dinh Tuong province)

5. Sex of subject : Male (X) Female ( )

6. Age of subject : 40

7. Ethnic background : Vietnamese

8. Place of birth :

   hamlet _____

   village [redacted]

   district Kim Son

   province Ninh Binh (North Vietnam)

9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :

   hamlet [redacted]

   village [redacted]

   district Ben Tranh

   province Dinh Tuong

10. (a) Length of residence in last location : 2 and one half years
    (b) Who controlled the place of residence :

    GVN ( ) VC (X) Contested ( ) How long? 1 year

NO. AGR 11

11. Number of brothers (2) and sisters ( )

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : Two aged 50 & 53

13. Marital status : Married

14. Number of children : Seven

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age None (eldest son is 14)

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject (X)
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject( ) or not with subject (XX)
Wife with subject (X) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject(X) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion : Catholicism

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : Fishing & weaving reeds

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation Poor farmer
(b) Landowner? No

20. Education :
illiterate ( )
literate (X)
schooling completed : Elementary school

21. Any relatives in VC : No

22. Any relatives in GVN : Five cousins in ARVN

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by :
(a) French No
(b) GVN No
(c) VC No

24. When became a refugee : February 1965

AGR

INTERVIEW

12

MASTER COPY

THE RAND CORPORATION

[redacted]

STUDIES OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT
OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR-12

Date of Interview : July [redacted] 1965

Subject's Category : Refugee - approx. April 1965

1. How long have you been here?

   I have been here for more than three months.

2. Where did you come from?

   I came from [redacted]

3. How did you come here?

   I came here by sampan.

4. Is [redacted] village far from here?

   [redacted] village is [redacted] kilometers from here.

5. What are your plans now?

   I would like to continue my profession as an herb doctor. However since nobody here knows me yet, I haven't had any customers. I will have to wait for some time to have some clients.

6. Before you came here, did all the members of your family live together?

   Yes, I lived with all the members of my family, i.e. my mother, my wife and my three children.

7. Did any members of your family live apart?

   No.

8. How big was your village?

   My native village was composed of [redacted] hamlets.

9. What was its total population?

   I don't know.

10. Did any families leave your village in the past year? How many?

Since last year, many families have left my village. I don't know how many. I only know that there are no families left in my native village (Thinh My village).

11. Where did these families from your village go?

They went to [redacted], My Tho, [redacted] and Phu My. A certain number of these families have come here.

12. What were the professions of the people in your village?

The women gathered the stalks of Bang plants to make mats. The men rowed sampans. Some were even owners of sampans.

13. What were their economic conditions?

The majority of them were poor.

14. Weren't there any farmers in your village?

There were no ricefields in my village. There was only land on which Bang plants were grown.

15. What did you do to earn a living?

As I have told you, I practiced herb medicine.

16. What category did the Front assign to your family: rich, middle, poor?

I don't know.

17. Were there any changes in your or your family's economic conditions in the past years?

During the past years, there have been some changes in my wealth. I was poor, but now I'm getting poorer and poorer.

18. Could you tell me why are getting poorer and poorer?

I had to move, and this harmed my profession. When an herb doctor is new in a locality, he cannot have many customers.

19. This is the picture of a ladder, the highest rung is the figure "1" and the lowest rung the figure "10". Let us suppose that the 1st rung represents the best life that you could imagine, and that the 10th rung represents the worst life that you could imagine. When you were still in your village, where would you place the life you led there?

I place my life at the 9th rung.

20. Where would you place the life that you may lead in five years?

If nothing extraordinary happens to me, and if I can continue to practice, I think that in five years I will be on the 8th rung.

21. Could you describe to me the best life that you could imagine for yourself in your village?

The best life which I could imagine in my village is that of a man who has money and some sampans for trade and who owns many ricefields.

22. Now, please describe for me the worst life that you could imagine for yourself in your village?

The worst life in my village which I could imagine is that of a poor man without money who cannot find work in the village - an unemployed.

23. How many sons do you have?

Two.

24. What kind of life do you wish for your sons? What do you want them to become?

I would like them to own a lot of ricefields. In case they could study, I wish that they could obtain high diplomas and become teachers.

25. What is your level of education? Did you go to school when you were young?

I could finish elementary school only.

26. Do you want to send your children to school now?

I would like very much to do so, but I don't know if I could, I am too poor.

27. Was your hamlet a strategic hamlet?

No. The Front people had been in my village for a long time, and this is why there were no strategic hamlets in my village.

28. How long have the Front people been in control of your village?

For four years.

29. Before the arrival of the Front people, was there a Village Council in your village?

Yes, there was a Village Council.

30. How did the Village Council members behave? What did the villagers think of their behavior?

The Village Council members behaved nicely towards every one. They are now in My Tho. All the villagers liked them.

31. During the time the Front people controlled your village, did they maltreat the villagers, or did they kill anybody?

I heard that the Front people killed some villagers. I don't know the details of this.

32. Did the Front members explain each assassination to the villagers? What did the people say?

Yes, after each assassination the Front members always explained it. The villagers listened to the explanations without saying anything. Deep in their hearts, the villagers suffered and pitied the victims very much. I left my village a long time ago, therefore I cannot give you the details.

33. How long ago did you leave your village?

I have left my village a little over three years now. I settled down in Cu Chi where I stayed for almost two years. Then I left Cu Chi for [redacted] Finally I came here from [redacted]

34. Why did you leave your village to move to Cu Chi?

I left my village because I couldn't live there any longer.

35. Why couldn't live there any longer?

The Front people came and forced me to grow trees, and to dig ditches across the roads to destroy them. I could not and did not want to do so, and this is why I preferred to leave my village.

36. Did the Front people let you leave the village freely? Didn't they try to prevent you from doing so?

No, the Front people did not prevent me from leaving the village. I told them I had to go and live where I could find customers. At that time, they were not as tough and they let me go.

37. Later on, why did you leave Cu Chi to settle down in Nhi Binh?

I stayed in Cu Chi for almost two years. Then the GVN military post in Cu Chi was destroyed by the Front people. All the GVN soldiers left Cu Chi, and the Front people came. A few days after the fall of Cu Chi outpost, I left Cu Chi to settle down in Nhi Binh.

38. Why did you leave Nhi Binh to come here?

Life in Nhi Binh was difficult. It was difficult for me to practice there. I had very few clients.

39. When the reason for your coming here was that you could not practice in Nhi Binh due to the lack of clients?

Yes.

40. Before you left your hamlet, was it transformed into a combat hamlet by the Front people?

I think that my hamlet has been transformed into a combat hamlet. The Front people forced the villagers to dig trenches and to build ramparts.

41. Do you know how the villagers' life in the combat village was?

I don't know. But no matter what, the villagers had to accept everything.

42. Did the Front people force the young men in your hamlet to join the Front forces?

Yes, the Front people asked those of draft age to join the Front forces.

43. What were the young men's reactions? What did the villagers say?

Some of the young men agreed to join; others refused. Among the villagers, some didn't say anything about this, some disapproved of it and complained about it.

44. The Front people didn't do anything to the young men who refused to join the Front forces?

The Front people said that they didn't understand their duty at all, that they were selfish and only thought of their personal security. They strongly criticized these young men.

45. Did the Front people punish them or did they threaten to punish them?

No, the Front people only made verbal criticisms. They neither punished them nor threatened them.

46. Did the Front people organize re-education courses in your hamlet?

Yes.

47. Were you or any members of your family forced by the Front to attend these re-education courses?

The Front people did not force me or my family to attend these re-education courses. But many of my acquaintances attended these courses.

43. Do you know why your acquaintances were forced to attend these re-education courses?

Some wanted to do so. Some were forced to attend. I don't know for what reasons.

49. Did the Front people often hold meetings with the villagers of your hamlet?

Yes, once every 15 or 30 days.

50. Usually, what was the occasion?

Usually, it was to ask the villagers to do something, for example to dig trenches, destroy roads, or build ramparts.

51. Did any villagers refuse to come to these meetings?

Yes, some refused to come. Not many did so.

52. Didn't the Front people do anything to them?

The Front people criticized them in such a way that they had to come to the next meetings.

53. Did the Front create certain organizations in your hamlet?

They organized the elections of the platoons and squads.

54. Of what?

I don't really know. I heard that these were the platoons and squads of men in charge of standing guard in the hamlet or of doing certain works asked by the Front people.

55. Was there a Farmers' Association in the hamlet?

Yes, there was one organization called Farmers' Association.

56. Were you a member? What was the purpose of this Association?

The Front people told me to join it, but I left the village some time later. I don't really know what the purpose of this Association was. It seems to me that it was designed to ask the people to pay their contributions or to do works asked for by the Front.

57. What did you think of this association?

I didn't have any opinion on this. I left before this association began to operate.

58. When you were still in your hamlet, did you and the other villagers have to pay taxes or contributions to the Front?

Yes, everybody had to pay an annual contribution fixed by the Front people.

59. How much did you have to pay? Did everybody have to pay the same contribution?

I had to pay 200 piasters. Some villagers had to pay more, some had to pay less.

60. How did these contributions compare with the taxes which you and the other villagers had to pay to the GVN?

I never had to pay taxes to the GVN. There were some people in my hamlet who had to pay taxes to the GVN. I don't know the amount of these taxes, but I think that there had never been any taxes as heavy as these Front contributions.

61. What did you think of these contributions?

I don't know what to think. The Front people forced everyone to pay them. Everybody paid these contributions. I had to do likewise.

62. Did the contributions increase later on?

I don't know. I left after I had paid them. I don't know how much the villagers had to pay the following years.

63. Was land distribution carried out in your hamlet?

There was no land distribution in the hamlet while I was still there.

64. Did the Front people seize the land of certain villagers?

Yes. The land of the landlords who were absent from the hamlet was seized.

65. Was the seized land distributed to some villagers?

No.

66. Who was in charge of farming this land? The Front people?

I don't know. I left the hamlet before finding out how this land was farmed.

67. Could you please tell me something about the history of your village since the Resistance period?

I cannot tell you anything, because I have forgotten everything.

68. How did the people in your hamlet live during the Resistance period?

During the Resistance period, the majority of the people in my hamlet left for My Tho, Phu Ly or other Catholic centers. I myself moved to Phu Ly which was also a Catholic center.

69. Why didn't these villagers remain in the hamlet?

I think they were afraid of the Viet Minh. I don't know why.

70. When GVN officials returned to your hamlet following the departure of the Viet Minh, did all those who had left come back to the hamlet?

Yes, all those who had left came back.

71. When your hamlet was controlled by the GVN, how did the villagers live? Did life become easier or more difficult?

Some became sampan oarsmen, others accepted any kind of work. Some led an easy life, others led a difficult life.

72. Did the Province Chief and District Chief sometimes come to the village?

Yes.

73. Do you know who they were?

The Province Chief and the Ben Tranh District Chief came to my hamlet once or twice only. So, I could not know who they were.

74. Did you hear of Mr. Diem's overthrow? What did the villagers say about this?

Yes, I heard of Mr. Diem's overthrow, but I have forgotten all that I heard. The villagers also knew about it. I don't know what the villagers said.

75. What did the Front people say about this?

The Front people gathered the villagers to tell them that Mr. Diem had been overthrown. They didn't say anything else.

76. Did the Front people talk about the present GVN? What did they say?

Yes, they also talked about the present government. They only said bad things about the GVN. They said that in bad things about the GVN. They said that in GVN-controlled areas the people led an unhappy life, and that there were many unemployed in GVN areas, whereas the people who lived in the hamlet had food and clothes.

77. While you were still in your hamlet, did the villagers receive any help from the GVN?

No. While I was still there, there was no GVN aid. I have only heard about GVN assistance since my arrival here.

78. Did the Front people do anything for the villagers?

No.

79. Did Front soldiers station in or pass through your hamlet?

Yes, Front soldiers passed through my hamlet very often.

80. Do you know what they came there for? How did they behave?

They asked the villagers to come so that they could show them weapons they said they had captured from the GVN soldiers.

81. How often in a month did Front soldiers come to your hamlet? Were they numerous each time they came?

There was no fixed time limit between their visits. Sometimes they came every 10 or 20 days, sometimes once every two or three months. Each time they came in large numbers. I cannot tell you exactly how many. I think that each time they were 1,000 or 2,000 strong.

82. Did GVN soldiers sometimes come to your hamlet?

Yes, once every three or four months.

83. Did any engagements take place in your hamlet?

GVN soldiers and Front guerrillas exchanged fire two or three times in my hamlet.

84. Did anybody on either side get killed?

I saw two Front guerrillas get killed. I didn't see any GVN soldiers get killed. But the Front people said that two or three GVN soldiers were killed.

85. Were any villagers killed or injured?

Once, a few villagers were slightly injured.

86. How did the GVN soldiers behave while on operation in your hamlet?

Some of them didn't behave themselves. They grabbed the villagers' bananas and sugar canes. But the majority of them behaved correctly and forbade their comrades to cause damage to the villagers.

87. What did the villagers think of GVN soldiers?

As I've told you, the GVN soldiers behaved correctly, and for this reason the villagers liked them.

88. What did the villagers think of GVN soldiers?

The guerrillas often came to ask for food from the villagers, sometimes they asked for five or ten piasters. We had to give it to them. But we didn't do it willingly. Since we lived with them, we could not refuse to give them what they asked for.

89. Did the Front people tell the villagers of the Front's aim?

They said that the Front's aim was to liberate the people.

90. Did they say why and how the Front had to liberate the people?

No, they didn't say anything.

91. What did the villagers say about this?

Some accepted what the Front members said without making any comments. Others said that they had never seen any liberation and that they had only seen people getting more and more unhappy.

92. Do you know the life of a Front soldier is?

I don't know. I suppose that the contributions which the people had to pay were destined for the support of the Front soldiers.

93. Did the Front members talk of the Front's victories or defeats?

The Front members often said that the Front forces were getting more and more powerful, and that they had scored many victories. I don't know the details on this.

94. Did they sometimes talk about the defeats of the Front forces?

No, they never talked of defeats.

95. Did the villagers believe what the Front members said about the Front forces' victories.

No, nobody believed it. We wondered why, with the Front forces always winning, the people still remained unhappy, and the guerrillas were always asking for food.

96. Are any of your relatives in the ARVN?

Yes, I have two cousins who are soldiers in the ARVN.

97. Did they sometimes come to see you?

One of them came to see me here two months ago.

98. Do you have any relatives in the Front forces?

No.

99. Was your hamlet sometimes shelled by the GVN?

No.

100. Was your hamlet bombed by airplanes?

Yes, my hamlet was sometimes bombed by aircraft. I think it was because of the guerrillas who sometimes shot at the planes.

101. How many times was your hamlet bombed?

I've forgotten. I think it was bombed once every four or five months.

102. Was there any damage? Did any one get killed or wounded?

Yes, a few houses were destroyed or burnt down. Among the villagers, one or two persons got killed.

103. What did the villagers think of these bombardments?

The villagers said the hamlet was bombed because of the presence of Front guerrillas or soldiers. They complained a lot about it.

104. Did anyone start working for the Front because of the damage they suffered in these bombings?

No.

105. Did these bombings prevent people from working?

Yes. We had to take cover during the bombings. After the bombings, we could not seriously resume our work because of the fear of bombardments.

106. Were the villagers able to get news on current events?

We only knew what the Front members told us.

107. Were there Front or GVN newspapers in your village?

There were no Front newspapers. As for GVN newspapers, once in a while someone brought back one issue from the market. Very few people could read newspapers.

108. Didn't the Front members forbid people to read GVN newspapers?

The Front members only said: "Why do you read these newspapers?" They didn't do anything to prevent people from reading them.

109. Were there any radios in your village?

There were only two or three radios belongings to well-off villagers.

110. Usually, what stations did the people who had radios listen to?

Those who didn't own radio sets could also profit from it once in a while. Usually, we only listened to Cai Luong music broadcast by GVN stations.

111. Did the Front members prevent people from listening to GVN stations?

The Front members didn't want the villagers to listen to Cai Luong music. They said: "Why don't you listen to Front or Hanoi stations?".

112. Did the Front members take any measures to prevent the villagers from listening to GVN stations?

They contented themselves with making verbal criticisms.

113. Did you have some friends whom you often talked to?

No. My uncle was the only person whom I often talked to.

114. What did you talk to your uncle about?

My uncle was a trader. We often talked about his business or mine.

115. Did you sometimes criticize the Front members while talking to your uncle?

No. I didn't know anything about the actions of the Front members. So, I could not criticize them.

116. Could you talk freely to the members of your family?

Yes.

117. Usually, about what did you talk with the members of your family?

I often talked of my profession.

118. Did you talk about other topics?

No.

119. Could the villagers talk freely to one another? What were their usual topics of conversation?

The villagers could talk freely to one another. They talked to each other about their professions and their business. They didn't talk to each other about anything else.

120. For instance, if you encountered some difficulties in your hamlet, do you think someone would help you?

I think that nobody could help me, because everyone was poor.

121. In your opinion, who was the most important man in your village in whom you had confidence?

My uncle. He was serious, and had much business experience. I had much confidence in him.

122. I would like to ask you if there was someone in your village whose opinions were listened to and shared by all the villagers?

All the villagers had to listen to the Front members and accept their opinions.

123. Could you tell me why?

Everybody was afraid they might be annoyed or criticized by the Front members.

124. Did you hear of GVN-American bombings of North Vietnam?

Yes, I've heard about them.

125. Could you tell me what you know about these bombings?

I only know that the North has been bombed. I don't know anything else besides that.

126. Did the villagers know about the bombings? What did they say?

Yes, the villagers also knew about them. They said there have been bombings carried out in the South. Now that the North is bombed, the people in the North have become as unhappy as the people in the South.

127. In your opinion, did the villagers disapprove of these bombings?

No, nobody disapproved of them.

128. When you made up your mind to come out here, did you make this decision yourself or did someone urge you to do so?

I myself made up my mind to come out here, after talking to the members of my family about it.

129. How did you prepare your departure?

I rented sampans to transport all our light personal effects. As for the heavy furniture, I entrusted it to my acquaintances. I transported it here on my second trip.

130. Were you afraid of anything while preparing your departure?

I was most afraid of bombings.

131. Have you ever seen airplanes dropping leaflets?

Yes, airplanes came to drop leaflets many times. In these leaflets the GVN exhorted the villagers to leave insecure areas and to move to GVN-controlled areas. I think other things were also said in these leaflets, but I have forgotten them all.

132. Did you see airplanes come to broadcast in your village?

Yes, many times.

133. Could you hear the broadcasts clearly? What do you retain from the broadcasts?

I could hear the broadcasts clearly but I've forgotten everything.

134. Usually, at what time of day did the planes come to broadcast?

Usually the planes came in the evening.

135. Did you hear of the Chieu Hoi program?

Yes, I've heard of the Chieu Hoi program. It seems to me that the Chieu Hoi asked those who were in the Front ranks to leave the Front and to come to the Chieu Hoi Center. The GVN was ready to help them.

136. Were you able to bring all your belongings along?

Yes, I was able to take all my belongings with me.

137. Before leaving, were you afraid you might be stopped by the Front members?

Yes, I was afraid I might be prevented from leaving the village by the Front members. This is why I arranged to leave without their knowing about it.

138. Did the Front people do something to prevent the villagers from leaving the village?

The Front people said that those who left the village could never go back there. They didn't do anything else.

139. How many families left at the same time as you?

A dozen people.

140. Were there many people left in the village?

Yes.

141. Do you know why these people didn't leave the village?

I don't exactly know why. Perhaps some of them wanted to leave the village after I did. Perhaps

others wanted to earn a living in an appropriate manner by staying there. Part of [redacted] village was under GVN control.

142. You have said that the Front people had told the villagers that it was difficult to earn a living in GVN-controlled areas and that there were many unemployed in GVN areas. Do you find that what the Front people said is correct?

No. What the Front people said about GVN-controlled areas is wrong. I haven't seen any unemployed persons here.

143. In your opinion, will this war last a long time?

I don't know. I cannot answer this question.

144. In your opinion, who will come out of this war as the victor? The GVN or the Front?

I am sure that the GVN will win.

145. Why?

The GVN has airplanes, armored cars and big trucks.

146. Do you blame anyone for causing you to leave your village?

If someone were to be blamed, the Front people should be the ones. It was because of their presence in my village that GVN airplanes came to drop bombs, and in this way to prevent people from earning their living in an appropriate manner.

147. When you came here, did the GVN promise to help you? What do you think of this?

The GVN authorities have promised to give 5,500 piasters to each family to build a house. Besides, during the first six months, each one of us could obtain a subsidy of 7 piasters a day. I was certainly very happy about this promise.

148. Did you actually receive any help?

I haven't obtained the money for the construction of the house. As for the daily subsidies, I have received only a sum equivalent to 10 days' subsidy for all the members of my family.

149. Do you think that the GVN will grant you all the assistance it promised you?

Yes. I have a lot of confidence in the GVN authorities.

150. How long do you intend to stay here?

I intend to stay here until there is complete security in my village.

151. Since your arrival here, have you had any news from your hamlet?

No, I haven't had any news from my hamlet.

152. Has anyone tried to persuade you to return to your hamlet?

No one.

153. Of those who left the village at the same time as you, did anyone return to the hamlet?

None.

154. Have you met any Americans?

Yes.

155. What have you heard about the Americans?

The Front people said that the Americans had come here to take over the country. I don't believe it, because I haven't seen anything which shows that they want to take over the country. The GVN soldiers said they have come here to help the GVN. I don't know the details on this.

156. Have you met other foreigners who have come here to help the GVN?

No.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS:

The subject is not very intelligent or observant. He had much difficulty understanding the questions put to him, even the simplest ones. He didn't know much, spoke haltingly and never seemed sure of what he said. He was however, very co-operative.

NO. AGR 12

QUESTIONNAIRE II
For Refugees

MASTER COPY

1. Name of interviewer: [redacted]

2. Name of subject [redacted]

3. Time and date of interview :
   From 10:40 a.m to 12:00 a.m on July [redacted] 1965
   From 2:45 p.m to 4:00 p.m on July [redacted] 1965
   From _____ to _____ on _____ 19___

4. Place of interview :
   Long Dinh village (Dinh Tuong province)

5. Sex of subject : Male (X) Female ( )

6. Age of subject : 43

7. Ethnic background : Vietnamese

8. Place of birth :
   hamlet [redacted]
   village [redacted]
   district Ben Tranh
   province Dinh Tuong

9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :
   hamlet [redacted]
   village [redacted]
   district Ben Tranh
   province Dinh Tuong

10. (a) Length of residence in last location : _____
    (b) Who controlled the place of residence :
    GVN ( ) VC (X) Contested ( ) How long? 4 years

NO. AGR 12

11. Number of brothers (X) and sisters (1)

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : _____

13. Marital status : Married

14. Number of children : 3

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age : _____

16. Mother with subject (X) or not with subject ( )
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject( ) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject (X) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject(X) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion : Buddhist

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : Oriental medicine practitioner (medicaster)

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation Poor
(b) Landowner? _____

20. Education :
illiterate ( )
literate (X)
schooling completed : 3 years of elementary school

21. Any relatives in VC : No

22. Any relatives in GVN : Two cousins in ARVN

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by :
(a) French 1
(b) GVN 0
(c) VC 0

24. When became a refugee : Over three months

AGR

INTERVIEW

13

MASTER COPY

THE RAND CORPORATION

STUDIES OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT
OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR- 13

Date of Interview: July [redacted] 1965

Subject's Category: Refugee - March 1965

Area of Residence: [redacted] village, Ben Tranh district, Dinh Tuong province.

1. How long have you been here?

I have been here for three months and a half.

2. Where did you come from?

I came from [redacted] village, Ben Tranh district, Dinh Tuong province.

3. How did you get here?

I came here on a sampan.

4. Describe how you could get here to take refuge.

The means at my disposal to get here were very simple and rudimentary. Others brought rice and salt with them. I brought nothing with me, even my clothes were in rags. The clothes which I wear now have been given by my younger brother, and some acquaintances of mine who I met here have assisted me according to their ability. I came here on a single sampan with my family composed of my wife and six children. When my sampan reached the pond before the church of Long Dinh, many people crowded around to welcome my family. They said that I was bold in evacuating a large family in one sampan. We were given food by the church for 2 or 3 days, then we moved to the refugee camp nearby before coming here.

5. How large was your family?

It was composed of myself, my wife and six children. I have one son and six daughters. My son, 18 years old, is now serving in the ARVN.

6. Did all the members of your family live together before you came here?

Yes, except for my son.

7. How big was your hamlet and village?

My village had 14 hamlets.

8. How long had you lived there? Where did you live previously?

I was a refugee from North Vietnam. I went to the South with my family in 1954. Previously, I lived in Soc Trang then in Tam Hiep, Bien Hoa province, before settling in [redacted] in 1957.

9. How many families or persons have left your village in the past years?

Very many families have left my village since 1960-61. I estimate that thousands of people have left.

10. Why did they leave?

Because of the VC, because destruction was seen everywhere in my village.

11. What did most of the people in the village you just left do to earn a living?

Most of them were farmers and fishermen. The local people picked rush leaves and the North Vietnamese refugees were engaged in farming and mat weaving.

12. Was the village prosperous or poor?

On the average, before 1960 it was fairly prosperous. The market was crowded. As a rule, if the people have money, the market becomes prosperous.

13. What did you, your family or your parents do to earn a living?

Before 1960, I tilled 2 mau of ricefields. I had a large garden of 14.000 sq. m. in which I planted many fruit trees. I was a hamlet chief in 1959. At that time I assisted many villagers who had much sympathy toward me.

14. What category did the Front assign to your family : rich, medium, poor, very poor or other.

The Front hadn't yet classified my family.

15. Were there any changes in your family's economic conditions in the past years?

They have become worse and worse each day. My situation was really miserable!

16. How much education have you had?

I completed six years of elementary school in North Vietnam. I attended a Catholic primary school.

17. Did your children go to school?

My son attended the primary school in [redacted] hamlet and he graduated from that school. My daughters didn't go to school.

18. Was your hamlet a Strategic Hamlet?

Yes.

19. When was it organized?

In 1961.

20. Was it destroyed by the Front?

Yes.

21. When?

It was destroyed soon after it was constructed. It only lasted a few months.

22. How did living in a Strategic hamlet affect your life and earnings?

In my opinion, the construction of this Strategic hamlet was more advantageous to me because my garden was protected, therefore it didn't affect my life.

23. What did you like about it?

As far as I was concerned, my interests were not affected. From the social viewpoint, there was joy in a strategic hamlet, the families lived more closely than before...

24. What did you dislike about it?

Nothing.

25. How did the GVN village and hamlet authorities behave?

The village chief was so kind that many people still like him.

26. Who controlled your hamlet or village a year ago?

This year, my village is completely under Front control, but last year it was a contested area.

27. When did your village become a contested area?

Since 1960-61.

28. Did the Front carry out any terroristic acts in your village or kill any of the people?

Yes. Previously, there was Mr. [redacted] a secretary of the village pagoda; he was very diligent and he was rather old.

He was a great help for all the villagers who applied for loans from the National Agricultural Credit Office, because nobody could write an application form suitably and he helped anyone do this. I wonder why the VC killed him. The second victim of the VC was Mr. [redacted]. He worked with us as an earth digger for the construction of a road leading to Ben Tre. He said: "I work for any government which pays me much money, even if this government is the GVN!" He was killed by the VC afterward. The third VC victim was the village official in charge of information. The fourth VC victim was a poor villager who had just bought a pair of water buffaloes one of which was pregnant. He took much care of this buffalo. With a torch he tried to burn the mosquitoes and flies swarming over the back of his animal, but the VC killed him on the ground that he had made signs to the enemy with his torch! Thus, four people were victims of VC terrorist acts.

29. If your hamlet was under Front control, how did the villagers feel about it.

The villagers felt strongly about it. They were forced to join the VC.

30. Were you satisfied or dissatisfied with the Front administration and policies in your hamlet. Explain.

I was dissatisfied.

31. Did the Front set up any organizations in your village? Was there a Farmers' Association in your village?

The Front cadres had talked about the Farmers' Association, but I hadn't seen it in my village. No Front organization had been set up.

32. Did your attitude and that of other villagers towards the Front change during the past year?

No. In my opinion, if the people had trusted the Front, they would have stayed behind, but they silently and gradually left the village.

33. If your hamlet was under Front control, was it a Combat Hamlet?

No. The Front people had discussed this problem, but there were no people left to set up a Combat Hamlet.

34. How many young men 16 years old or more were in your hamlet or village?

There were about 10 to 15 young men 16 years old or more in my hamlet.

35. How many joined the Front in the last year?

Three.

36. Did they volunteer?

No. They were kidnapped to serve in the military forces.

37. How many joined the ARVN.

About 20 in my village.

38. What did the people think about the recruiting by the Front?

They didn't say anything.

39. Were you or any members of your family taken by the Front for reeducation?

No.

40. To whom did you pay taxes or contributions during the past three years.

The Front people called on me and asked me to pay contributions, and I told them that I was very poor. At that time, it seemed that the VC tried to win the people's confidence by persuasion. Therefore, I succeeded in postponing my payment one year after the other. During the past three years, I worked as a coolie for them twice, but I didn't pay them taxes.

41. Did the Front people tell you how much you had to pay them in taxes?

More than 2,000 piasters a year. I told them that I didn't have such a sum to pay since I became poorer and poorer. They agreed to postpone my payment for one year, but last year I again succeeded in having my payment postponed, and this year I have escaped to come here.

42. Do you think that the Front taxes are higher than the GVN taxes?

Yes. Four times higher, as far as land tax is concerned.

43. How do you feel about it?

We farmers don't like heavy taxes, of course, because they increase the family expenses.

44. When the contributions to the Front increased, what did the Front cadres say about it?

They didn't give any explanation.

45. Did you benefit from the land distribution carried out by the Front?

No. The Front people told me that they would distribute land to me, but I didn't receive any land from them.

46. Was it because you owned 2 mau of ricefields?

These 2 mau of ricefields were confiscated by the Front as public land. Therefore, I didn't own any ricefields at all.

47. When did the Front people tell you that they would distribute land to you?

I don't remember exactly when. It was about the time when they destroyed the strategic hamlet in my area, that is, about in 1961.

48. Did they tell you how much land they would give you?

No. As a matter of fact, before the VC got control of my village, all the land owned by us, the refugees from North Vietnam, had been immense ricefields. Since 1960 nobody has tilled the land which is now wholly covered with grass. My two mau of ricefields were also left uncultivated since 1960 after a bad crop in 1959.

49. Did you rent land?

No.

50. Tell me something about the history of your village during and after the Resistance period.

I don't know the history of [redacted] village during the Resistance because I only settled in that village in 1957. When I came to settle there in 1957, the village was prosperous and very populated, with an addition of a very large number of refugees from North Vietnam.

51. How many people?

I don't remember. I know that there were [redacted] refugee hamlets with 34 classes of elementary school from the highest grade to the kindergarten, 11 small churches and one large church.. But after a few years, all these establishments were destroyed and all the people have evacuated to safer areas. In my area, nobody remains behind...

52. How about the houses left unoccupied after the departure of their owners?

They were confiscated by the VC and destroyed or dismantled.

53. When did the Front became active in your village?

Before 1960, they sometimes spoke in megaphones to wage propaganda. Since 1960, when they first killed a hamlet chief named [redacted], the people got scared and little by little they moved elsewhere, except for a few people who stayed behind to construct the Strategic Hamlet. But when those who stayed behind -- my family was among them -- felt that it was impossible to stay there any longer, they left the hamlet to come here.

54. How did you and the other villagers feel about the first Front activities in the village?

They had enough of the Front. I don't know much about the attitude of the local people toward the Front, but concerning the refugees (North Vietnamese), no one liked the Front.

55. In your opinion, how did the local people in your village feel about the Front?

I think that they also had enough of it. In their conversations, they dared not speak out, but they shook their heads, and they always looked very sad.

56. Did you see the district and province chiefs in your village?

Yes. Before 1960, they sometimes visited my village but since 1960 they haven't visited my village, or if they came with the troops, I couldn't distinguish them.

57. Did they visit your village at the time of the construction of the Strategic Hamlet?

Yes.

58. When did they last visit your village?

About 1961 or 1962. But personally I didn't see them at that time.

59. How often did they visit your village before 1960?

At first, every two or three months, then every five or six months. Later, they came to my village only occasionally to explain to the villagers the procedure for obtaining loans from the National Agricultural Credit Office.

60. Were there many people in your village who obtained loans from this Office?

Yes. Loans were granted to the refugees as well as to the local people of the village.

61. How many people benefitted from the loans of the National Agricultural Credit Office?

There were some hundreds of applicants for loans, but I don't know how many people benefitted from these loans.

62. When the Diem regime fell, were the people of your village informed of it immediately?

They did not know it until the next day because at that time there was fighting at my village post.

63. What post?

The [redacted] post.

64. What was the outcome of the fighting?

Sincerely speaking, due to lack of reinforcements, the GVN forces were defeated.

65. How did you hear about the fall of the Diem regime?

The people coming from My Tho spread this news.

66. How did the people feel about it?

At that time, the people were very anxious about the outcome of the fighting at the [redacted] post. They feared that the GVN couldn't withstand the VC attack and would lose the post, that they would be very miserable under the VC control. The villagers just discussed it clandestinely and, of course, they dared not speak openly.

67. What did you think about the fall of the Diem regime?

I don't know what I thought about it. I was neutral and didn't know who was right and who was wrong.

68. Tell me frankly: Did you have pity for Mr. Diem, or did you think that his overthrow was justified?

(The subject laughed.) I cannot answer this question. In my opinion, it is true that he (Ngo Dinh Diem) had been a great help for us, not only for the refugees from the North like us, but also for all the people of my village. Under his regime, the people received housing facilities and food from American aid. This aid was given without discrimination, regardless of whether the recipients were local people or refugees.

69. What did the Front tell the villagers about the fall of the Diem regime?

They just said: "After Mr Diem there will be more cruel men than he!" (The subject laughed)

70. Do you know who heads up the present government?

I know that now the Army has taken control. The present government is headed by General Thieu, and the executive power is headed by Brigadier General Nguyen Cao Ky.

71. What government preceded the Nguyen Cao Ky Government?

The Phan Huy Quat Government.

72. What do you think about the present government?

In my opinion, the GVN soldier has a hard job and he earns a small salary. So, it is just that the high officials' salaries be cut for the little soldiers' sake so that the latter can fight and Vietnam can be independent.

The recent news that the leaders of Vietnam have sacrified one half of their salaries to assist the fighters is very encouraging and just what I had hoped.

73. Besides this, what have you heard about the present government and its policies?

I am only able to comment about one or two points of the present government's policies. Concerning the problem of speculation which harms the people -- the poor have to buy food at exorbitant prices while the rich can afford it as a cheap price. I will praise the government if it can eliminate this evil. I am told that the government will punish very severely all speculators caught committing this offense. They will pass before a firing squad in order to set examples for others. This measure will be, to some extent, advantageous to the poor people.

74. What did the Front tell the villagers about the present government?

The Front people didn't say anything.

75. You had come here before General Ky set up the new government. What did the Front tell the villagers about the Phan-Huy-Quat Government?

They didn't say anything then either. They only said: "There will be more changes!" That is all I heard them say.

76. Did the GVN carry out any programs in your hamlet to help the villagers?

Before 1961, the people of my village benefitted from the loans of the National Agricultural Credit Office and from American aid. They received rice and cloth and, as victims of the floods, they got rice, cloth and fish sauce (nuoc mam) from the American aid.

77. Did you or your family benefit from this aid?

Yes. My family received aid twice. The first time, each person in my family got 3 kg of wheat, and the second time we got 5 kg of rice each, plus 4 meters of cloth and a bottle of fish sauce.

78. How many refugee families were there in your village in 1961?

About 50 families.

79. Were there any military or self-defense forces stationed in your hamlet?

Yes. There was the [redacted] post. My garden was adjacent to the post.

80. What GVN forces were stationed in this post?

The Civil Guard and the SDC. The Civil Guard was one platoon strong. The SDC, formerly one platoon strong, was reduced to one squad. It was one platoon strong when the Village Committee still had its office located in the village, i.e., in 1959.

81. Where did the Village Committee move its office?

I don't know. Later, when I still lived in my village, I saw every month or two the village chief and the members of the Village Committee come back to the village along with the GVN troops; they stayed in the village for a while then left with the troops.

82. How did the Civil Guard and SDC forces behave towards the villagers?

At that time, they mixed with the villagers and they behaved well.

83. Did the GVN troops pass through your hamlet?

Yes. They passed through it every three to five months.

84. How did they behave towards the villagers?

They behaved well. When we met them, they always recommended to us that we leave our hamlet.

85. How did the villagers feel about the GVN troops?

They liked them. But because they were afraid of the VC, they apparently didn't show their sympathy to the GVN troops.

86. Did the GVN arrest the VC suspects?

Yes. They arrested the VC suspects among the local people. None of the refugees in my hamlet were arrested.

87. What did the villagers think about it?

I don't know.

88. If your hamlet was controlled by the Front, how did the villagers feel about the activities of the hamlet and village guerrillas?

It is probable that the villagers didn't like the guerrillas because of their unjust actions. They apparently showed sympathy towards them, but in their inner hearts they didn't like them much.

89. Have there been any changes in the attitude of the villagers toward the Front forces in the past year?

No. The villagers were always afraid that in living with the Front they might be killed by the GVN bombs and bullets, therefore, they were very unhappy and they didn't like to follow the liberation troops.

90. What have you heard about the aims of the Front?

The VC said that they would liberate the South, but as a matter of fact what they said is just lies and they have not liberated anything at all!

91. Who told you about the Front aims?

The guerrillas.

92. Did the Front cadres also tell you about the Front aims?

They passed through my village in small groups, carrying weapons and grenades, and I didn't know how to distinguish a cadre from a guerrilla.

93. What do you think of the Front aims?

I don't have any opinion about them. I only think that what the VC said is just propaganda to fool the people.

94. What have you heard about life in Front military units?

I don't know. The VC didn't tell me whether their life was happy or not.

95. What have you heard about Front successes, defeats, and losses?

The VC always said they won this or that battle, but I didn't believe them.

96. Who told you about Front successes?

Groups of 7 to 10 VC carrying weapons who passed through my hamlet.

97. Do you have any close friends serving in Front military units?

No.

98. Are any members of your family or any relatives serving in the ARVN or with the GVN?

Yes. At present, all my brothers are serving in the ARVN.

99. How many brothers and sisters do you have?

I have two younger brothers and two younger sisters. One of my brothers works in Ben Tranh, and my youngest brother is a sergeant in the ARVN's [redacted] Regiment. My sisters are married and their husbands are working in the ARVN.

100. Have they visited you or your family?

Yes. My brothers have visited my family every week since I have been here, and my sisters saw us twice. Last Sunday, one of my sisters came to see us.

101. Are any members of your family or any relatives serving with the Front?

No.

102. Before you came here, did your brothers and sisters persuade you to leave your village?

No. Before I left my village, I had not met them for a long time.

103. Has any fighting taken place near or in your hamlet or village?

Yes.

104. When?

I don't remember, but it took place about the beginning of this year.

105. What happened?

Shots were heard, and the Front obliged the villagers, about 50 to 60 people, to leave the area before the fight. I don't know what happened during the fighting.

106. Was your hamlet bombarded by artillery?

The GVN artillery often pounded the [redacted] area and the VC fortifications about 2,000 meters from [redacted] market. It didn't bombard my hamlet.

107. Was your hamlet bombarded by aircraft?

No.

108. Has your hamlet been attacked?

Yes. It was attacked twice very long ago, when the Strategic Hamlet was not yet constructed.

109. Did your family suffer any damage?

My family didn't suffer any human losses, but my house which was as large as this house (the subject referred to the house in which he was interviewed) was burned by the VC during the attack of the [redacted] post. Afterwards, I constructed a smaller house.

110. What property did you or your family bring with you when you came here?

I left all my property. I only brought my wife and my six children with me.

111. What else would you have liked to have taken with you if you had been able to do so?

I regret very much my garden.

112. How large is your garden?

It is 14,000 sq. m. in area. It has 600 mango trees, 400 guavatrees and 700 banana trees. My garden was very profitable, indeed!

113. What did the villagers say about the Front attacks?

They didn't say anything.

114. What kinds of attacks frightened you and the other villagers most?

The aircraft and the artillery.

115. Did any persons in your hamlet join the Front because they resented the attacks?

Nobody.

116. Did any villagers move to GVN-controlled areas after the attacks?

Yes. Many people moved to safer areas.

117. How many?

I cannot count them all. Many people left the village three years ago. The first group of evacuees was small, but the second one, right after the fall of the Diem regime was the largest of all. The people continued to evacuate until now it seems that there is nobody left.

118. Why did the people leave the village in large numbers after the fall of the Diem regime?

At that time, the Front attacks were strongest, so the people went to take refuge in this area. Only the poor people and those who had large families stayed behind in the hope of better days. As these days never came, they gradually left, almost to the last man.

119. According to your estimate, how many families have left your village?

In my opinion, up to 2,000 families in all have left.

120. Did any villagers move to Front-controlled areas after the attacks?

To my knowledge, 3 families followed the Front and moved to its areas.

121. In all, how many people?

One family was composed of 6 or 7 people and the two other families had 5 people each.

122. Were these families pro-VC for a long time?

I don't know. Each family had a son kidnapped by the VC for military duty and later all three families moved to VC-controlled areas to live.

123. Did the attacks interfere with your work and earning a living?

Yes.

124. What kinds of attacks damaged you most?

All kinds of attacks.

125. Did the GVN warn your hamlet that it would be attacked?

No.

126. Did the GVN explain the reasons for the attack?

No.

127. What did the GVN tell the villagers?

The GVN soldiers told the villagers to let them fight the VC in order to bring peace and security to the population, so that the people could enjoy happiness.

128. How did they tell you?

The GVN soldiers who came to my hamlet for mopping up operation, got tired. They sat down before the villagers' houses and talked with them.

129. What did you think about it?

I think that certainly these soldiers were right in saying this because, as a matter of fact, the GVN had helped the people while the Front had not. I also ascertained that the VC only tried to run away and to fade when the GVN troops came.

130. How did you and the villagers get news about what was going on?

At that time, the villagers could not get news about what was going on.

131. Were there any radios in your hamlet?

No. Sincerely speaking, nobody had money to buy a radio set.

132. Were there any newspapers read in the village?

No.

133. What information did the village office of the Vietnamese Information Service give the villagers?

Neither the GVN nor the Front had such an office in my village.

134. Had you or your family thought of moving to a GVN-controlled area before?

I never thought of taking refuge, because I believed that sooner or later the GVN would liberate this area from the VC and bring peace and happiness there. Only at the last moment, i.e., more than 3 months ago, when I realized that my hope could not be achieved, did I escape with my family to come here.

135. What made you strongly believe that the GVN would liberate your area from the VC?

Previously, there had been a SDC post near my hamlet and the SDC there had said that the GVN would never give up the area. As I have seen many reconstruction works carried out by the GVN in the past, other refugees and myself longed for the return of those happy days.

136. Have you taken refuge or tried to take refuge in a GVN-controlled area before?

No.

137. What had you heard about conditions in GVN-controlled areas before you left?

I knew that the living conditions in GVN-controlled areas were easier, but I delayed coming here because I believed that sooner or later the GVN would reconstruct the countryside. Therefore, I tried to stay behind in order to keep my property.

138. Were you told what the GVN would do for you and your family?

I knew beforehand that my family would be assisted by the GVN. Nobody told me so, but I myself imagined it. The VC guerrillas once told the villagers that the GVN didn't help anyone, that it was just lies or false promises on the part of the GVN authorities who, in their opinion, had no money to help others.

139. Why and how did you know about this refugee camp before you left?

I knew beforehand of this Long-Dinh camp. There is another refugee camp -- which also belongs to this camp here -- located about 1 km from here, and it is close to my hamlet.

140. How did you hear about the living conditions in this camp?

I knew that it was possible to live here. I thought that as a final resort I could weave mats to earn a living here, or live from hand to mouth, in order to avoid the air and artillery attacks.

141. What did you expect the GVN to do for you?

I hoped that the government would help me find a job.

142. When and why did you or your family decide to leave your hamlet to come here?

I didn't have any plan before I left with my family. I suddenly thought that I had to go. That morning, I was still very calm and I didn't expect to leave. After dark I suddenly decided to leave without my wife and my children knowing why I made this decision.

143. Did you hear any rumors of a possible attack on your hamlet, which made you decide to leave?

Yes. I saw the coming of GVN troops and I felt in a hurry to move.

144. Was an attack launched when the GVN troops came to your hamlet?

No. The GVN troops were numerous, but there was no fighting. I thought that this was an opportunity for me to escape.

145. What preparations did you and your family make?

No preparations at all.

146. Why didn't you leave earlier?

As I stated above, I had hoped that the GVN would liberate the area and reconstruct it.

147. What did you fear most when you were considering leaving your village?

I was not anxious about anything.

148. Did you hear broadcasts from aircraft or read leaflets telling you to leave?

Yes.

149. How often?

Many times. I heard broadcasts from aircraft, but in my area the VC didn't let anyone pick up any leaflet.

150. Were leaflets dropped?

Yes, but they drifted far away, and at that time the guerrillas picked them all up, and didn't allow the people to read them.

151. What did the broadcasts say?

They only exhorted the people to evacuate to this camp where the government would give them houses to live in.

152. What kind of aircraft made these broadcasts?

The helicopters. Two or three helicopters flew each time.

153. Did you hear the broadcasts this year or last year?

Last year. I heard them twice at night and once in daytime. Night broadcasts were made at about 8 or 9:00 p.m.

154. Did these broadcasts deal with the Chieu Hoi program?

Yes.

155. Could you hear clearly what the broadcasts from aircraft said?

Yes.

156. When did you hear them best?

At night.

157. What did you think of what they said?

I believed what they said, because I knew well the GVN assistance at the time when my area was still under GVN control. Moreover, I compared the GVN here with North Vietnamese Communists who have done nothing for the people for 9 or 10 years. Therefore, I was resigned to living with the VC to avoid having troubles with them, but in my heart I always placed my confidence and hopes in the GVN.

158. Did you expect to leave your hamlet for a long or a short time?

I didn't expect to go back to my hamlet, unless peace would come. I don't know when peace will come.

159. What property did you or your family bring with you?

Nothing.

160. Are you worried about the property you left behind?

I am not worried about it, because the trees in my garden will be completely useless due to lack of care. Moreover, the VC might destroy or burn them all.

161. Is there anyone in your village who will look after your property?

No.

162. Did the Front people know that you decided to leave?

No. If they had known it, they would have stopped me.

163. Did anyone encourage you to leave?

No. In fact, one made one's decision to leave and one never discussed the matter with anyone else.

164. Did the Front people try to persuade you and other villagers not to leave?

Yes. The guerrillas said that those who went to GVN-controlled areas would be mistreated by the GVN.

165. How did you avoid being stopped by the guerrillas?

When the GVN troops came to my hamlet, the guerrillas escaped I don't know when or where. I took advantage of this opportunity to leave with my family.

166. Has the Front threatened to punish you or other villagers for leaving the hamlet or for settling in a GVN-controlled area?

Yes. The guerrillas threatened that if ever the villagers were stopped by them while trying to leave the hamlet, they would force the arrested people to work as coolies, and they would recruit their sons for the guerrilla unit.

167. How many families left the village at about the time you did?

That day only my family left the village.

168. How many stayed behind?

I don't know. Five or six families had said that they would not leave, but after I came here I have found them here. I don't know when they came I don't know why.

169. How about your neighbors in your hamlet?

They also told me that they would never leave, but they came here two months ago.

170. Do you know why they left when they did?

No.

171. Did they have many ricefields?

Yes.

172. Did the young men in your village stay behind?

When I was still in my village, all the young men had gone I don't know where. I think that most of them have enlisted in the GVN troops.

173. In your opinion, why did some people stay behind?

As I have explained above, because of their family situation. Because they had property in their village, they didn't want to leave, and they tried to stay behind as long as they could in the expectation that the GVN would return to reconstruct their areas.

174. What do you think might happen to you if you went back to your hamlet?

I don't know. I will never go back home if there is no security in my hamlet.

175. Are there any differences between what the Front told you about life under GVN control and what you have heard and seen here?

The Front wages propaganda that those who come to take refuge in the GVN-controlled areas will be killed. But that is just propaganda and the reality is quite different, as proven by what I have heard and seen here.

176. How long do you think the war will go on?

I think that it is really difficult to stop guerrilla warfare. In this kind of war, many guerrillas have run away to come back as innocent farmers, then after some time they become again guerrillas -- while the GVN troops are seeking for them in an "honest" way. How can one arrest a true guerrilla who doesn't look like a guerrilla? When he is approached, he is an innocent farmer washing his own water buffalo. So, I have some apprehension about this war.

177. In your opinion, how long will this war go on?

In my opinion, it is difficult to foresee.

178. Do you think that the air attacks on North Vietnam can quickly resolve this war?

This depends on God. It is impossible to foresee.

179. Do you think that these attacks may affect the war situation in the South?

In my opinion, I think that the more quickly the war ends, the more prosperous and strong our country will become. However, I ascertain that the guerrillas are now very shrewd in fighting. I once indicated to a GVN soldier a guerrilla but he himself didn't believe me! This guerrilla had participated in a fight and when he realized that he was weak, he immediately came down to a pond to wash his own child while shouting loudly that he was innocent! He was searched but, for lack of proof, he was generously released, and next day he turned his coat to become again a guerrilla!

180. Do you blame anyone for causing you to leave your village?

Yes. I blame the VC. If the VC had not used the Liberation Front, there would have been no fighting and I would not have been forced to leave my village.

181. What do the other refugees say?

They dared not say anything, and I dared not ask them.

182. What help did the GVN authorities give you and your family after you left your hamlet?

My family, composed of 9 persons, has received 630 piasters from the GVN authorities.

183. Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the help you received?

I am satisfied.

184. What did the GVN authorities tell you they will do for you and your family?

They promised to grant my family food allowances (7 piasters per person and per day) for six months.

185. What do you think about what they told you?

I think that they will keep their promise.

186. What did you plan to do when you left your village?

When I left my village, I thought that if others could earn their living in the GVN-controlled areas, I might earn my living like them provided I make an effort. As for GVN aid, I think that the GVN helps the refugees for a short time and not for their whole life.

187. Have your plans changed since you came here?

Before I came here, I was confident that the GVN would certainly help the refugees.

188. Do you want to stay here or go back to your hamlet or move elsewhere?

Actually, I want to stay here and, in the future, if the circumstances permit it, I will go back to my village. But if the situation continues as now, I won't go back.

189. What sort of work do you plan to do?

I know that there are no ricefields available here, and the only handicraft is mat weaving.

190. If you have adequate facilities, what sort of work do you plan to do?

If I have adequate facilities, I think that laundry can be a good job.

191. Have you heard about or from the people who stayed behind in your hamlet?

No. I only met those who have come here.

192. Did anyone try to persuade you or the other refugees to go back to your hamlet since you came here?

No. But I have learned that a few refugees went back home. I didn't see them go back to their village, and I just learned this news from hearsay.

193. Is this news just a rumor?

Yes.

194. Have you ever tried to find out why some refugees went back home?

No. As a matter of fact, I don't believe this rumor and I often told my wife and my children: "Don't care about who comes and who goes back, don't spread the rumor again. It is just the Viet Cong propaganda, so be careful!"

195. Among those who left the village at the same time as you, did anyone go back to the village?

None. I'm sure that nobody has gone back.

196. Have you seen any Americans?

Only after coming here have I seen them. I hadn't see them before.

197. What have you heard about them?

I have heard that they are helping the refugees and I believe it.

198. What do you think they are doing in Vietnam?

I don't know if they do anything else, I only know that they help us, the refugees.

199. Have you seen people from other countries who are helping the Vietnamese?

No. I only met the Americans, as well as the American negroes.

200. What have you heard about their activities in Vietnam?

They provide facilities for fighting the war, assuring security for the Vietnamese people.

201. Who were your best friends in the village before you came here?

I was acquainted with a member of the Village Committee, but I only discussed business matters with him. He was my intimate friend and he gave me advice on what was right or wrong. I didn't have relations with other villagers, because I thought that what they said was not accurate.

202. Could you talk freely to them about all matters that concerned you?

Very seldom.

203. Where and when did you usually talk with them?

When they called on me, I only talked with them about plans for carrying on my business or trade, for example how to get a better crop, or a larger catch of fish, etc.

204. Was there any danger that they would report you if you criticized the VC or violated VC regulations?

Although some people were intimate friends, I never talked extensively with them.

205. Could you talk freely to all members of your family?

Yes. But I also talked with them about business matters.

206. Did you talk with them about the daily topics?

No.

207. Were there other families that you could trust?

No. I couldn't trust anyone other than myself and my family.

208. Is everything that is known to one member of a family also known to the others in the family?

Yes, of course.

209. Do women know everything the men know?

Yes, except for the matters that do not concern them personally. For myself, I discussed with my wife the ordinary matters that concerned both of us.

210. Can women understand everything the men know?

It happens that women can't. Sometimes I didn't let my wife know what I planned to do. I didn't let her know in advance about my plan of going here for fear that my plan might fail.

211. How long in advance did you tell her?

I told her: "We must go right now, if not it will be difficult to go." And she immediately followed me.

212. Did other families or individuals help you or your family when you were in trouble?

No.

213. Who would you say was the most important person in your village, after the village chief?

I ascertain that nobody was more important than the village chief.

214. Who was the most important person in your village after the VC took control of your village?

I don't know.

215. Why was the village chief the most important person in your village?

To my knowledge, the man with whom I was very acquainted and whose opinions are particularly respected was the village chief. He came here too, and now the people still lavish praise on him. He is pro-GVN.

216. Who would you say was the most energetic person in your village when it was a matter of getting things done -- repairing roads, asking for governmental action, and so on?

Only the village chief was the most energetic person in my village.

217. Who do you think are the best-informed about what is going on in the village?

The village chief.

218. Who do you think are best informed about what is going on in Saigon? in Hanoi?

I don't know.

219. When you lived in the village, how did you usually learn about what was going on?

When the Village Committee was still in the village, it always informed me of what was going on. After the Village Committee left the village, the Viet Cong announced in megaphones what to do for anti-aircraft defenses, but they did not wage propaganda.

220. What people did you talk to most frequently?

I talked to people very seldom. I only talked about business matters with those who were interested in them. I never talked about current events.

221. How could you learn about what the VC was doing in your district?

I saw and heard about their destructions here and there, and the villagers whispered about their arrival and their sabotage operations.

222. How could you learn about what the ARVN was doing in your district?

I saw the GVN forces conducting their military operations. I sometimes heard the GVN broadcasts from aircraft. But later I was like a man who didn't see or hear anything.

223. What is the latest information you have received about what is going on in Saigon.

I received the information about what is going on in Saigon when I have come here. I know that Mr. Nguyen Cao Ky has replaced Mr. Phan Huy Quat as Premier.

224. How did you receive this information?

I heard it over the radio here.

225. Did you read newspapers while still in your village?

No. The VC promised to give me their newspapers, but they never kept their promise.

226. Did you hear about the newspapers "Giai Phong" (Liberation)?

Yes. But I never read this paper.

227. What about news from Hanoi and North Vietnam?

I didn't pay attention to this news.

228. Have you ever sent postal cards to your relatives in North Vietnam?

No. My own parents came to the South with my family in 1954 and my wife's father still lived in North Vietnam at that time. My wife sometimes urged me to write to him, but I said: "If you receive any news from him, whether he is still living or dead, let us say prayers for him. I don't write to him, because I suspect that the VM in the North might falsify his answer, thus causing confusion to us..." So, since I came to the South, I absolutely didn't write any letters.

229. When did you hear about the air attacks on North Vietnam?

I heard about them when I came here.

230. Have you heard about life in North Vietnam?

No.

231. Did you listen to Radio Hanoi? Radio Liberation?

I had no radio set. Nobody in my hamlet had a radio set.

232. Did you listen clandestinely?

No. In my area where some fifty families lived, everyone was very poor and had no radio set.

233. In the village, did you ever see any newspapers or wall newspapers?

No.

234. Have you seen any newspapers in other places?

No.

235. Did you see any reformed opera or other entertainment?

No.

236. Did anyone else in your village read a newspaper occasionally?

I don't know.

237. Here is a picture of a ladder. The bottom rung is numbered ten, and the top rung is numbered one. Now, let's say that the top rung represents the best life you can imagine, and the bottom rung represents the worst life you can imagine. Where on this ladder would you say that your life was before you left your village?

Number 10.

238. How about your life now?

Number 8. I hope it may come up to 7 or 6 in the future.

239. How about one year ago?

Number 10.

240. And how about five years ago?

Five years ago, that is to say, when the [redacted] post wasn't yet lost, and Mr. Ngo Dinh Diem wasn't yet overthrown, I may say that it was Number 5 or 6 on the ladder. At that time, I harvested 100 gia of paddy a year, and fruits were plentiful in my garden. I may say that I was then very happy.

241. Let's us suppose that you now come back to your village. Where on the ladder would you say that your life might be?

Lower than the bottom rung or Number 10.

242. You have one son, don't you?

Yes. My son volunteered to serve in the ARVN two months ago.

243. Are you satisfied of his serving in the ARVN?

Yes. I am entirely satisfied.

244. What would you like him to become?

I hope that he will kill the VC.

245. Do you wish that he will be promoted?

This depends on his fate. I only wish that he wins over the VC, since as long as the VC are not defeated, it will be impossible to live in peace.

246. To what unit is he assigned?

He enlisted in the Paratroopers' Unit. He is attending a training course at the Hoang Hoa Tham Camp in Saigon. He gets a leave every two weeks to visit his family here.

247. What will be necessary to give your son a good life?

I have only one son. I wanted him to get married, but he told me that he liked to serve in the ARVN for a few years before getting married.

248. Do you think that your son's new salary suffices to cover his expenses? Does he support you?

When my son came here to see me, I recommended to him as follows: "You should be careful in your expenses so that you will never be short of money at the end of each month. You should count in advance how much you will spend for food, laundry, etc." For myself, I don't want to rely upon his support.

249. Did your son stay with you in the village before you left?

No. He had escaped to live in the GVN-controlled area two or three years ago.

250. What did he do?

He lived with a Catholic father for one year, then he got some minor jobs as a hired laborer before enlisting in the ARVN.

251. Did you get any support from your brothers?

No. One of my younger brothers who lives in Ben Tranh is very poor. He was a SDC in Ben Tranh and he was wounded after an engagement with the VC about over two years ago;

he is now a disabled war veteran and so he gets an office job in Ben Tranh. Another young brother of mine is a sergeant in the ARVN and he earns some six or seven thousand piasters a month, but he spends away his money and he doesn't help his own family much.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

The subject was not well informed, but he was sincere and very cooperative. He liked to talk about his family situation, and he seemed to be happy to be interviewed although he did not know much about the Front and its activities in his own village. Despite his age, he talked to the interviewer in a pretty loud voice and he sometimes answered at length the questions set by the interviewer.

MASTER COPY

NO. AGR 13

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

1. Name of interviewer [redacted]

2. Name of subject [redacted]

3. Time and date of interview :

   From 10:00 to 12:00 on July [redacted] 1965

   From 2:00 to 4:00 on " 1965

   From _____ to _____ on _____ 19___

4. Place of interview :

   Long Dinh Refugees Center, Dinh Tuong

5. Sex of subject : Male (X) Female ( )

6. Age of subject : 59

7. Ethnic background : Vietnamese

8. Place of birth :

   hamlet _____

   village _____

   district Phat-Diem (catholic city)

   province Ninh Binh (North Vietnam)

9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :

   hamlet [redacted]

   village [redacted]

   district Ben-Tranh

   province Dinh-Tuong

10. (a) Length of residence in last location : 8 1/2 years (since 1957)

    (b) Who controlled the place of residence :

    GVN ( ) VC (X) Contested ( ) How long? 1 year

NO. AGR 13

11. Number of brothers (2) and sisters (2)

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : 2

13. Marital status : Married

14. Number of children : 7

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age : 1

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject (X) (deceased)
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject(X) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject (X) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject(X) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion : Catholic

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : farmer

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation _____
(b) Landowner? _____

20. Education :
illiterate ( )
literate (X)
schooling completed : _____

21. Any relatives in VC : _____

22. Any relatives in GVN : 2 brothers and ~~2 brs~~ 2 brothers-in-law

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by :
(a) French
(b) GVN none
(c) VC

24. When became a refugee : March 1965
(3 1/2 months before the interview)

AGR

INTERVIEW

14

THE RAND CORPORATION
[redacted]

STUDIES OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT
OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR- 14

Date of Interview : July [redacted], 1965

Subject's Category : Refugee - June [redacted], 1965

Area of Residence : [redacted] village
Nam Hoa district,
Thua Thien province

1. How long have you been here?

I have been here for more than a month now.

2. Where did you come from?

I came from [redacted] which is located about fifty kilometers from here.

3. How did you get here?

I got here by helicopter. We had to leave our village because we could not live under the communists' oppression and terror. Since we could not come here by road, we made the trip by government helicopters.

4. What are your plans and prospects now?

The purpose of my coming to live here is that I want to live in a secure area away from VC terrorism. Now I hope to continue living on trade and to be able to work and help the GVN. I wish to be allowed to work in this village administration or to become a cadre in the public service so that I can support my family with my salary.

5. How large was your family?

My wife and I have four children.

6. Did all the members of your family live together before you came here or were some living apart?

My wife and my children lived together. I could stay with them only during the day because I had to spend my nights in the outpost where it was more secure. I had been threatened with death by the VC because they put me in the category of traitors and bourgeois. (How long ago was this?) This situation began in April 1964 and ended only with my taking refuge here.

7. How big was your hamlet? How many people lived there?

[redacted] hamlet had about one hundred families. Eligible voters numbered close to one hundred and the total population was over six hundred persons.

8. How long had you lived there?

I lived there for five years. (Where did you live previously? Why did you move to [redacted]?) Previously I lived in my native district of Phu Vang and then I moved to [redacted] because the land there was more fertile and prospects for trade were good.

9. How many persons have left [redacted] hamlet in the past years?

The VC began to control my village in February 1964, and up to now, about one third of the population have left to take refuge. The total population of my village was 4,344 persons and a third of it has come here to take refuge. The reason for their leaving the village was that it was remote and they found it difficult to get rice and food. They are all resettled in this village. (How many people left before you?) At the most, fifteen families left before me. These families left early by road because either they had sick wives or numerous children and they could not wait. Our group did not want to go by road and we waited for the helicopters to bring us here. (Why did they leave their village and where did they go?) They returned to their native villages where they could get help from their relatives. They left their village for two reasons : first, they could not bear VC terrorism anymore, secondly, they could not earn enough income to support their families, business being at a low because means of communication were not safe.

10. What did most of the people in the village you just left do to earn a living?

People lived mainly on agriculture and timberland. There were a few who lived on trade. They grew rice, tobacco, coffee and fruit trees such as bananas, oranges, tangerines, etc. (Were most people, rich, medium of poor?) There were many hamlets in the village and of them, [redacted] hamlet was the most prosperous while the people in the other hamlets were medium. However medium, they were still far better off than in their native villages.

11. What did you and your family do to earn a living?

We traded timber and wicker and we also grew fruit trees. (What category did the Front assign to your family?) They put me in the category of bourgeois, traitor and henchman. (What did you do to be regarded as a traitor by the VC?) Previously, I had worked in the police and resigned. Then I worked for sometime in my village administration. Although I had resigned, the VC still called me a traitor and tried to murder me. (What position did you hold in your village administration?) I was a hamlet chief in [redacted] hamlet. (What was your economic status? How prosperous were you to be called a bourgeois?) My parents were rich people. They owned land and cattle and had been able to send me to school. When I got married and was on my own, I did not have to work hard with my hands and I lived easily on trade, and this made the VC put me into the category of bourgeois. (Did many people in your hamlet belong to the category of bourgeois?) No, only one tenth of the population belonged to the bourgeoisie.

12. Were there any changes in your economic condition in the past years?

No, my economic condition was normal and suffered no changes.

13. How much education have you had?

I have completed elementary school. I went to the village school in my native village of [redacted]. (Did your children go to school in [redacted]?) Yes, they went to school there but since last year they had to stay home because there was no teacher. Previously, my two elder children went to school and the two others were too young for school. There was only one teacher in that area and he resigned when there was no more money to pay him. His salary was paid by USOM and when USOM could no longer pay him, he quit. (Do you plan to send your children to school here?) Yes.

14. Was your hamlet a strategic hamlet?

Yes, it was organized in early 1963. It was one of the first strategic hamlets to be built after the start of the strategic hamlet program in November 1962. The materials were supplied by the government and the labor was contributed by the people under our direction. (Were the people paid for their work in building the strategic hamlet?) The materials were supplied by the government and it was the duty of the people to contribute labor. They were not paid for this. (Was the strategic hamlet destroyed by the Front?) No, it was not destroyed because it was located close to the outpost, however, the VC did penetrate it. (How did living in a strategic hamlet affect your life and earnings?) The purpose of the strategic hamlet is to provide safety for the people and to organize the infrastructure of the government. The people could have a peaceful life in their strategic hamlet if the VC did not harass it. Living in a strategic hamlet did not cause any trouble whatsoever to the people. (What did you like about it? What did you dislike about it?) There was nothing that I disliked about it. Because of the strategic hamlet, people had been able to live peacefully.

15. How did the GVN village authorities behave? How did you as a hamlet chief behave? What did the people think of you? Did they complain about your behavior?

The hamlet administration of [redacted] was composed of three persons. We worked with the cooperation of the chiefs of family groups. We always worked with the consent of the people and nobody had to complain about us.

16. Who controlled your village at the time you left to take refuge?

My village was a contested area but at the time I left, government troops came to insure security so that the people could leave. (When did it become a contested area?) It has been a contested area since February 1964. (How many hamlets in your village are now controlled by the VC?) My village has four hamlets. Two of the hamlets are under VC control and young men there have already been forced to do military service for the VC. The other two hamlets are contested.

17. What were the VC activities in your hamlet which, you say, was contested?

The VC did not actually live in the hamlet but they lived as close as four kilometers. People in my hamlet had to go as far as seven kilometers on their way to work. The VC stopped them and persuaded them to work as underground agents in order to harm our people.

18. Did the Front carry out any terroristic acts in your hamlet or kill any of the people?

Yes, the VC carried out terroristic acts against the people of my hamlet. They stopped the people on their way to the river 25 kilometers away from the hamlet. People went there to buy rice and fish sauce and the VC bought this rice and fish sauce from them at half price. The VC had not killed anyone from my hamlet because it was located near the outpost. But they did kill people in neighboring hamlets. They had killed two hamlet chiefs and a number of our informers disguised as merchants. (What did the people think about these killings?) They thought this was VC terrorism just like when VC troops were stationed in their hamlets. These troops forced people to feed them and to contribute rice to them. Each person was asked to contribute one can of rice. The VC also coerced the young men to follow them and fight back at the ARVN. That is why people were demoralized. They did not like to work for a living anymore and wanted to leave that area. In addition to making their work difficult, the VC also asked the people to contribute and to feed them.

19. Did the VC ever penetrate your hamlet?

Only a few times a year. They came in small numbers except on two occasions when they attacked the outpost of [redacted]. The first time, they overran the outpost when it was built at the base of the hill. But when the ARVN rebuilt it higher up the hill the VC attacked it once again.

20. Did the attitude of the villagers towards the Front change during the past year?

The educated people in that area tried to ignore the VC but less educated people did not know much about government policies and were converted by the VC who made them their underground agents. I must admit that the majority of the population sympathized with the VC. (During the past year, did the number of VC sympathizers increase or decrease?) It increased. People were demoralized and they talked thoughtlessly. (Could you explain the reasons for this attitude?) People could not live in peace for of the following reasons : first, they were terrorized by the VC, and secondly, there was the danger of being killed during engagements between ARVN and VC troops. Because of this they became discontented and spoke in a harmful way toward the GVN. But the truth is that the VC were the cause of all their troubles and people should blame them on the VC. (What did the people say that you regard it as thoughtless?) They complained about their unbearable life. They did not want to cooperate with the GVN because they were terrorized by the Communists. They all wanted to resign and it was against their desire that we made them work for us. (Did the people criticize the GVN or the VC.) They criticized the VC but there was a small minority who were stubborn and who refused to do what they were told because they had been won over by the VC. The majority still criticized the VC for their cruelty and their trickery. (You said earlier that more people had sympathized with the VC and said thoughtless things. Why did you think so?) For instance, they did not readily agree to do collective labor for the village. Those who were stubborn refused to do the work altogether while the great majority did it grudgingly. Their protests made it more and more difficult for us to get things done. These people had been " educated " and won over by the VC.

21. Did the VC ever come to your hamlet to make people pay contributions to them?

No, they did not do this but they collected their contributions indirectly by stopping villagers on their food-supplying trips and making them contribute half of their merchandise . This was inevitable because the villagers had to cross areas controlled by the VC in order to go and buy their food. (How did the people feel about this?) The people were discontented about this but they kept their feelings to themselves. That road was the only way to go and get food and if they voiced their discontent with the VC, a minority of VC agents among the population

would report that to the VC who would execute them. (Were these contributions collected by the VC increased during the past years?) My hamlet of [redacted] was not yet subject to VC control and people there did not have to pay contributions yet. But, as I know it, people in neighboring hamlets had to contribute to the VC in increasing amounts. Previously, they contributed from 20 to 25 % of their earnings but lately they contributed as much as 50 %. This was too much.

22. Do you know how many people in your hamlet sympathized with the VC?

About one tenth of the population was on the VC side. The rest were on the GVN side. (What did the VC sympathizers do for the VC?) Those of the young men who were courageous left the hamlet to join the VC military units while the others remained behind to give a helping hand to the VC in organizing their underground network.

23. How many young men in your hamlet and in your whole village joined the Front in the last year?

About twenty young men in the whole village had followed the VC. A large proportion of these were people in the two hamlets controlled by the VC. Only three or four young men from my hamlet joined. The other contested hamlet, [redacted] also had a few men in the ranks of the VC, so I would put the total number for the whole village at thirty rather than twenty young men who joined the VC. (Did the Front persuade most of them through propaganda or did it coerce them to serve in the military forces?) The majority of these men belonged to families which already had members in the Communist ranks, therefore, they were easily persuaded by the VC to join them. Of these thirty young men who joined the VC, twenty did so willingly and the remaining ten were forced to join. (How did the VC recruit people in your village for military duty?) As I know it, the VC troops occupied these hamlets and remained there permanently. Our forces were not strong enough to come into these hamlets, therefore, the VC had all their time to persuade or to coerce the young men into their military units. (How did the villagers feel about the recruiting?) The people had their means of livelihood there and they could not send their sons to another area to take refuge. Moreover, the majority of the people there had relatives in the Front and they wanted their sons to join it.

24. Were any of your close friends taken by the Front for reeducation?

I know of one village deputy chief, one hamlet chief, one clerk of the provincial administration and a large number of people whom the VC disliked and called traitors who were abducted by the VC for reeducation. (What had these people done to be disliked and called traitors by the VC?) They were GVN cadres and their close friends who were pro-GVN. Those who were enthusiastic in attending meetings or collective labor organized by the village administration, were called traitors and taken by the VC for reeducation. (How long were they kept away? How were they treated by the VC?) The duration of their custody ranged from one month to two or three months according to the degree of gravity of the charges made against them. After they were released, they said that they were given two meals a day, of one can of rice each, taken with salt. They said none of them were beaten; they were questioned and were asked to give information about the GVN agents of the village and hamlets, then they were released after having gone through a reeducation course. (Did they say anything about this reeducation course, about the propaganda they received?) They were told that the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam was set up to fight the Americans not the Vietnamese and that the people will have a happy life once the country is liberated. These are the aims of the Liberation Front. (How was the attitude of the people who were taken away for reeducation after they were released?) I could notice, through what they said, that they had faith in the VC after their return. They did not tell their stories to everybody but they told them to me who was in their group, that is why I was able to notice the change in their attitude. (Were you afraid of being taken by the VC for reeducation?) Of course, I was afraid. With me, there was no doubt that the VC would have me executed, they would not bother themselves trying to reeducate me. They had no hope of being successful in proselyting me and they had put my name on their assassination list. (How do you know this?) Traders who went on business trips and villagers who went into the forests to work told me that they were often stopped by the VC who asked for information of my whereabouts. The VC also sent word to me and told me to cease my activities. They also came into my house to terrorize my wife and children while I was away at night. Consequently, I did not expect to have my life spared if the VC could lay their hands on me. (Describe in detail what the VC did and said when they came into your house to terrorize your family.) During the four or five years I lived in Khai Tre, the Communists often stopped my wife on her way to buy rice

and terrorized her. They also came to my house twice when they attacked the [redacted] outpost and asked my wife to lead them to my hiding place. They said my crimes deserved death but they would be lenient and spare my life if my wife persuaded me to surrender to them. But I know them to well and I can never rally to them. Consequently, I decided to stay on the run and, if that was not possible, to die with them rather than let them capture me. (Was your wife taken by the VC for reeducation?) No, she was not abducted. She was only terrorized with threats and then the VC let her go.

25. Did the VC hold meetings with the villagers?

Yes, they held meetings with the people of three hamlets in my village but not in my hamlet. They were veterans who were in the Front for a long time and who returned to these hamlets to organize meetings. (How often did these meetings take place?) Once every two nights. The VC did not organize meetings in my hamlet because it was located near the outpost. (What did the VC say during these meetings?) The VC gathered the people and organized them into associations and cells such as the associations of elder people, of women, of farmers, of young men, etc. These associations were formed to supply the VC with food, for instance. The women, for instance, were asked to cook rice to support the troops. (What did the villagers think about that?) They had to bear that. They dared not complain publicly, they had to complain to the GVN cadres of the village only. (Did the VC say anything about the bombing of North Vietnam?) No, they said nothing except that they fired back at aircraft when aircraft fired at them. They did not mention North Vietnam.

26. Did the people in your village pay taxes to the GVN in addition to those they paid to the VC?

People of two or three hamlets in my village paid contributions to the VC. The whole village did not have to pay taxes to the GVN but they had to contribute labor whenever some work had to be done in the public interest.

27. Did the village chief have frequent contacts with the people?

The village chief had had frequent contacts with the villagers prior to 1964. But since 1964 with the VC occupying two or three hamlets and the roads insecure, the contacts were impossible.

28. Did the province chief or district chief come to visit your village during the past year?

Yes, my village was visited lately by GVN officials such as the province chief, the district chief and army generals. They usually visited my village two or three times a month. (Why did they come so often?) This was a mountain area with only a small population. People had requested the government to supply them with rice and that is why so many high ranking officials came to inspect the living conditions of the people.

29. What did the people in your village think of the fall of the Diem regime?

People applauded the downfall of the Diem regime because they thought it was unjust. Many villagers had been forced to go and settle in that area and they thought it was unfair of the Diem government. Many people were poor and volunteered to come to [redacted] under the Land Development program but a number of people had been forced to move there. Moreover the Diem government did not fulfill its promises to the people. For instance, people were promised that the government would supply them with rice for ten months but in fact they received their rice only for nine months, or people were promised all kinds of allowances such as for flood relief, but they received not a piaster of that money, consequently, they thought the government had trampled on their rights and had shown itself to be unjust. The Diem government did nothing to help the people. People received no medicine, their rations of rice were cut down every time one of their children died, the rice was delivered for only nine months instead of ten, etc.

30. Did the GVN carry out any programs in your hamlet to help the villagers?

The roads were not usable because of the VC and the government took charge of supplying the village with rice which was sold to the villagers. The rice was brought there twice a month by helicopters.

31. What GVN forces were stationed in your hamlet?

Prior to the VC attack on the outpost, there were two companies of Regional Forces in that area, one was stationed in [redacted] hamlet and one in [redacted] hamlet After the attack, this garrison was reinforced with

regular troops of the 1st Division who came there to build another outpost and turn it over to the Regional Forces troops.

32. What damage did these attacks cause the population?

A few people were killed by stray bullets during this attack. (Who did the people blame for these deaths?) They blamed nobody. It was a misfortune of war. They did not know whose bullets they were and they could blame nobody.

33. How did the GVN soldiers behave towards the villagers?

They behaved decently towards the villagers and they had close contacts with the people. However, they had no contact with the people in insecure hamlets because they were afraid to go there. (Did any villagers complain about the behavior of the GVN soldiers?) I know nothing about that.

34. How did the villagers feel about Front troops stationed in insecure hamlets?

The villagers complained bitterly that the VC forced them to keep guard duty, to cook rice for their troops and that the VC took away their sons for military service. People also resented the VC harassment of the GVN troops which subjected the people to the dangers of war.

35. Describe the attacks which took place in or near your village.

In May of 1964, the VC attacked and overran the outpost of [redacted]. The outpost was manned by only one platoon at that time and the GVN soldiers suffered five killed and the rest fled into the mountains. On the [redacted] of May of this year, the VC attacked again the new [redacted] outpost which was built on top of a hill. The company of GVN soldiers in the outpost was taken by surprise during their meal and had to escape into the mountains. The soldiers suffered five killed while the rest returned to the outpost about ten days later. Losses were light at the outpost but on May [redacted], detachments of the 1st Division which came as reinforcements were ambushed by the VC and suffered heavy casualties. The ambush took place near one of the insecure hamlets and a large number of soldiers were either killed or captured. The GVN soldiers had landed on [redacted] hamlet and were moving to the relief of [redacted] when they were ambushed. The [redacted] Battalion was hardest hit and was completely wiped out. The ARVN sent another relief detachment on May [redacted] 1965, and this time it

succeeded in reaching [redacted]. (What did the villagers do during these attacks?) The villagers stayed in their shelters during the battles. After the VC had overrun the outpost, they gathered the people and asked them to carry the war booty for them. (Describe the shelters used by the villagers.) They dug shelters and covered them with boards and earth. These shelters were used for protection against bombs and artillery shells. (What did you do during these attacks?) I and seven other village and hamlet officials escaped into the mountains and hid ourselves. (Did other villagers have to escape into the mountains like you did?) Yes, a number of villagers belonging to the upper class also had to escape into the mountains for fear of being arrested by the VC.

35. Were there other VC harassments in addition to these large-scale attacks?

No, the VC undertook no harassment actions against my hamlet except their attacks against the outpost. On the day they overran the outpost, they organized a meeting of the people and they terrorized particularly those who worked for the village administration, such as the heads of family groups. They advised them to resign their positions and also asked them to persuade the village and hamlet officials to surrender to the VC because sooner or later the VC would capture them. That was the only thing they did. (Did the heads of family groups resign their positions afterward?) The majority of them resigned. Even village and hamlet officials were scared. (Were there other villagers to replace them?) Yes, they were replaced by other villagers. (Why did the new officials agree to serve the GVN in spite of the threats?) It was the work of our cadres who talked them into accepting their new positions and, if need be, forced them to do so. They pointed out that those who were too old to serve the GVN as soldiers had the duty to serve it as civilian cadres.

37. Had you thought of taking refuge before?

No. I remained with my family during the day and I had to sleep in a safer place only at night. Aside from this I had never taken refuge before. (Although you had not moved your family to another area where it was safer,

had you ever had this idea before? Yes. I had realized that I could not live in [redacted] and sooner or later I would have to move out. I had intended to have my family return with me to my native hamlet of [redacted] in [redacted] village where my father and my brother live. (Why didn't you carry out your plan?) I did not have the means to move out because the VC controlled the roads and they could arrest me. Therefore, I had to remain and get stuck in [redacted]. (Was your native hamlet in a secure area?) No, my native hamlet is still insecure. (Then, why did you plan to move there?) I planned to send my wife and children to live there while I would try to find work in the GVN administration, as I have told you. Now I hope to get work in the administration of this village or of the province.

38. When did you decide to leave your hamlet?

Since April 1964, when the VC began to terrorize all the neighboring hamlets.

39. Describe the circumstances which made you decide to leave your hamlet on the day you left?

The circumstances were that the VC overran the outpost of [redacted] and the villagers had to be evacuated. I came here on June [redacted], 1965. (Why did you choose this place to take refuge?) We were brought here by the government. We did not choose this area, it was decided by the government that we must come here. I know that the government has chosen this area because it is relatively safer than our old village. (Do you know why you people were evacuated from your old village?) Because we could not stand the terrorism of the VC. Nearly four hundred families were evacuated from my old village.

40. Were the people happy or reluctant to leave their village?

As far as I know, they were willing to leave because they could not stand VC terrorism and the dangers of war.

41. Did the VC make any attempts to prevent the people from leaving their village?

Yes, they did. The villagers from [redacted] hamlet had to come to the airship in [redacted] hamlet in order to be evacuated and to do so, they had to cross areas under VC control. The VC stopped them and asked them to remain in the village and have a peaceful life. But the people had made up their mind and they kept going. The VC used only propaganda to persuade them and did not use force.

42. What preparations did you make when you decided to leave your hamlet?

I made no preparations. I was busy looking after the safety of my wife and children. (What property did you and your family bring with you?) We brought with us nothing beside a few clothes. (What property did you leave behind?) We left everything behind : our house, the furniture, the pigs, the poultry, the tobacco leaves we had just harvested, everything. We brought with us only a few clothes. (Is there anyone in your village who will look after your property? Are you worried about the property you left behind?) Nobody is looking after my property. There can be two possibilities, either the VC will take it over or the GVN soldiers will destroy it. In both cases it is lost to me.

43. Did the VC make any threats to make the people remain in their village?

Yes, they did but it was in vain because the people's decision was firm and they had to bow down. They used no terrorist acts to make people change their minds. They only said : " Stay in your village. What is the use of going elsewhere. Don't believe that you will be safer elsewhere. War will come to you wherever you are. No place will be safe from our attacks". (Did they tell the villagers about conditions in GVN- controlled areas?) They said there was no place safe from war and fighting. Liberation fighters launched attacks all over the country and even Hue city was not safe from their attacks. They urged the people to remain in their village and continue their work under the protection of the Liberation fighters. (Did any of the people change their minds and obey the VC?) No, they all continued on their way.

44. Did the villagers blame anyone for causing them to leave their village?

It is so obvious; of course they blamed the Communists. (What did they say?) They said the VC had overrun their hamlets and harassed the people. When it saw that people were having an impossible life, the GVN had to evacuate them and people had to leave behind all their property, that is why they blame the VC.

45. What help did the GVN authorities give you and the other villagers after you left your village?

The government gave us enough rice for one month and each of us also is receiving seven piasters a day for food. We have received building materials to build our houses. (Are the people satisfied or dissatisfied with the help they received?) They are dissatisfied because first, there are not enough houses for all of them and secondly, they still have to sleep on the ground. They have requested that the government give them beds, tables and furniture. I think they are asking for too much.

46. Have any of the villagers who left with you thought of moving back to their village?

No one is thinking of returning to their village in the mountains, but a number of the villagers who left with me have asked for authorization to return to their native village in the plains. I cannot possibly imagine anybody willing to return to [redacted] or [redacted].

47. What do you think might happen to them if they went back to [redacted] or [redacted]?

They will have to bear the VC and the dangers of war.

48. Who were your best friends in your village?

My best friends were the cadres in the village and hamlet administration, the people who did trade with me and the soldiers in the outpost. (Could you talk freely to them about all matters that concerned you or were there any matters that you were afraid to talk with them about?) I was free to talk to them about every matter. I was afraid of nobody. (Where and when did you usually talk with them?) We talked about government matters during working hours and about private matters during rest hours. We never talked when it was dark. (Was there any danger that they would report you if you criticized the VC?) Yes, I was afraid of that, consequently I opened my heart only to my closest friends. I would not do so with ordinary acquaintances. (Who were your closest friends?) My closest friends were the cadres. They had been my colleagues for many years and they had a strongly pro-GVN attitude. I did not trust those who identified themselves with neither side or those who pretended to be pro-GVN just to please people. (In addition to the government cadres, were there any other people in whom you could have confidence?) Yes, they belonged to the educated class. Those people understood the situation and I could trust them. The rest of the villagers could not be trusted. They were not educated and they could be easily won over by the Communists through their propaganda, while educated people supported the government even when they were not government cadres. Educated people had had an easy life, they appreciated their freedom and they realized which was

the right and which was the wrong.

49. Who would you say was the most important person in your village, after the village chief?

I think that the most important persons were the old and educated people. These people were too old to take charge of the village administration but they had experience and were respected. (Why were they important? Why were their opinions particularly respected?) They had had experience with life and they could tell the right from the wrong, therefore, their words were respected by the people. Moreover they were educated people. (Are there other people who are also important?) No. Nobody is important beside these people.

50. Who would you say was the most energetic person in your hamlet?

I would say that people over thirty years old were energetic while young men under thirty were often thoughtless. (What do you mean by energetic?) I mean those people who were strongly pro-GVN and who were enthusiastic in their support of the government.

51. Who would you say was the person most likely to have things done in your hamlet - repairing roads, asking for governmental action, etc.?

The old and educated people. They were distinguished, people listened to them and they could direct people around. The young men were listless and did these works only when they were ordered to.

52. Who do you think were the best-informed people in your village about what was going on in the village?

I did not know much but I think I was the best-informed person. (How did you receive your information?) The people who went to work outside the hamlet reported to me everything they knew. They were people who believed in the government and they could be trusted.

53. Who do you think were the best informed people in your village about what was going on in Saigon? In Hanoi?

I myself knew nothing about what was going on in Hanoi or in North Vietnam and I do not think that anybody could say he knew, perhaps at most one or two educated people.

Only those who owned radios could be informed of such things and they were very few. There were just two, including myself. (What about the world outside of Vietnam?) Nobody was informed about what was going on in the world outside of Vietnam. (So, you were the best-informed person in your hamlet, weren't you?) Yes, I think I was a little better-informed than the other villagers, together with a few other persons. (Who were the few other persons who were as well-informed as you?) They were educated people who served in the village administration at one time or another.

54. You said that you were informed about what was going on in your village by people who went out to work. What kind of information did they give you?

Whenever the VC stopped people who went out to work or to buy food, this was reported to me by these same people. It was the same with events which happened inside the hamlet, for instance a villager had some problem and he came to ask my advice and my help.

55. Could you learn about what the ARVN was doing in your area?

No, I could not because it was beyond my official responsibilities.

56. Could you learn about the district and province administration?

I was definitely not informed about these things. You should understand that my village was located in a completely remote area. News of an event must spread to all the people of the district before it reached us.

57. What is the latest information you have received about what was going on in Saigon?

Here, I read the news from Saigon in the newspapers and I also listen to the radio. (Did you have newspapers in [redacted]) No, I listened only to the radio. But the village had an information office with news bulletins. (Did people frequently come to the information office to read the news?) No, because they were kept busy by their work. (What about you?) I went there to read very frequently. (Do you think these sources of information are reliable?) I do not know if other people think so but I think that the newspapers and the radio are reliable sources of information because they give information about only what has really happened.

58. What is the latest information you have received about what is going on in Hanoi and North Vietnam?

I have not received any information from North Vietnam. (Do you know how life is in North Vietnam?) No, I know nothing on this subject and I do not know how I can possibly get information about it. Back in my village, there were only regional forces troops and village guerrillas among the VC; there was no North Vietnamese infiltrator among them.

59. Which station did you tune in with your radio?

I usually listened to Radio Hue and Radio Saigon. I had a radio but I have sold it. Now I listen to my neighbor's radio. (What do you like to listen to on the radio?) I usually listen most often to the news. (Do you listen to other stations such as Radio Liberation, Radio Freedom, the BBC, etc...?) I also listen to the BBC radio station but not to Radio Liberation. I listen to Radio Freedom too. (Is it a direct broadcast from the BBC or a relayed broadcast of the BBC from Radio Saigon?) It is a relayed broadcast by Radio Hue.

60. How many people back in your village came regularly to the information office to read newspapers?

About one third of the villagers were literate but they were kept busy by their work and they rarely came to read newspapers at the information office. Only less than ten people read newspapers regularly. They either came to the information office to read them or they might borrow them and read at their homes. They were educated people. (Did they usually tell other people what was in the newspapers?) No, they did not tell other people what they had read in the newspapers except the news concerning the war and the news of victories. (To whom did they tell this news?) To their neighbors.

61. When you were in the village, were there some kinds of news or other information that you wish you had more of?

Yes, I wished to have more information but this wish could not come true because my village was too remote. (What were the news or other information that you wished you had more of?) I wished to have more of in - country as well as foreign news and this could be realized only if my hamlet had had a radio. I see that hamlets in the plains all have at least one radio belonging to the hamlet administration while my hamlet did not have one. I wished it could have one.

62. You said that the information you got from GVN sources was reliable. Can you give an example?

About news of the fighting, for instance, I could get confirmation from a friend or relative who came to my village, therefore, I could infer that the news from the GVN was accurate. Another example : the government promised to supply my village with rice twice monthly and it kept its promise. (How did you learn about this government promise?) In the newspapers and on Radio Hue.

63. Here is a picture of a ladder. The bottom rung is numbered ten, and the top rung is numbered one. Now, let's say that the top rung represents the best life you can imagine, and the bottom rung represents the worst life you can imagine. Where on this ladder would you say that your life was before you left your village?

I would say that I was on rung # 10. (What about your present life?) It is on rung # 6. (How about one year ago?) Around rung # 8. (And how about five years from now?) I think my life will be on rung # 5 or 4 but it might also reach rung # 3 or 2.

64. You were rather well-to-do back in your village, then why do you put your life then on rung # 10?

Money and property meant almost nothing to me then and I led a worried life. I had elegant clothes but I dared not put them on. I had money but there was nothing to buy. Even a bottle of beer could not be purchased there. I had beds and chairs but I could not use them with a relaxed mind. I could not stay in one place during the day and I had to go and take refuge at night. Consequently, money and property were meaningless and my life remained all the same at rung # 10. Money was meaningless for two reasons : first there was nothing to buy and secondly, the VC would charge me with the crime of luxury and this would aggravate my case. There was also a third reason : if the village happened to be encircled by the VC and isolated, my life would not be worth a piaster. I could think of nothing happy about my life back in my village.

65. Now try to describe the best life you can imagine for yourself. What would it be like?

I would describe my life on rung # 1 like this : My family and I will live in an area where all will be quiet. I will have a stable position with which I will be able to support my family. I will be able to have frequent contacts with the population and we will all live in an atmosphere of peace. That is the best life I hope for myself. My family will have a sufficient income and I will not have to worry about debts.

However, I am not demanding a rich life. I want only to be in the middle class. That is the best life for me.

66. What kind of life do you hope your son will have?

I hope for him to have a life on rung # 5. I do not see for him a better life because my family now has no property and because he had not been to school in [redacted]. How can I hope to give him a good education with an empty purse? My present life is on rung # 6 and I will do my best to earn money and give him some education and I hope his life will be a little better and reach rung # 5. I hope to earn about two or three thousand piasters a month here, use part of this income to raise my family and save a little in order to send him to school.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

The subject appeared to be highly intelligent, honest and cooperative. However, he seemed bored and smiled uneasily when asked about his sources of information. He was particularly bored when asked about what was going on in Saigon, in Hanoi, and in the world outside of Vietnam. On the contrary the test of the ladder was surprisingly successful and he had a very clear view on this question.

NO. AGR 14

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

1. Name of interviewer [redacted]

2. Name of subject [redacted]

3. Time and date of interview :
   From 10:00 to 11:45 on July [redacted] 196 5
   From _____ to _____ on _____ 19 ___
   From _____ to _____ on _____ 19___

4. Place of interview :
   Hoa Luong Refugee Center, Thua Thien province.

5. Sex of subject : Male (X) Female ( )

6. Age of subject : 37

7. Ethnic background : Vietnamese

8. Place of birth :
   hamlet [redacted]
   village [redacted]
   district Phu Vang
   province Thua Thien

9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :
   hamlet [redacted]
   village [redacted]
   district Nam Hoa
   province Thua Thien

10. (a) Length of residence in last location : Five years
    (b) Who controlled the place of residence :
    GVN ( ) VC ( ) Contested (✓) How long? one year

NO. AGR 14

11. Number of brothers (one) and sisters (six)

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : one

13. Marital status : Married

14. Number of children : Four

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age : Zero

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject (X)
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject( ) or not with subject (X)
Wife with subject (X) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject(X) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion : Buddhism

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : Hamlet chief and Timber trader

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation Bourgeois
(b) Landowner? No

20. Education :
illiterate ( )
literate (X)
schooling completed : Elementary school

21. Any relatives in VC : No

22. Any relatives in GVN : [redacted] uncles in [redacted] police force

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by :
(a) French No
(b) GVN No
(c) VC One brother-in-law killed in October 1964

24. When became a refugee : June [redacted] 1965

AGR

INTERVIEW

15

MASTER COPY

THE RAND CORPORATION [redacted]

STUDIES OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR-15

Date of Interview : July [redacted] 1965

Subject's Category : Refugee - November [redacted] 1964

Area of Residence : [redacted] village
Nam Hoa district, Thua Thien province

1. How long have you been here?

I have been a refugee since November [redacted] 1964.

2. Where did you come from?

I came from [redacted], my native hamlet. This place is also called [redacted] but it belongs to [redacted] village.

3. How did you get here?

I came by Vietnamese Navy boats. The Navy sent its boats to [redacted] to bring us here. [redacted] is located about nine kilometers from here.

4. What are your plans and prospects now?

I am worrying about my means of living. Back in my old hamlet, I had plenty of land and orchard which I had inherited from my parents and I did not have to worry about life. Since I came, I have been worrying about the future. We have been given food by the government during the past few months. It is not plentiful but sufficient. We now worry about our future, about what we will do to make a living. I am old now and it is impossible for me to find work in the GVN administration. It is also impossible for me to work as a hired laborer because I do not have enough strength for that. I am now sixty years old, I am not young. (Do you have any idea what you will do to make a living?) I do not worry for myself, I worry for the villagers in general. I have four sons in the ARVN and I can rely on them to support me. Back in my hamlet, I did not ask for their support because I had plenty of land and was never in need but now they can be of a great help to me and I have no worry about a living. But I worry about the people of this hamlet. Many of them are very poor. They had at most three or five thousand piasters when they took refuge, now they have spent all their savings during the past months. They have received help from the government but this help cannot meet all their needs and constitutes only partial relief. Each adult receives fourteen kilograms of rice a month, each child receives eight kilograms. Where does the food come from to accompany the rice? Where do the clothes they wear come from? From the money they saved. Consequently, the people of this hamlet are very worried about earning a living. As for myself, I am not worried. Don't think I am a hanger-on. My four sons in the ARVN cannot possibly let their father starve.

5. How old are your sons and what branch of the ARVN are they in?

I have four sons in the ARVN. The eldest has been in the army for eighteen years and he is now a conductor of a military band in Sadec. The second son has been in the

army for sixteen years, he is in a combat unit stationed in [redacted]. The third son has been a paratrooper for eight years and is stationed in Saigon. The fourth son works with the Americans in Phu Bai as a civic action cadre.

6. How many members of your family lived with you back in your old hamlet?

I returned to live in my native hamlet in 1960. I was farsighted and I realized that life was not going to be secure there. Consequently, I did not build a house and my wife and I went to live temporarily in my aunt's house. My aunt was living alone with her daughter. I did not build a house because I feared it would be lost when I would have to take refuge once again. That is why I did not lose a house when I had to take refuge here. I only worked my land and my orchard but did not build a house.

7. Have you taken refuge before?

I had taken refuge the first time in 1947. I returned to my hamlet in 1960 to restore my land when I saw that all was quiet. I took refuge a second time on November [redacted] 1964 and I have been staying here since that date. (Why did you take refuge in 1947?) I was living peacefully in my hamlet in 1947 when French troops came and rounded up all the people. We were taken to the plains and left to ourselves. We received no help what ever from the French and we had to shift for ourselves. (Where did you take refuge?) I went to [redacted] village where I had many relatives. I stayed there until 1960. (What did you do for a living there?) I worked as a hired laborer during the first few years, then I was told that the French military hospital needed civilian employees and I applied for a job. My application was accepted and I became a civilian employee for the French army in 1953. I stayed in that job until 1960 when I reached the retirement age of 55. The director of the hospital was sorry to see me leave and he requested the Vietnamese defense ministry to let me stay on the job in the public interest. His request was turned down and I had to retire. (Why did you go back to your hamlet?) After my retirement I had no means to make a living except in my native hamlet where I had inherited from my parents plenty of land and orchards. Consequently, I went back to my native hamlet to restore this land and lead an easy life.

8. How big was your village and hamlet?

My village had only one hamlet but this was a large hamlet divided into three parts : the higher part, the middle part, and the lower part. I lived in the middle part. The population was rather small, around four hundred persons, but

each person had a large piece of land and people lived far from their next neighbors. The smallest piece of land was at least six or seven " sao " large and the largest was about two " mau " large.

9. How many families or persons have left your hamlet in the past years?

There were a number of people who took refuge before me. They were the hamlet chief and the other cadres of the hamlet administration and also some villagers who were more afraid than me. They left six or seven months before me when the VC took over my hamlet in February 1964. Those who left numbered about five or six persons. My village has very rich land and people were reluctant to leave. Life was very easy back in my village and nobody wanted to leave. The only reason which made them willing to leave was their fear of the Communists. Don't think that they wanted to move to a richer place. Take my case. I have left my hamlet but I swear to you that I will return there as soon as there is peace because it is such a happy place to live, you work very little but your income is very large.

10. What did most of the people in your hamlet do to earn a living?

After the VC took over the hamlet, the majority of the people there wanted to leave and take refuge in the plains. But they were afraid to do so. They were afraid of having nothing to eat here. They had plenty of land up there and did not have to bother about making a living, consequently they hesitated. They adopted a wait-and-see attitude hoping there might be peace again. I myself thought the same. I thought that the situation could not last and there must be peace some day, consequently I lingered on. I told myself : " Let's stay as long as we can and let's be subtle toward them, they cannot harm such an old man as me ". And I stayed behind looking for a good opportunity to leave. I could not leave even if I had wanted to. Once the VC had taken over my hamlet, it became very difficult for the people to move out. You could move out alone but you had to leave behind a wife, or a brother, or a husband, etc.. After you had left, the remaining members of your family would be suspected by the VC and they might be bound and led away. Consequently, you dared not take refuge, you shut your ears and closed your month, waiting for a good event which would change the whole situation. This event came at last. The GVN organized a large operation and we were evacuated, we and all our families and some of our property.

11. Compare life in your hamlet before and after the VC occupied it.

Before the VC took over my hamlet, life was very happy. The incomes of the villagers kept growing and were very sufficient. People were happy to increase their production every year but after the arrival of the VC they were discouraged and did not want to work. For instance, they would sow three baskets of seeds instead of the previous five. They decreased their production out of discouragement. But although they were discouraged, they had to keep on working. They were discouraged because they were afraid of the VC. The more they produced the heavier were the taxes, consequently they did not want to work anymore. In spite of this, they had to continue to work for fear of being suspected by the VC. They feared the VC would be alarmed by their attitude if they suddenly stopped working, consequently they kept on working but half-heartedly. (What did they do to earn a living?) They cultivated their land. Those who did not own a piece of land went into the forests and gathered wood. A very small proportion of the people were merchants. People who went to work in the forests gathered small quantities of wood, mostly thatch. They could earn as much as one hundred and fifty piasters a day from the thatch they gathered. I say nothing of the well-to-do people who owned land or orchads because that is obvious, but the poor people in my hamlet could earn at least 150 piasters a day. There were a relatively small number of ricefields up there because water was scarce, instead people chose to grow fruit trees which were more lucrative. We grew oranges, tangerines, bananas, pineapples, grapefruits etc. My orchard was full of these fruits. The trees were so laden with fruits that their branches had to be propped up with poles. My orchard was an average one and it already had over one hundred fruit trees. Larger orchards had from 150 to 200 trees and the smallest orchard had at least 30 to 50 trees. At the height of the tangerine season, the least important tangerine grower was able to get six or seven thousand piasters out of his tangerines; the more important growers could get as much as twenty five thousand piasters. This time of year is the tangerine season and we were very happy then. We were busy welcoming the fruit traders from the plains. We were endowed with everything. We grew our fruit and we just sat there and waited for the traders to come. It was a tremendously happy life. We did not have to bother with the transportation and sale of our produce. We just sat there.

12. Were there any changes in your economic situation in the past years?

We passed from one prosperous year to another more prosperous year. Previously, people lived in thatched huts, and after 1960 when I went back, I could see that people switched to brick houses. Everybody could afford a brick house. If nothing had happened, I can assure you that in five years

my hamlet would be the most prosperous in all Nam Hoa district. Yes, it was a prosperous hamlet. But then the VC came and people got scared. People who remained behind after 1947 knew too well what life with the Communists was like. They had lived with them from 1947 to 1954. And even those like myself who had not lived with them were aware of the VC behavior, e.g. what they would do at the beginning and what they would do later on. Consequently we decided to leave behind all that we cared for and take refuge. We were very sorry for all that we left behind, believe me we were. But we could not value our property more than our lives and we chose to take refuge.

13. How much education have you had? Can you read and write?

I do not know how to read and write Vietnamese. I have learned only how to sign my name. I have been prejudiced by the policy of the French which had banned the creation of schools. During my youth I could not go to school because there were none, therefore, I learned Chinese for two or three years.

14. Who controlled your hamlet a year ago?

The GVN controlled my hamlet prior to 1964. It was in firm control of it and no VC could be seen around. But beginning February 7, 1964, there were plenty of them to be seen. They called themselves the Liberation fighters. In previous years, it was rumored that they were everywhere else but surprisingly enough they did not come to [redacted]. The district chief himself got suspicious and asked : "Why do they stay away from [redacted]?" But indeed, they stayed away from my hamlet. If it had not been that way we would have taken refuge long before. But on February 7, 1964, there was no doubt that they were there, people could see them clearly. The VC came and occupied my hamlet until the day we took refuge.

15. How did the GVN hamlet authorities behave?

The members of the village council in general behaved perfectly toward the villagers. They took pains to lead the people along the government line and away from the VC. They never ceased urging people to follow the government line and ignore the VC. But when the VC made their appearance, the members of the village council had to escape. They took refuge well before us. None of them were arrested by the VC. If they had stayed behind they were certain to be arrested by the VC. (What did the villagers think of the GVN village authorities?) I know from my personal experience that the hamlet chief was a very honest man, he behaved perfectly toward the villagers. Some thoughtless villagers said of him that he was severe

with them and made them work hard but the truth was that he had to carry out the directives which came from above. Take the case of the construction of the strategic hamlet. Some of the villagers came late to the work site and were scolded by the hamlet chief. Everybody should recognize that he was right in scolding them. If he had not scolded them they would continue to come late to work and how could he have the directives carried out. These people should understand him instead of complaining. Everybody in his place would have to act the same.

16. When was your strategic hamlet built?

It was built in 1962. All the villagers contributed labor, bamboo, etc. (Was it destroyed by the VC?) It was destroyed on February 7, 1964. The VC came and asked the people to tear down the strategic hamlet. They forced people to do so at gun point. They went from house to house, rounded up all the people and made them tear down the strategic hamlet. Our hamlet was located in a remote area, the GVN could be seen nowhere then, consequently we did what we were told although we had contributed much of our own labor to erect it. Nobody dared to protest out of fear for his life.

17. How did you find life in a strategic hamlet?

I found life in a strategic hamlet more secure. After the construction of the strategic hamlet was completed, its security was provided by the Armed Popular Forces. They were grouped into cells of three men each. Every evening they had their meals at 5 p.m. and then spread out to all parts of the hamlet to keep security. They stayed awake all night in cells of three to stand guard and the villagers felt very safe. When the Popular Forces were disbanded, the villagers felt that the situation was becoming weaker and weaker every day. I do not know why the GVN disbanded the Popular Forces. I only know that it happened after the 1963 Revolution and it surprised everybody. (Where did the men in the Popular Forces come from? Were they natives of your hamlet?) They were sent in by the provincial administration. They were people from all parts of the country. (What did you like about life in a strategic hamlet?) As I saw it, the fences of the strategic hamlet were solidly built but in reality they meant nothing to the VC who could destroy the fences very easily. What was important was the fact that the strategic hamlet was guarded by soldiers. That was the important thing. I felt secure in the hamlet when I could see soldiers patrolling around it. When the soldiers were gone I was discouraged. Why? Because my hamlet was very large. It spread over more than three kilometers at the foot of the mountains. (What did you dislike about life in a strategic hamlet?) I was satisfied about life

in a strategic hamlet. There was nothing I could think of which made me sad. However, people were angry at the beginning when they had to build it themselves. They complained about the large amount of labor that they had to contribute in addition to money and property. Each villager was asked to contribute two or three days of labor. The period of the construction coincided with harvest time and the people were sad to have to delay their harvests. But after the strategic hamlet was built, everybody liked living in it. However, they liked it only when there were soldiers to defend it. We felt sorry for all the work we had wasted when there were no-soldiers to defend the hamlet anymore. Fences alone did not constitute a good protection against the Communists and the villagers certainly could not defend themselves. The only equipment that they were acquainted with were hoes and plougns; they had no guns or rifles and the VC could come in whenever they liked. We felt very sad when we saw the soldiers leave our hamlet. (What did you contribute for the construction of the strategic hamlet?) I did not contribute money. I contributed labor and bamboo stakes. I had to contribute many days of labor, about one or two days a week and this for as long as one month. The contributions in bamboo stakes did not amount to much, each villager contributed an average of 25 or 30 bamboo stakes.

18. Describe how the VC took over control of your hamlet.

They came at night and knocked at our door. We woke up and opened the door. There they were. Our blood ran cold out of fear. We were terrified because we had never been awakened by GVN soldiers in the middle of the night. Once the door was opened they said : "We are the Liberation Front of South Vietnam. We come to pay a visit to the villagers. You have nothing to be afraid of. Please have a seat and have a chat with us". I was still trembling and unable to speak for at least a few minutes. They asked me : "You are terrified, aren't you?" " Yes, " I replied, "of course I am ". They said : " Don't be afraid anymore. We are just Liberation fighters. Sit down and enjoy the talk." I told them : " It is the first time that I have see you. It is natural to be afraid of strangers and please excuse me ". They said it was all right. They did not stay long in my house, this was their habit on subsequent visits too. They stayed only long enough to ask me to attend a meeting in the hamlet temple. It was lucky for me at that time that I had a tooth ache. I asked to be exempted from having to attend the meeting because of my tooth ache. I told them that my wife and my aunt would attend the meeting in my place while I would stay at home to guard the house. They said : " All right. All we want is that each family send some of its

members to the meeting". Consequently I did not attend the first popular meeting but I had to attend subsequent meetings. The meetings of that night lasted for a while and then the villagers were asked to go and destroy the strategic hamlet. Everybody had to take part in the destruction. The Liberation fighters remained in the hamlet right through the following day. They occupied the whole area including the other side of the river. ARVN troops who came to the rescue were stopped and beaten by the VC. Afterward my hamlet was under complete control of the VC who remained there flagrantly. Although we lived with them, our hearts and minds remained with the GVN. During the nine months we lived with the VC, we were guilty of harmful deeds done to the GVN but we had not deserted it. I myself did not side with the VC but I had to do harm to the GVN. I could not do otherwise, if I did I would not be here today. Take the example of my strategic hamlet. I had put into it my property and my labor but when the VC ordered me to destroy it, I did what I was told. This was a crime againt the GVN but I committed it against my will. The VC would kill me unless I obeyed them.

19. What did the VC say to the people on the first night they came to your hamlet?

I did not attend the meeting that night but I was informed about it by my wife. She told me that the VC introduced themselves to the people as the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam. They asked the people not to be afraid because they came to liberate them. Afterward they said that the strategic hamlet had been built to pen in the villagers and prevent them from moving freely to work for a living. After this the VC asked the villagers to destroy it. Everybody obeyed them.

20. Was the people's attitude different from yours? Were they eager to destroy the strategic hamlet?

No one was eager to do that. They did that only out of fear for their lives. However, I must let you know this. Back in my old hamlet it was impossible to know what other people thought or felt. One might confide to his own brother only after he had made sure that his brother was a prudent person. This is just to show you how the villagers were afraid of one another. They dared say nothing to one another. I dared open my heart to no one, not even my wife. I had made my preparations with a view to our taking refuge but I did not let her in on the secret. She did not want to harm me but I was afraid she might make a slip, then the secret would be known and I might be killed or arrested. Consequently I alone made all the preparations for our escape. I had managed to smuggle out of my hamlet half of my property and my wife was

unaware of this, I waited only for a good opportunity to take refuge with my wife. That day came and I told my wife to her astonishment : " You do not have to worry about our property, I have smuggled out half of it. Just pack some clothes and your personal effects and let's go". This is to show you how we could have confidence in nobody, not even our immediate neighbors. We avoided paying visits to our friends and chose to stay at home because we did not want to meet some VC who might reside in our friends' houses and to be accused of spying and arrested. Our life during those months was a very sad one. Relatives did not act like relatives, friends did not act like friends and we did not trust one another. Everybody's idea was to try to take refuge but everybody kept his thoughts to himself. It is funny that after we arrived here we learned that this villager had smuggled out of the hamlet this much and that villager had smuggled out that much. They said it aloud for everybody to hear it but back in my old hamlet nobody had known about it because nobody had dared to say that openly. It was a nightmare and everybody got easily frightened. We could not eat in peace, we could not sleep in peace. We would wake up and be paralyzed with fear at the first bark of our dog. It was a hard life. I wanted to escape and take refuge but I could not be drawn into leaving my wife behind. It was easy for me to escape alone but my wife would be arrested if I did, consequently I delayed again and again my attempt to escape. I waited for a good opportunity to come and I kept praying that my wife and I would be able to escape together. This would be the summit of happiness. One should regret the land he left behind but in my case I have no regret when I consider that I am alive and able to start a new life here.

21. How did you manage to smuggle out your property?

I have relatives in [redacted] village. I had built a house there in 1947 and it is now leased. When I lived in my hamlet I smuggled out my property and brought it to [redacted]. There I put it into a safe and consigned it to my tenant. So it was very simple. (Were you free to go out of your hamlet or did the VC try to stop you?) It was very easy for me to go out of my hamlet. I beat the VC at their own game. I knew it would be harmful to their propaganda if they arrested me. I told them : " I have relatives in the plains and I have leased my house to them. Now I must go there to collect the rent. I am an old man and I must be allowed to go ". The VC said : " Of course, you are free to go ". That is why I was able to go to the plains very often and carry with me some of my property each time. I played propaganda against them when I pointed out to them that I was an old man. However,

I was careful not to raise their suspicions. I went away for only a short period at a time and never failed to return. Thus, you can see that I talked to the VC only when it was in the interest of my family or of the GVN. I kept silent whenever I could, therefore, nobody looked for trouble from me. However, it was impossible for me to escape because if I did not return to my hamlet, my wife would be arrested by the VC. (Why didn't you bring your wife along with you when you went out of your hamlet?) There were two ways to go from my hamlet to the district town, by river or overland. Both routes were controlled by the VC. If I had brought with me my wife and my luggage, our lives would be worthless. The VC would know immediately that we were on our way to take refuge. They would arrest us and send us to a prison deep in the mountains.

22. Has anybody from your hamlet been arrested by the VC while trying to take refuge in a GVN-controlled area?

Of those who were arrested by the VC, none were arrested while trying to take refuge. A proof of what I say is that all the hamlet cadres managed to escape successfully. Those who were arrested by the VC were GVN secret agents. They had not been clever and were unmasked and arrested. They numbered about four or five people in all. They are still in the custody of the VC up there and their fate is unknown. (Has it happened that a villager was taking his family to a GVN-controlled area when he was arrested by the VC?) No, it has not happened recently but back in 1947 there were such instances. That is why the villagers memorized what happened in the past and dared not do it again.

23. Back in 1947, did you take refuge alone or with other villagers?

All the people of the Catholic congregation took refuge at the same time. However, a few of them went back to live in the hamlet after two or three months because they could not find any means of living in the plains and the government did not help them at all. I was a middle class farmer and I brought some money with me when I took refuge, therefore, I managed to sustain myself for sometime until I found work. The poorer farmers were less lucky and had to return to their hamlet.

24. Was there anyone back in your hamlet in whom you could have confidence and to whom you could speak freely?

Prior to the arrival of the VC in my hamlet, I could trust a large number of people but thereafter I could not have confidence in them because I did not know how they felt towards the VC. Each one kept his feelings to himself and opened his heart to nobody. We feared that the man we talked to might inadvertently talk to another and the story would

leak out. These people did not want to harm us but they might do it inadvertently when in the middle of a conversation they would come out with a " Mr-so-and-so-has-just-told-me-that". Consequently the best tactic on our part was to keep mum, otherwise we might talk to a man whose ideas were completely contrary to ours. How could I know that my interlocutor had a pro-GVN standpoint like I had? As to my standpoint, everybody in my hamlet including the VC knew that I was pro-GVN, and they were right. They knew that all my four sons were with the ARVN and with the GVN. My sons could be seen as the roots of a tree of which I was the trunk. If the roots were pro-GVN how could the trunk be but pro-GVN itself? Then why did the VC let me stay in the hamlet?
The answer: for propaganda purposes! Thus, I could not tell whether a person was pro-GVN or not, consequently, I trusted nobody to discuss things with. We trusted one another again only after we came here and we talked freely then. That is how I learned I was not the only one to have smuggled out my property.

25. Did the Front carry out any terroristic acts in your hamlet or kill any of the people?

The VC killed nobody in my hamlet, they only arrested people and sent them away for reeducation. We noticed that those people who were asked to bring along with them a 20-can supply of rice were released after ten days and those who were asked to bring along a 15-can supply were released after seven days. The VC used propaganda instead of killing. On the night they came to the hamlet, one GVN combat youth threw a grenade at them. He was captured by the VC who led him away. But instead of killing him, they released him after having reeducated him, and sent him back to his wife and children. I did not see the VC kill any of the people in my hamlet. The only terroristic acts they carried out were the arrests of people for reeducation. At each meeting, the VC would decide the arrests of three or five people and send them away for reeducation deep in the mountains. These people were later all released. However, the VC did threaten to kill people. At the meetings, they usually declared this to the people : "There are a few GVN spies among the people of this hamlet. We know who they are but we won't tell you. In the very near future you will have the opportunity to witness a few executions of these people right here in your hamlet". They spoke such half-statements at every meeting but killed nobody. But it is true that many villagers were arrested and sent away for reeducation. Each of these people had to bring with him from twenty to thirty cans of rice for food supply during the duration of the reeducation course. This was not a regular contribution to the VC, this was only for their own use because the VC could not

afford to feed them. Speaking of contributions, I did not have to contribute rice but I had to prepare meals and offer them to the VC when I was asked to. They said they would give money to me to pay for the meals but I was not fooled. Nevertheless, I always told my wife to cook a meal for them and never asked for money. Back in my hamlet, I never kept a large supply of rice in my house for fear the VC would come and ask me to sell it to them. I was certain I could not get their money in that case. When the VC asked me : " Why don't you go and buy a large quantity of rice?" I replied : " I do not want the GVN soldiers to suspect me of supplying rice to the Front and beat me." That is why I kept only enough rice to last me a few days, at the end of which I would buy a new supply at the market. I had always had a large supply of rice in my house when my hamlet was under GVN control and was protected by Popular Forces. I bought as much as one hundred kilograms of rice at a time. The VC could do nothing to me when I refused to sell rice to them because the truth was I did not have rice in excess. They could always search the house and find out that I spoke the truth.

25. What kinds of villagers did the VC send away for reeducation? How many were there?

Many people were arrested by the VC and sent away for reeducation. Let me remember the figure... As many as twelve or thirteen persons had been arrested in the three parts of my hamlet. (Why were they arrested?) These people either had worked for the GVN as heads of family groups or had said something harmful to the VC while the GVN was still in control of the hamlet. I do not know how the VC were informed about that but they did arrest these people. (Did the villagers think these arrests were justified or not?) As a whole, none of the VC activities could be justified. They wanted the people to follow their line and they arrested anybody who opposed them. Those arrested were reeducated so that they changed their attitude and this could not be justified. They had worked for the GVN, for the good, for the legitimate government and in honor. The VC resented this and arrested them. Two or three of those arrested complained to me that it was too unjust for the VC to arrest them. They said they were citizens and they could not avoid having to work for any party which ruled the hamlet. In any case their complaints were very mild. As for the other villagers they dared not give their comments as to whether these arrests were justified or not. They adopted this attitude because they did not know which side was going to be the final winner in the hamlet. The VC ran into the forests whenever a GVN operation cleared the hamlet and they returned and controlled it as soon as the GVN soldiers departed. The villagers did

not want to say the arrests were justified and risk trouble with the GVN soldiers when they came to the hamlet. They did not want either to say that the arrests were unjustified and risk trouble with the Communists. The result of this was that everybody kept mum. I told you a little while ago that the people back in my hamlet could not trust one another. Regarding my personal case, I had confidence only in my own brother. He was the only person I could tell all my secrets to. I told him about my preparations for taking refuge but I dared not tell it to his wife or my wife. I was afraid the women could not keep it to themselves. Thus, you see, villagers were afraid of one anotner. Two villagers, although they had the same political standpoint, did not talk to each other because they did not know they had the same standpoint. That was the main reason which made our life unbearable back in my hamlet. No one could be called a close friend, anybody could be an enemy to be afraid of.

27. Did those who were reeducated tell you about their experience? How were they treated by the VC?

They said they were treated by the VC in a decent and brotnerly manner. They denied having been beaten or slapped by the VC but they had to answer honestly to the questions they were asked. The VC used soft words to make them recognize and acknowledge their crimes. When a villager did not tell the whole truth at a self-criticism session, he was reminded with a " still-more, still-more " by the VC and the result was that he admitted all his crimes. The VC used no terror or threats on them, they used only coaxing. (Aside from this questioning, what did the VC do in order to reeducate these villagers?) The VC said to them : " Now the Front has taken over all this area. Don't hope for the GVN to come back. You had better change your attitude and side with the Front. You had better give up all the bad habits that you had taken while living under the GVN. You must enlighten yourself and be repentant for your crimes." This was what I heard from the people who were reeducated. I was not in their situation and that was all I know. (Were any of your close friends or relatives taken by the Front for reeducation?) Three people in my Catholic congregation were taken away for reeducation. One was a retired hamlet chief, the second was his elder brother, the third was a man whose son was in the ARVN. This son used to entertain his friends at his father's house and it happened that these friends worked for the secret police. When the VC took over the hamlet, they suspected his father and had him reeducated for seven days.

28. Did the fact that you had four sons in the ARVN cause you any trouble while living under the VC?

Quite the contrary. The VC came to see me and asked me to go to the plains and proselyte my sons. I said I was happy to go and persuade my sons to come over to the Front but I also

told the VC that it would take time because I would have to persuade them little by little. I thought my sons were on the right path and there was no need to persuade them to leave it but I had to play the game with the VC in order to avoid trouble. I said to the VC : " Of course, I will be glad to call my sons to come over to the Front, but there is a problem. One of my sons lives in Saigon. How can I talk to him?" They told me to send him a letter. I said :" Oh no ! Please spare me this danger. I will agree only to talk to him, I will not write him a letter. However, I will try to go to Saigon by plane if I can catch one. It is out of the question to go there by a civilian aircraft because I cannot afford the 3500 piaster round trip fare but I will do my best to have a place on a military flight." When I returned to my hamlet, the VC inquired about the result of my trip and I told them I had met a man who promised to help me get to Saigon on a military aircraft and who asked me to see him later. I told the VC this story in order to be allowed to go frequently to the plains. The VC said : "It is all right Keep trying."

29. How many VC were there in your hamlet?

Sometimes the VC moved their troops through my hamlet and their strength averaged twenty or thirty men. Only two or three cadres stayed permanently in my hamlet, going about it every day and going into hiding whenever the GVN soldiers came. The VC troops who moved through the hamlet never stayed long there. (Were there local guerrillas in your hamlet?) One of the cadres was an ARVN deserter. He worked for the VC hamlet administration. As for the guerrillas I could not make out their strength. I saw them coming in a group of three one day, in a group of five another day or even as many as nine or ten. I did not know their faces because they did not linger about and chat with the people like the GVN soldiers did. Instead, they were very brief with the villagers when they visited them in their houses and they never talked beyond the subject they came for. (What were the subjects of their visits?) For instance, they told the people : " There will be a meeting to-night and you are invited to attend," or " Beginning tomorrow, you people must go to work earlier than up to now. There is nothing to be afraid of anymore because we will take the necessary measures to protect you ", etc. (What more do you know about the three civilian cadres?) They called themselves comrades and they did not show their ranks on their clothes. Consequently, I do not know what their ranks or functions were. Their mission was to make propaganda to the villagers during the meeting sessions. (Were they natives of your hamlet?) No, they were strangers. My hamlet did have some cadres who joined the VC long ago but they did not show up in my hamlet. The cadre who was an ARVN deserter held the position of Chairman of the hamlet administrative committee.

30. Was your hamlet a Combat Hamlet when under Front control?

Yes, the VC called it a Combat Hamlet. They said : "Whenever the GVN soldiers come here, we will fight them together because we now have a Combat Hamlet". This was ridiculous. Although we were guilty of crimes against the GVN, our hearts and minds remained faithful to it and we would never fight the GVN. The VC said they would take charge of engaging the soldiers but the villagers would have to sound the alert so that unlawful people could go into hiding. The VC called the young men unlawful people and told them to run away whenever the soldiers came, otherwise they would be caught and enlisted by force into the ARVN. As a result, all the young men ran away each time the GVN soldiers came to my hamlet. The soldiers met no one but elderly people in the hamlet.

31. How many young men were there in your hamlet?

Only a small number of young men lived in my hamlet while a large number were in the ARVN. Only nine or ten young men lived there. Although they were considered young men, they in fact already had wives and children and were aged 35 or 37 years old. Speaking of real young men, not a single one was left in my hamlet, as was the case of my four sons in the ARVN, they were all taken into the ARVN. Only people younger than 18 years old or older than 35 years old were left in my hamlet. These persons were either too young or too old to be wanted by the ARVN. Those who were too old were nevertheless called young men by the VC because they were still able to work or to fight. (Did the Front recruit these nine or ten young men in your hamlet for military duty?) The VC were very clever with their recruiting system. They did not recruit openly but the result was the same. They persuaded the young men to run away from the hamlet whenever the GVN soldiers came. After some time of this tactic, they gave a grenade to each young man. This man was told to keep the grenade for self-defense. With the grenade in his hand, this man would stay forever away from the GVN. He was then afraid and was morally forced to stay with the VC. Thus he became a VC fighter. He could not do otherwise because where could he go if not to the VC once he was afraid of the GVN. Thus the VC were very clever. They did not come and round up the young men for military duty, instead they worked very patiently. (Why did the young men listen to the VC in the first place and run away when the soldiers came?) They had to. The VC told them : " Either you stay here and be arrested by the GVN soldiers or you run away. If you stay here, we will have to arrest you first. We cannot afford to have you enlisted by force into the ARVN and use your rifles against us". Thus the young men got scared and ran away when the GVN soldiers came. They did

know that life as a VC was very hard and they all wanted to take refuge in a GVN-controlled area. But the sad thing about this was that they feared they could not earn a livelihood down here while there was no problem up there. Thus fear came to them from every direction.

32. How often did the GVN soldiers come to your hamlet?

The GVN soldiers came to my hamlet once every two weeks or a month. At first they came with a small force of about ten or fifteen soldiers but afterward they came only with a strong force. They did not come very frequently, therefore, it was reasonable to say that my hamlet was taken over by the VC.

33. Has any fighting taken place near or in your hamlet?

There has never been any fighting inside my hamlet. Only once did the VC attack the GVN soldiers near my village. One company of ARVN troops called " the crack company " by the ARVN had bivouacked in an area near my hamlet. I did not know they were there. At 5 a.m. I woke up at the sound of grenades launched by the VC on the ARVN positions. There must have been thirty or forty grenades launched by the VC that night. I whispered to my wife : "The soldiers must be stationed nearby and they must be having a hard time because I could only hear the sound of VC grenade launchers". Fifteen minutes later, I heard the first burst of small arms fire, automatic rifles and submachine guns. I then whispered to my wife : " The ARVN soldiers over there must be too self -confident and have fallen asleep. It took them fifteen minutes to reach out for their weapons and return the fire". The following morning the ARVN helicopters flew to the battlefield to evacuate the dead and wounded to the district town. I was told afterward that the ARVN suffered a dozen dead and another dozen wounded in this battle and that the VC suffered many casualties too. (Who told you about the VC casualties?) I did not learn this information from the people in my hamlet because they knew nothing on this subject. I had to come to the district town and there people told me that the VC suffered heavy casualties too. I also learned that the VC were prevented from carrying off all their dead by the numerous aircraft which pursued them and that they had to leave four or five bodies on the battlefield. Although I had this information, I dared not tell it to other villagers when I returned to my hamlet. (Who told you about the ARVN casualties?) I was told by the ARVN soldiers themselves the following time they came to my hamlet. I asked them in a casual manner whether they had suffered heavy casualties in that battle and I was told that there were fifteen dead and sixteen or seventeen wounded. I then said to the soldiers: " We have been deceived by the VC here who told us that you suffered eighty or ninety killed. It was ridiculous".

34. Which people did you ask for news on what was going on when you went to the GVN-controlled areas?

I opened my ears and listened to what the people said. I also had my relatives read newspapers to me. I dared not bring these newspapers back to my hamlet.

35. Speaking of the young men in your hamlet who were drawn into the VC ranks, did they remain there and operate as guerrillas?

I saw them during the day continuing to work like the other villagers. They cut thatch and gathered wood as they did before. But one or two of them who had been in the ARVN and who had defected were seen carrying rifles and grenades while the other young men continued to work for a living in the hamlet. The difference with them was that they all ran into hiding whenever the GVN soldiers came to the hamlet. (What did the villagers think about these young men having to work for the VC?) I could not possibly know how the villagers felt about anything. I only know how I felt.

36. Back in your hamlet, were there any radios or newspapers?

No, I could have the newspapers read to me only when I went to the GVN-controlled area. I memorized what I heard but I did not bring any newspapers back to my hamlet. There was not a single radio in my hamlet. Previously there had been one owned by the hamlet chief but he took it with him when he took refuge.

37. How often did the Front hold meetings with the villagers?

It was unpredictable. Sometimes one meeting would follow another by two or three days, sometimes it would be ten or fifteen days. (What kinds of people attended these meetings?) Everybody had to attend the meetings, old as well as young. Even children attended the meetings and they found them funny and entertaining. As for grown-ups, I can tell you they were reluctant to go but they had to go because they were afraid. You cannot imagine how we were frightened at the very news of a coming meeting. (What did the VC say during these meetings?) They said they came to liberate the country and the proof of this can be found right there in the hamlet. They also said their objectives of liberating the whole country were being realized, the population had put its faith in them. Consequently, people in my hamlet were asked to do the same, i.e. to give their allegiance to the Liberation Front in order to be emancipated from misery and oppression wrought by the GVN. These were the usual topics talked about at the meetings. (How long did the meetings usually last?) There was no fixed pattern. Some of them lasted only a quarter hour while others dragged on for two or three hours. (Where were the meetings usually held?) We went wherever

we were told. It could be the temple, the pagoda, the hamlet office or an open space. (What happened at these meetings besides the speeches?) We noticed while on our way to the meetings that the VC put sentinals all over the hamlet. Besides the speeches there was also propaganda. We were informed about Front victories all over the country from South Vietnam to Central Vietnam. (Who made the speeches?) There was only one cadre who talked at every meeting.

38. Did the Front set up any organizations in your hamlet?

They set up a farmers' association, a women's association, etc.. The farmers were asked to encourage one another with a view to increasing their production. The women's association was set up to come to the help of the VC whenever it was needed, e.g. the VC asked the women to buy this or that for them. (Were there any other organizations?) No, I know only of these two in my hamlet. (Did you belong to any organization back in your hamlet?) I was an old man and I did not join any organization. However, the VC put me up as chairman of the Committee on Popular Education. I declined the offer saying it was ridiculous for an old illiterate man to be chairman of this committee. The mission of this committee was to supervise the education of all the children in my part of the hamlet. The VC said I would not have to teach the children, my duty was only to encourage and look after them. I stood firm and declined the offer saying that I was illeterate. In spite of this, the VC went ahead and put down my name as chairman of this committee.

39. Describe the popular education program of the VC in your hamlet.

I was not well informed about this subject. I never visited the school myself because as I have told you we preferred to stay in our houses most of the time. However, I heard that small children were taught by one VC cadre and by some youths of sixteen or seventeen years old in the hamlet for a half hour every day. (What did the villagers think about this program?) I do not know. Everything the VC said must be complied with.

40. Did you pay taxes to the VC?

No, my hamlet has not paid taxes to the VC yet but we heard the VC were preparing to collect them. We were told by the VC cadre in a meeting that the Front was intending to ask the people in my hamlet to contribute in the very near future. The cadre said the poorest man in the hamlet would be asked to pay at least one hundred piasters a year as a contribution to the Front. But this plan had not been carried out when we left our hamlet to take refuge. (What did the cadre say about these contributions? What was his explanation?) He said the contributions would be used to feed the fighters and help them fight the enemy.

41. Did the Front carry out land distribution in your hamlet?

The VC cadre also told people that the Front was going to carry out a land distribution in the hamlet, i.e. it would take the land from the middle farmers, rich farmers and landowners and distribute it to the poor farmers. But the truth is that the poor villagers did not wish this. My hamlet was well endowed with cultivatable land and part of it went to waste because there was more land than there were people. Part of my own land was left to waste and I had called some villagers and given them permission to cultivate it free of rent, but they declined the offer and preferred to make a better living by gathering wood in the forests. Even if the Front gave them the land, they would still leave it uncultivated.

42. What damage did the villagers suffer from the engagements between the GVN soldiers and the VC?

The GVN soldiers fought with the VC just once and it was relatively far from our hamlet and the villagers suffered no damage. (What preparations did the villagers take to protect themselves from bombs or bullets?) Every family had its own shelter to guard against the eventuality of a battle between the GVN soldiers and the VC. I remember that one day an ARVN artillery shell landed in a corner of a farmer's house and damaged it. Nobody was injured. (Did he blame it on the ARVN? What did he have to say about this event?) He lamented that he was a poor farmer who had toiled hard to build his house and then for no reason the GVN destroyed it with a shell. He said : " Why did the GVN have to shell my house? If it did not want me to live here, all it had to do was to say so and I would move out. What would it say if my family had died last night?" The GVN fired many shells on my hamlet. Only one hit a corner of a house while the other landed harmlessly on the roads inside the hamlet.

43. What type of work did the VC make the villagers do for them? Did they have collective labor?

Yes. The villagers were asked to prepare sharpened bamboo spikes while the young men were asked to dig foxholes alongside the roads. (What did the people think of that?) Nobody liked the work but no one could do anything to avoid it. People were very afraid that the GVN soldiers would come and throw them in jail for this.

44. Did the artillery bombardment cause anybody to become angry and join the VC?

They did not do this, they only said : " We would say nothing if the GVN came and chased us out; we certainly cannot accept this kind of bombardment which could kill

members of our families".

45. Did the GVN soldiers afterward explain the shelling to the villagers?

The man whose house was damaged by the artillery went to the district town to protest to the district officials. The district chief explained to him that he had ordered the bombardment because there were VC in the hamlet. (How come you know of this explanation? Did the man tell you afterward?) Yes. On his return to the hamlet, he was asked about the result of his trip by the villagers and he told his story which you know. (Did he get into trouble with the VC for repeating the GVN explanation of the bombardment?) I do not know whether he got into trouble afterward or not. But I think he risked nothing because his story was advantageous to the VC. The GVN had damaged his house and it was natural that he went to protest it and ask for damages. This was in the interests of the VC who did not want the people to be disturbed by the GVN artillery. (Did this man go to the district chief on his own or was he goaded to do so by the VC?) He went to the district chief on his own because he was very angry at that time. He said : " I am not a VC. Why did the GVN fire on my house?" (Did he get reparations from the district chief?) No. (What did the VC have to say about this event?) They said to the people : " You have seen it. The GVN fires artillery shells on the people. You draw the conclusion as to how the GVN treats its people." The villagers were told this during a meeting.

46. Describe in detail how you get here.

We came out of our hamlet on a GVN river craft. We were shot at by the VC while on our way here. My wife and I were not harmed because we lay flat on the bottom of the craft. My niece got a bruised forehead and one crewman was wounded in the neck. (Why did you choose that day to take refuge?) I had been to visit my son in a GVN-controlled area and I was returning to my hamlet. When I arrived at the district town, I received word that the ARVN who was chief of the district had decided to evacuate the people from my hamlet. I was told that ARVN troops had occupied my hamlet and people there were being asked to pack their belongings in order to be evacuated to a GVN-controlled area. I immediately went back to my hamlet to tell my wife and my brother to prepare their luggage. Back in my hamlet I could see numerous ARVN and US troops there. My family and my relatives were ready very fast and we were the first people to move out of my hamlet. With me were my wife, my brother and his family, my aunt and her daughter. We were taken into a small river craft and made the trip to the district town. The rest of the villagers joined us only

the following days. During this trip, our craft was attacked by the VC. After a fierce engagement, the VC were chased away but they had damaged our river craft. The commanding lieutenant had to call another craft from the district town to come and tow us. When we arrived there we could not go farther because there was no boat available. We waited there for one day until more ARVN troops were brought in to keep security all the way from the district town to my hamlet in order to evacuate safely the rest of the villagers. The troops took positions on both sides of the river and the villagers were evacuated by numerous river craft on two operations. People in my hamlet brought with them rice, clothes and furniture. I dared not join them on their boats because I was frightened by the previous day's attack. I brought my family to a village where I had relatives and we lived there. Every day I came here on my bicycle to inquire about the situation of the refugees and about the help they received. I had papers filled out for me and then I moved my family here.

47. Were the villagers able to bring all their property with them?

They had been able to bring with them their trunks, closets and even their houses which they had taken apart. But speaking of money, they did not have it in cash or jewels like the city people usually have. Although the people in my hamlet were famous for their prosperity, they did not keep their money in cash, instead they invested their money in the purchase of thatch or bamboo which was more profitable, consequently they became very poor when they took refuge. (What property did you bring with you? What did you leave behind?) I left behind all my land. I was lucky because I did not build a house, therefore, I brought with me all my property except my land.

48. Did you expect to leave your hamlet for a short or a long time?

I am now sixty years old and I think I will not stay alive long. Thus my hopes for returning to my hamlet are very dim. Now I am relying entirely on my sons to support me. I will go back to the land of my ancestors only when there is real peace but I do not think this war will end in the near future. I am an old man and I want very much to return to my native hamlet. However, if peace is long in coming I will be too old to still have the strength to work my land and in that case I think I will stay where I am.

49. How long do you think the war will go on?

I think it is difficult to have peace now. I am praying every night for peace to return quickly so that people can live happily. As to how long this war will go on, I cannot tell you.

50. What was the religion of the people of your hamlet?

There were two main religions in my hamlet : Buddhism and Catholicism. (Did the VC interfere with the people's faith?) On the contrary, they encouraged freedom of faith and they did not interfere whatsoever with our religion.

51. While in your hamlet, were you informed about what was going on in Saigon?

Yes. Each time I went to visit my son I would have newspapers read to me and I would also listen to news broadcasts on the radio. It is true that I heard some disappointing news but the news of ARVN victories were more numerous, consequently, I inferred that the GVN was clearly winning the war. But when I went back to my hamlet, the VC propaganda said the contrary, i.e. it was the VC who were winning the war. The VC never talked to us about ARVN victories, instead they always talked about their victories. But I knew that the GVN was winning the war.

52. Were many people in your hamlet as well-informed as you?

Many people were as well-informed as I was but they did not reveal it. These people were allowed to go to the plains like I was. They went to the GVN-controlled areas with the same purpose, i.e. to try to proselyte their sons in the ARVN or the GVN Popular Forces. Old men and women were also free to go. Only the young men and those who had worked for the GVN were forbidden to go to the GVN-controlled areas. (Did you have to ask the VC for a permit each time you went out?) No, we had not reached that situation yet.

53. Do you know who heads up the present government?

The present government is headed by Mr. Nguyen Cao Ky who acts as Premier and by General Thieu who acts as Chief of State. (What have you heard about the present government and its policies?) I have listened to their proclamations on the radio. I hope they will succeed in carrying out what they have proclaimed on the radio. (What did they say in their proclamations?) In their proclamations, they urged the citizens to unite with the government to eradicate the VC, the feudalists, the grafters and those who rob the nation and carry their loot abroad. They said it is imperative that these men should be annihilated or otherwise the country will continue down the road to decadence and the Communists will be able to extend their power more and more. (Do you have a radio now?) No, but I listen every day to the broadcasts through the public loudspeaker in this hamlet.

54: Here is a picture of a ladder. The bottom rung is numbered ten, and the top rung is numbered one. Now, let's say that the top rung represents the best life you can imagine, and the bottom rung represents the worst life you can imagine. Where on this ladder would you say that your life was before you left your hamlet?

I cannot say that my life stood on rung // 1 before I left my hamlet. I will rather put it on rung // 5 or 6. It is true that I owned land but not to a point where I could just sit there and collect the money. In fact I had to work for a living. Thus I will put my life on rung // 5 only. (What about your life now? About where on the ladder do you think your life is?) My life here is better when compared to my life before I left my hamlet. Here I work less than when I lived in my old hamlet. I have received some sort of help from the government, however, this help is not sufficient and has to be complemented with money from my own purse in order to be adequate. But the main reason which causes my life to be better here is that I enjoy a quiet life; my mind is relaxed; my friends and I are able to visit one another freely, we are not afraid of one another, we have full confidence in one another. Thus both physically and spiritually my life is better here. Although we do not have 100 o/o security here, we are still able to spend a fearless night. I would say that we have 90 o/o security here and I feel happy. It is reasonable to say that I am enjoying the same degree of happiness as I did back in my hamlet prior to the arrival of the VC. After the arrival of the VC, my life dropped to the bottom rung of this ladder. I did not have a mind at peace. I worked resignedly just to allay the suspicions of the VC because I had no hope of getting any income out of my work. I worked only temporarily, waiting for the day when I would take refuge. If I had stopped working I would have raised their suspicions. (And how about five years from now, where on the ladder do you think your life will be then?) I am in a situation completely different from the other people in this hamlet. If, in the future, I find that my life here is unsatisfactory, I can always go and live with my sons. I will move to Saigon where my sons will support me. They have already urged me to go to Saigon and lead an easy life. Their letters say : "Come to live with us, you will not need to work, you will spend all your time entertaining yourself". In spite of their eagerness, I still do not want to leave this hamlet. I have gone to Saigon before and I think I will not like living there because life is so brisk there, with noisy traffic. I cannot possibly relax in such a city, I prefer to live in a quiet and friendly place. Thus, providing that all goes well for my sons, I think my life will remain as happy in three or five years from now as it is now or as it was in my old hamlet before the arrival of the VC.

55. How would you describe the best life you can imagine for yourself?

I do not want to remain idle, on the contrary, I want to work but it has to be in an atmosphere of freedom. The best life I can imagine for myself would be like this : I will have an orchard of adequate size, I will work it only when I feel like doing so, i.e. I will leave my work and have a rest in my house whenever I feel tired or whenever it gets too hot or too sunny, with nobody to force me to work. That is my best life. I do not want to stay idle and have my food without having to work to earn it.

56. Now try to describe the worst life you can imagine yourself living back in your village. What would it be like?

The worst life I can imagine for us would be like this : from the material aspect, I will have not enough food, not enough clothes and I will have to live day by day, without any guarantee for the next day. From the spiritual aspect, my friends will not be my friends, we will suspect one another and each of us will live a secluded life. That is the worst life I can imagine for me.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS :

The subject appeared to have above average intelligence. He was honest and very cooperative. He was exceptionally eloquent and enjoyed the interview very much.

MASTER COPY

NO. AGR 15

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

1. Name of interviewer [redacted]

2. Name of subject [redacted]

3. Time and date of interview :

   From 2:00 p.m. to 5:35 p.m. on July [redacted] 1965

   From _____ to _____ on _____ 19___

   From _____ to _____ on _____ 19___

4. Place of interview :

   [redacted] refugee village, Thua Thien province

5. Sex of subject : Male (X) Female ( )

6. Age of subject : 60

7. Ethnic background : Vietnamese

8. Place of birth :

   hamlet [redacted]

   village [redacted]

   district Nam Hoa

   province Thua Thien

9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :

   hamlet [redacted]

   village [redacted]

   district Nam Hoa

   province Thua Thien

10. (a) Length of residence in last location : Four years

    (b) Who controlled the place of residence :

    GVN ( ) VC (X) Contested ( ) How long? over a year.

NO. AGR 15

11. Number of brothers (one) and sisters (no)

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : One aged 52

13. Marital status : Married

14. Number of children : Five (4 sons + 1 daughter)

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age : Four

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject (X)
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject(X) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject (X) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject( ) or not with subject (X)

17. Religion : Catholicism

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : Grew fruit trees

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation Middle farmer
(b) Landowner? Yes

20. Education :
illiterate (X)
literate ( )
schooling completed : Three years of Chinese characters
None in Vietnamese

21. Any relatives in VC : No

22. Any relatives in GVN : Four sons in ARVN

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by :
(a) French No
(b) GVN No
(c) VC Two cousins assassinated on the same night in 1947.

24. When became a refugee : November [redacted] 1964

AGR

INTERVIEW

16

THE RAND CORPORATION
[redacted]

STUDIES OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR-16

Date of Interview : July [redacted] 1965

Subject's Category : Refugee - June [redacted] 1965

Area of Residence : [redacted] village, Nam Hoa district, Thua Thien province

1. When did you come here?

I came here on June [redacted] 1965, that is more than a month ago.

2. Where did you come from?

From the hamlet [redacted] of [redacted] village.

3. How did you get here?

By plane. We were all transported by American military planes.

4. What's your plan now?

At present I'm looking after the construction of my house with the building materials provided by the GVN. I haven't made any plans yet.

5. Who are the members of your family who came with you?

I came here with my mother, my wife and four children.

6. Before you came here, did all the members of your family live together with you? Were there some who lived apart?

All lived with me, except my three brothers who had joined the ARVN more than five years ago.

7. How big was your village? How many inhabitants?

My village was large and made up of [redacted] hamlets. There were altogether 197 families or approximately 2,000 inhabitants.

8. Have all these families left their village? How many of them have come here or gone elsewhere?

All the families have come here. Nobody stayed behind in the village.

9. What did most of the inhabitants of your village do to earn a living?

The inhabitants tilled their ricefields or cleared lands. Some of them collected firewood and rattan. Previously, everyone had led a fairly comfortable life but since the arrival of the VC in the village, the latter frightened the people, prevented them from going far out of their village, so that nobody could work properly, which rendered life difficult for everyone.

10. What did you do for a living?

I was a farmer. I also cleared lands and brought them under cultivation.

11. How much land did you own?

I had two "mau" of ricelands and five "sao" of entirely cleared lands.

12. What category did the VC assign to you?

I was assigned to the category of middle-class farmers.

13. Were there any changes in your economic conditions in the past years?

Before the arrival of the VC, my life was well off. But since they came to the village, things have changed. They forced the people to supply rice. Being assigned to the middle-class category, I had to provide them with five "loh" (measures) of rice per day. As a result of this contribution, I no longer had enough rice for all my family. We had to add sweet potatoes and manioc to our diet, which made some members of my family sick.

14. What did you think of that change?

I was indeed sad. I said to myself that I could no longer go on living in that way. I then decided to ask the GVN authorities to take us somewhere so that we might live and work undisturbed.

15. Did you always live at [redacted]?

No. Before coming to [redacted], I lived in my native village of [redacted].

16. Why did you settle in [redacted]?

Mine was a large family and didn't have much land. At that time it was safe to go everywhere. As there were a lot of unexploited good ricelands at [redacted], I decided to go there.

17. Here is a picture of a ladder. The lowest rung bears the number 10 and the highest rung the number 1. Suppose rung 1 represents the best life you can imagine and number 10 the worst life you can imagine, where would you put the life you lived at [redacted]

At rung 6.

18. Where would you put the life you think you could live in five years' time?

I can't answer you for I have no idea what I'm going to do. I could answer your question if I were still living at [redacted]. If I stayed on at [redacted] and the VC hadn't come, I would set my life in five years' time at the rung 2. But if I stayed there with the VC, my life in five years' time would be at the 10th rung. I have brothers who are GVN soldiers. This is enough for the VC to render my life hard and difficult.

19. How much education have you had?

I attended the primary-education top class.

20. Did your children go to school?

I sent my first seven-year-old child to school. But since last February, the school at [redacted] was closed on account of damage caused by the VC. Since then he had been obliged to stay at home.

21. Do you plan to send your child to school here?

Yes, I've already asked permission from the authorities.

22. What kind of life do you wish for your son? What do you want him to become?

I wish my child may work well at school and later obtain "high diplomas", that he may get a lucrative job which will enable him to have a lot of ricefields and gardens.

23. Was your [redacted] hamlet a Strategic Hamlet?

Yes, [redacted] was turned into a Strategic Hamlet long ago.

24. Was that Strategic Hamlet destroyed by the VC? When and how?

It was destroyed by the VC in 1963. By means of loudspeakers, they assembled all the inhabitants of the hamlet and forced them to destroy the hamlet's defense works. Bamboo and wood fences were burned and the barbed wire thrown into the river.

25. Did you like living in a Strategic Hamlet? Did living in a Strategic Hamlet influence your work and earnings?

[redacted]

When I was still living in the Strategic Hamlet, I often received GVN assistance in rice and maize. Technicians were sent there to take care of roads, bridges. Public health measures were taken. Some comfort was derived therefrom and one could enjoy one's work and earnings. I very much like to live in Strategic Hamlets.

26. What do you like best in the Strategic Hamlet? And what do you dislike about it?

What I like best in the Strategic Hamlet is continual help from the GVN. There's nothing I dislike.

27. How did GVN officials behave in the Strategic Hamlet?

They were very kind. They considered all the inhabitants as members of one family. The inhabitants had a great deal of sympathy for them.

28. When the VC arrived in your village, were GVN officials still there?

No. When the VC came, all the GVN officials had left the village for the posts, or elsewhere. None remained in the village.

29. What did the VC do to control the village?

To begin with, they gathered all the inhabitants to make propaganda for the Front. Then they forced them to follow a political training course, the old men attending a two or three-hour course and the adults and youths a two or three-day course. After that, they went round collecting contributions. This lasted for some time. Then GVN troops came back and the VC fled from the village.

30. When did the GVN troops return?

They returned in March 1965.

31. Did the GVN troops remain there until you came here?

No. The VC returned to attack the village on May [redacted], and all the inhabitants left the village to come here on June [redacted].

32. While the VC controlled the village, did they handle the inhabitants roughly or assassinate anyone?

In my hamlet, the hamlet chief and all the inter-family group chiefs were obliged to follow a 20 to 30 day re-education course. There were no assassination in my hamlet but in the neighboring hamlet, the VC killed the hamlet chief and several merchants.

33. Did the VC explain to the inhabitants why they had carried out these assassinations?

After each assassination, they put on the victim's body a piece of paper on which was specified the charge that the latter had worked for the enemy (GVN authorities).

34. Were the people satisfied with these explanations?

It was common knowledge that the victims had not been killed on account of the asserted motive, because none of them, except perhaps the hamlet chief who served as a functionary, had worked for the GVN. They had been killed for some other motive. Either they had not been obedient vis-à-vis the VC or the latter had taken such measures to frighten the inhabitants.

35. What did the inhabitants think about it?

Those who had been unjustly assassinated left behind their wives and children without support. They had stirred up a lot of sympathy and compassion. This situation only deepened the people's hatred for the VC.

36. Did the VC turn your hamlet into a Combat Hamlet?

No. They had no time to do it, I suppose.

37. While your hamlet was under VC control, were there people who set themselves to work for the VC?

There were five of them. They had gone with the VC.

38. Do you know what prompted them to work for the VC?

No, I don't know.

39. How many youths were there in your hamlet?

There were thirty or so.

40. Didn't the VC force them to join the Front forces?

First the VC obliged these youths to follow a 10-day course. Then they gave them grenades, rifles and made them dig trenches and mount guard at night. After a while, some of the youths definitely joined the VC. Two of them had come back to rally to the GVN at the [redacted] post. The others, about seven, had left the village to follow the VC in February 1965.

41. Did you or other members of your family have to follow a reeducation course?

In my family, I was the only one obliged to follow a political course. All men and some women had to attend such courses. There were short term courses for old men and longer ones for youths. In principle, I had to follow a two or three-day course. But as I was ill. I was permitted to attend the course for one night only.

42. Did the VC say why the inhabitants should take these courses?

The inhabitants have the duty, they said, to know about the principles and objectives of the government (VC).

43. What did the inhabitants think of these courses?

Nobody wanted to follow these courses. But upon hearing that the VC had killed some people, everyone got scared and had to do as told.

44. You've said the VC held meetings with the villagers. How often and what did they talk about at each meeting?

The VC held only one meeting in my hamlet to talk to the villagers. They spoke about the Front. The Front men are effectuating a revolution in the interests of the people, they said, and the GVN are following the American imperialists. They mentioned a lot of other things but I've forgotten them all.

45. Did the VC set up any organization in your hamlet, such as youth group or Farmers' Association?

No, they hadn't set up any organization. It was, I guess, because my hamlet was near a GVN post.

46. Did all the inhabitants have to pay contributions to the VC? Or was only one class of people obliged to do so ?

Everyone, as I've told you, must pay contributions to the VC. Each family contributes two "lon" of rice per day. Some families have to pay more.

47. Were there some people who refused to pay?

No, nobody dared refuse to pay.

48. Did the contributions decrease or increase after some time?

They neither decreased nor increased.

49. What did the inhabitants say about it?

Everyone thought the contributions too heavy but didn't dare to complain publicly.

50. Before the arrival of the VC, how were the taxes paid to the GVN?

We never had to pay taxes to the GVN. Not only did we pay no taxes but we received assistance from the GVN, as I've told you, in rice, clothing, ploughing equipment.

51. Did the VC carry out land distribution in your hamlet?

Not yet.

52. Were there people in your hamlet who cultivated land rented from others?

No, all the farmers worked on their own ricefields.

53. Will you tell me something about the history of your village since the Resistance period.

I came to settle in my hamlet under Mr. Diem. That's why I can't answer your question.

54. Do you know who are the District and Province Chiefs?

I know the District Chief well. He very often came to my village. His delegate, a Lieutenant, turned up nearly everyday, whereas the Province Chief came only once every three months.

55. Did the inhabitants of your hamlet hear about the fall of Mr. Diem?

Yes, we heard about the fall of Mr. Diem but didn't know the details.

56. What did the inhabitants think of the fall of Mr. Diem?

Mr. Diem had been ousted, they said, because he practised despotism and religious discrimination. They said that the Army and people had toppled Mr. Diem. They were pleased about it.

57. What is your view?

I shared the view of the inhabitants of my hamlet.

58. Do you know who heads the present government? What do you know about the present government?

No, I don't know who heads the present government. Since I came here, I have been kept busy with the construction of my house, the settlement of my family. The present government is freshly constituted. I haven't yet had time to know more details, therefore, I know nothing about it.

59. Before the arrival of the VC, did GVN troops often pass through your village?

GVN troops even camped in my village.

60. How did they behave?

Out of ten GVN soldiers, perhaps one or two didn't behave properly because of their young age. But the majority behaved correctly and the inhabitants had a lot of sympathy for them. Sometimes they helped farmers in their work.

61. Have you heard about the Front's aims?

No I haven't.

62. While the VC was in control of your hamlet, did they tell the people about the Front?

They said something about the Front of Liberation. I only remember they said that the Front served the people's interests. That's all I can say, I've forgotten everything.

63. Did they sometimes mention the engagements between the Front and GVN forces?

They often talked about battles. They recounted the successes of the Front forces, giving each time details on the ARVN's losses, such as the number of killed (hundred at each battle), and the quantity of weapons captured (by the VC). I don't remember anything else.

64. Have you relatives working for the VC?

No.

65. Have you relatives working for the GVN?

Three brothers of mine have joined the ARVN.

66. While you were at [redacted], did your brothers come to see you often?

No. It was difficult for them to find transportation means to come to [redacted].

67. When did they come to see you last?

One of them came here to see me on the day my family and I left [redacted] to move here, that is on June [redacted], 1965.

68. Did some engagements between the Front and GVN forces take place in your hamlet or in its vicinity?

Very often shots were heard in the neighborhood of my hamlet. The greatest battle unfolded on May [redacted], 1965 in my village. It was because of this battle that we had decided to take refuge here.

69. Will you give some details on that battle?

It was the attack on the [redacted] post which was held by a company of GVN forces. On the evening of May [redacted], the VC launched the assault. They were in great number. Outnumbered, the GVN troops were forced to give up the post and withdraw.

70. What were the damage suffered by both sides?

I didn't know about it.

71. Is the [redacted] post still in VC hands?

No. Two days after the VC attack on the post, GVN troops returned and retook the post. But the VC forces had already left.

72. Was your village sometimes bombed by planes?

Several times planes came and dropped bombs but never into the village. Bombs always fell outside the hamlets.

73. How many planes came on each occasion? What was the damage?

Sometimes there were two or three planes, at other times five or six. They never caused any damage because, as I've said, the bombs always fell outside the hamlets.

74. Was your village sometimes pounded by GVN artillery?

Yes, the [redacted] post artillery often went into action. But like the air bombardment, the shells fell outside the village at the foot of mountains.

75. At what time of the day did the artillery start pounding? What was the damage?

Artillery shelling occurred sometimes during daytime, other times at night. There was no damage.

76. Did these bombardments interfere with the villagers' work? What did they say?

These bombardments didn't disturb our work, anyway, because of the VC we couldn't go to work far from the village. On the contrary, these bombardments enabled us to work undisturbed during the day and to sleep peacefully at night. We were all happy.

77. Will you tell me why?

When the artillery pounding became intense, the VC no longer dared to infiltrate into my hamlet to trouble us day and night

78. Was there anyone who didn't like these bombardments?

No. No family had suffered any damage. There were, however, some people who were unable to go out into the forests to collect wood and rattan, but as I've told you, even without these bombardments, I don't think they would be able to go to the forest because of the VC presence.

79. Did the GVN warn the inhabitants before each bombardment by artillery or aircraft?

The authorities didn't warn the people before each bombardment but they had on more than one occasion asked the inhabitants not to go to work far away from the village to avoid being hurt by these bombardments.

80. How was it done?

Written directives were sent to the hamlet chief who took care to inform the inhabitants about them.

81. Did planes sometimes drop leaflets in your hamlet?

Yes, very often. They dropped leaflets about once a fortnight.

82. What did these leaflets say?

Usually they recounted the successes scored by the ARVN and the losses sustained by the VC.

83. Did the people believe what these leaflets said?

Yes, they did.

84. How do you know they did?

Everyone knew that the ARVN was more powerful than the VC forces. It's natural that the ARVN scored victories.

85. Didn't the VC prevent the people from reading these leaflets?

Yes, the VC had prevented the inhabitants from reading these leaflets, saying the GVN only told lies. But the people of my hamlet read them all the same, because the VC couldn't come to my hamlet in broad daylight, my hamlet being near a post.

86. Were there VC leaflets in your hamlet?

Yes, there were also VC leaflets. The VC often showed up and distributed them. They even handed them to the inhabitants, asking the latter to read them. The inhabitants read them too.

87. What did these leaflets say?

In these leaflets, the VC urged the GVN soldiers to leave the ARVN and rally to the Liberation Front. Rallying to the Front is serving the people.

88. What did the inhabitants think about it?

The inhabitants had never accepted that to rally to the Front was to serve the people, because the VC had done nothing to serve the people. The VC never did what their propaganda said. What they had done was simply collecting contributions and compelling the people to sell them rice and salt.

89. Could the people of your village get information on current events?

No, we could not.

90. Were there GVN newspapers?

As communication was difficult, it was nearly impossible to have newspapers brought over. Occasionally, there were some, but this wasn't sufficient to know about what was happening.

91. Were there Front newspapers?

No, there were none.

92. Were there radios in your village?

No, nobody in the village owned a radio.

93. Wasn't there a small information center in your village?

No.

94. Who, in your opinion, was the most important person in the village and whose opinion was respected by the inhabitants?

There were three men in my village, Messrs. [redacted], whom the people respected and whose opinions were always shared by the inhabitants.

95. What did they do? Were they for the Front or the GVN?

They were old men, former Notables, very learned, very serious. They were all anti-Front, anti-Communist.

96. Could the people of your village talk freely, discuss everything among themselves?

No, they didn't dare to talk freely among themselves about everything. If by any chance, one said something unpleasant to the VC, one could be arrested and punished. As the VC had ears everywhere, one had to be very careful. As a rule, one refrained from talking.

97. Could you speak freely in your family?

Yes, in principle I could speak freely to my kin, but I was also afraid of being overheard by some outsider. So, even at home, I always minded what I said.

98. Could women know everything men knew in your family?

No, there were sometimes things women didn't know.

99. Can you tell me what things?

When the VC called to collect contributions, they usually spoke to men only. To women, they said that these were loans. Women believed it and didn't know that one had to pay contributions to the VC.

100. Why did you hide it from women?

We told them about it after the VC had gone.

101. Did the people of your hamlet hear about US-GVN air strikes on North Vietnam?

Yes, it was GVN soldiers who reported them to the inhabitants. Hundred of airplanes, they said, had bombed North Vietnam, destroying bridges, roads, petrol and ammo depots. They added that damage was enormous.

102. What did the people say?

Everyone was very pleased.

103. Why?

We have always regarded the VC and the Communists of North Vietnam as our enemies. That's why we were pleased that they had suffered some damage.

104. What did the VC cadres say?

They said nothing.

105. Have you heard of new landings of American troops in South Vietnam?

Yes I have. It seems to me that several American divisions have landed.

106. What do you think of it?

I'm very happy about it. This indicates that the US is really determined to help the GVN finish off the VC. We have been the victims of this war for a fairly long time. The quicker the GVN can dispose of the VC, the sooner we shall recover peace and happiness.

107. In your hamlet did you sometimes have news from Hanoi?

No, never.

108. Did you have news from Saigon?

Yes. I've heard that friendly nations had sent to Saigon men and materials, that often foreigners came to visit our country.

109. Before coming here, did you intend to move to another GVN-controlled region?

No. We hadn't thought of going to another region for we knew it was perfectly secure here.

110. Before coming here, did you hear about life in GVN-controlled areas?

Yes, we knew that life was easy in GVN-controlled regions. If one takes refuge there, one will receive help from the GVN authorities. One can also obtain building materials and food during the first few months. The authorities will also give land for clearing and cultivation, and will help those who want to learn new trades.

111. Who told you all that?

The GVN authorities.

112. What made you all decide to come over here? Did you make the decision yourselves or were you persuaded by the GVN authorities?

We made the decision ourselves. The VC had caused us so much trouble that it was impossible for us to go on living in our village. As a result, out of common accord, we asked the GVN authorities to give us permission to settle in a secure region. And thus we came here.

113. Before coming, did you hope that the GVN would help you?

Yes we hoped that the GVN would help us during the first few days when we couldn't make our living yet.

114. Has the GVN effectively assisted you as you expected?

Yes, I've received materials for the construction of my house. Each member of my family got seven piasters and 500 grams of rice per day.

115. Have you heard of the Chieu Hoi program?

Yes. It was the village and district officials who told us about it. The Chieu Hoi urge families to recall their children if the latter are serving in the VC ranks. It further promises to forgive those youths for their errors and help remake their life.

116. Did these appeals achieve any results?

I think that these families did want to call back their children but they had been unable to get in touch with them. Thus the appeals had no effect.

117. Do you intend to stay here for a long time?

We intend to stay here until security is reestablished in our village, then we shall return there to live as before.

118. Were you able to bring something with you when you came here?

I brought along my personal belongings, mosquito nets, blankets and a few days' rice rations. We came by plane which enabled us to bring along a lot of things.

119. Should you have had the means to bring with you a lot of things, what else would you have liked to have taken with you?

I would have liked to bring along all my property, even to dismantle my house and transport it over here.

120. Did you entrust your house to someone before you came here?

Like everybody, I left behind everything.

121. Did the VC know about the inhabitants' decision to abandon their village to come over here?

No. We sent, without their knowing, a delegation of some old men to the district main town to ask the authorities for some means to leave the village. The whole thing had been done in strict secrecy so that the VC knew nothing about it.

122. Were you afraid of being stopped by the VC?

Yes. Some families trying to use an overland way to leave the village, had been stopped and driven back with threats by the VC. They were even interned for one night and thereafter released when they promised not to do it again.

123. If you returned to your village now, what do you think might happen to you?

I would be arrested and killed by the VC.

124. Before your departure from the village, did the VC sometimes talk to the inhabitants about life in GVN-controlled areas?

No, never.

125. Since you have been here has anyone tried to persuade to return to your village?

No.

126. You've given up everything to come here. Deep in your heart do you blame anyone for that?

I blame the VC. It's because of them that I've had to abandon house, garden, ricefields to come here.

127. You told me you haven't yet made any plan for what you're going to do. Can you tell me at least what you would like to do?

I would like to resume my old job of farming. I like to clear lands to bring them under cultivation.

128. Since you came here, have you had news from your village?

No.

129. Is there anyone who has returned to the village?

No, nobody.

130. Have you seen any Americans?

Yes I've seen several of them.

131. What do you think of them?

I have a lot of sympathy for them.

132. What do the other inhabitants think of them?

They all find them very kind. The Americans have helped a great deal. They gave us building materials, rice. Every week they send over here a car to bring us medicine. They take our patients to hospital.

133. Besides the Americans, have you seen other foreigners who came here to help the GVN?

No.

134. In your opinion, how long will the present war go on?

This war will last for some time, I think.

135. On what basis can you say that?

At present, the VC are trying to mix up with the villagers.

The GVN cannot exterminate them without running the risk of killing at the same time a lot of innocent people. The GVN cares for the people, and therefore cannot afford to do such a thing. That's why the annihilation of the VC demands time and thus the war still lasts for some time.

136. Who, in your opinion, will win this war, the GVN or the Front?

The GVN will certainly win. Because it is strongly assisted by friendly nations, the U.S., Britain, Australia, Korea and Japan.

137. What do you think of these friendly nations' assistance?

These countries are aware that Vietnam has suffered a great deal because of the Communists. These countries aren't Communist and don't like Communism. Therefore, they come to help Vietnam.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

The subject spoke very distinctly in spite of his quite peculiar accent, and looked intelligent enough.

But from his answers, the interviewer felt that he had been strongly influenced by the local authorities. Often he collected his thought before answering. (For example, his answer to the question on the fall of Mr. Diem was made only after a minute's silence). The interviewer wondered whether he had taken time to reflect on how to answer that question, or to recall what he had been taught to say.

He was cooperative.

NO. AGR 16

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

1. Name of interviewer [redacted] 5

2. Name of subject [redacted]

3. Time and date of interview :

   From 10:00 to 12:30 on July [redacted] 1965

   From _____ to _____ on _____ 19 ___

   From _____ to _____ on _____ 19___

4. Place of interview :

   [redacted] village (Thua Thien province)

5. Sex of subject : Male (X) Female ( )

6. Age of subject : 32

7. Ethnic background : Vietnamese

8. Place of birth :

   hamlet [redacted]

   village [redacted]

   district Nam Hoa

   province Thua Thien

9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :

   hamlet [redacted]

   village [redacted]

   district Nam Hoa

   province Thua Thien

10. (a) Length of residence in last location : _____

    (b) Who controlled the place of residence :

    GVN ( ) VC ( ) Contested (X) How long? 2 years

NO. AGR 240

11. Number of brothers (3) and sisters ( )

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : 3

13. Marital status : Married

14. Number of children : 4

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age :

16. Mother with subject (XX) or not with subject ( )
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject( ) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject (XX) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject(XX) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion : Buddhist

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : Farmer

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation Middle
(b) Landowner?

20. Education :
illiterate ( )
literate (X)
schooling completed : 5 years of elementary school

21. Any relatives in VC : NO

22. Any relatives in GVN : 3 brothers in ARVN

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by :
(a) French Grand-father
(b) GVN
(c) VC

24. When became a refugee : June [redacted] 1965

AGR

INTERVIEW

17

THE RAND CORPORATION
[redacted]

STUDIES OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT
OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR-17

Date of Interview : July [redacted] 1965

Subject's Category : Refugee - November 30, 1964

Area of Residence : [redacted] village, Nam Hoa district, Thua Thien province

1. When did you come here ?

I came here in November 1964.

2. Where did you come from?

I came from the [redacted] hamlet.

3. How did you get here ?

I came by junk. All the members of my family with our belongings were transported by junk.

4. Did you hire the junk yourself, or was it lent by the GVN authorities ?

The junk was hired by the GVN authorities who paid the rental.

5. What are your plans and prospects ?

I'm jobless at present. I get GVN assistance, such as 14 kilos of rice and some money per month. This aid is to last for 6 months. I haven't yet made any plan.

6. Who are the members of your family who came here with you ?

They are my wife and four children.

7. Did your wife and four children live with you before you came here ?

Yes,we always lived together in the [redacted] hamlet before coming here.

8. Do you have other family members who lived in the [redacted] hamlet ?

A brother and a sister of mine also lived in the [redacted] hamlet. And they left it too. But they didn't come here. They went to live in the [redacted] hamlet of [redacted] village.

9. Why didn't they come here with you ?

My sister is a merchant and my brother is a barber. It's easy for them to earn a living at [redacted].

10. How many other families came here at about the time you did?

All the families of my hamlet came here at the time I did. There were 90 of them. Not a soul remains in my hamlet.

11. What did the inhabitants of your hamlet do to earn a living?

They were farmers. Some were woodcutters.

12. How were their material conditions?

Nobody was needy. There were no truly wealthy people but the majority of them had just enough of what they wanted.

13. What did you do to earn a living?

I was a farmer.

14. What category did the VC assign to you?

I was in the category of middle-class farmer.

15. How much ricefield did you possess?

I owned three "mau" of ricefields and one "mau" of land.

16. Were there any changes in your economic conditions in the past years?

Previously, before the VC appeared in my hamlet, each year I was able to get more than 200 "thung" of paddy and thirty "thung" of maize and beans, which was more than sufficient to feed all my family. But since the arrival of the VC, I had to ignore a part of my ricefields and maize-producing lands, for I didn't dare to work too far away from my hamlet because of bombardments. This greatly affected my revenues.

17. What do you think about it?

I was sad indeed. Naturally, in wartime the situation must be different from that in peacetime. But the root cause was certainly the VC. Without the VC, my economic condition wouldn't have declined.

18. Was there someone else in your hamlet who had his profits cut because of the presence of the VC, as in your case?

All the inhabitants of my hamlet had seen their revenues diminished exactly like mine, since the VC arrived.

19. Here is a picture of a ladder: the highest rung bears the number 1 and the lowest one the number 10. Suppose rung 1 represents the best life you can imagine and rung 10 represents the worst you can imagine. Which rung would you assign to the life you lived in your hamlet?

Before the arrival of the VC, I would assign to it rung 4.

20. And how about the life you think you could have in five years' time?

Without the VC in five years' time my life might reach grade 2.

21. Will you describe the worst life you can imagine for yourself in your hamlet?

The worst life would mean being very poor, having to collect wood in the forest and straw in the fields for a living, being unable to sell this wood and straw for lack of buyers who didn't come because of the presence of the VC.

22. Now tell me about the best life you could imagine in your hamlet ?

It would mean having five or seven spacious brick houses, being able to make pleasure trips, and to move about on motorbike

23. What kind of life do you wish for your son? What would you like him to become?

I don't wish that my son may become very rich. I only wish that he may earn enough to live on. Furthermore I hope he may succeed well in his studies, be awarded with very "high diplomas" and usefully serve society.

24. Did you have any close friends in your hamlet? Could you talk with them freely on things of particular interest to you?

I had four close friends with whom I talked very often. But I only talked about unimportant things.

25. Did you ever happen to criticize the VC to someone?

No, never. Personally I would like to, but I didn't dare say it to someone, even to a friend, for there was a great deal of risk of being denounced.

26. Could you talk freely in your family?

Yes, I could.

27. Did you ever criticize the VC while speaking to your wife?

Yes, more than once I criticized the VC while talking to my wife.

28. Did your wife know everything you knew?

Yes. When I knew something, I always told my wife about it.

29. When your family was in trouble, did the other families come to your help?

When my family was in trouble, friends, relatives, neighbors might have come to our help. They could have done something for my family, given us some kind of work or lent us money.

30. In your opinion, who in your hamlet was the most respected person whose opinion the people always listened to?

There were two old men respected by everyone, whose opinions secured everyone's attention. They had been farmers. When the VC came, they promptly left the hamlet for Hue.

31. Why were they respected by everyone?

They were serious and their advice on the hamlet's affairs always sounded reasonable and aimed at the inhabitants' welfare.

32. In your hamlet, who do you think were best informed of what was going on in Saigon, Hue and Hanoi?

In my hamlet there were four radios, so I think that their owners were best informed of what happened elsewhere.

33. Besides the radios, were there other means to keep oneself informed of events? Was there an information service? Were there newspapers?

There was no information service. Before the arrival of the VC there were newspapers. But there were no more newspapers after they came. Besides the VC forbade the people to read GVN newspapers.

34. Did the VC give the people permission to listen to their radios? What stations was it possible to listen to?

When the VC arrived, radio owners left the hamlet for Hue, taking along their radios.

35. How could the inhabitants, controlled by the VC, be informed of happenings?

The inhabitants were unable to get information. They only knew what the VC told them at each meeting. They could know nothing about what was happening outside their hamlet.

36. Was your hamlet a Strategic Hamlet?

Yes, it was.

37. When and how was it destroyed?

It was destroyed in March 1964. The VC gathered the inhabitants and ordered them to destroy all the defense works of the hamlet. Everyone had to comply with it out of fear of reprisal.

38. How was the people's life in a strategic hamlet?

It was an easy life. Everyone worked in peace.

39. What did you like most in the strategic hamlet?

Security.

40. What did you dislike in the strategic hamlet?

What I disliked in the strategic hamlet was that at night one had to mount guard and couldn't move about freely in the hamlet.

41. While you were living in the strategic hamlet, how did the GVN officials behave? What did the people think of them?

The GVN officials were correct. They behaved properly towards everyone. The inhabitants had sympathy for them and were ready to do what they were asked.

42. When the VC controlled your hamlet, how did their cadres behave? What did the inhabitants think of them?

The VC cadres often threatened the people. Nobody liked them but they were feared. That's why everyone had to obey their orders.

43. Did the VC handle the people roughly?

The VC declared that all the inhabitants were guilty of having sided with the GVN. That's why all must follow a 10-day re-education course.

44. Did you yourself have to follow that course? What did you learn?

I had to follow the course like everybody else.

The VC explained during the course the principles and objectives of the Front. I remember nothing else.

45. Besides that course, did the VC do anything else?

No.

46. Were there assassinations?

No.

47. Were the inhabitants afraid of being obliged to follow re-education courses? Why?

The inhabitants were much afraid of being compelled to follow re-education courses, because these would take up a lot of their time and interfere with their work.

48. Did the youths of your hamlet join the VC forces?

I saw youths carrying rifles and grenades. They were called guerrillas.

49. Were these youths forced to become guerrillas or did they volunteer to become guerrillas?

They were all forced by the VC to serve as guerrillas.

50. What did the inhabitants say about it?

They weren't pleased but since everyone was afraid of the VC, nobody dared utter a word.

51. You said the VC assembled the people to talk to them. How often did it occur?

The VC gathered the inhabitants once a week or every two weeks.

52. What did they tell the people on such occasions?

They asked the inhabitants to do some things for them, such as digging trenches, repairing one road, destroying another, building a gate,... etc.

53. Was your hamlet turned into a combat hamlet?

No.

54. Did the VC set up in your hamlet such organizations as youths' group, farmers' association?

They had talked about setting up certain groups but had not yet put it into practice.

55. Did the inhabitants of your hamlet have to pay contributions to the VC?

Each family was to contribute 20 "lon" of rice per month.

56. Did these contributions increase or decrease while the VC were controlling your hamlet?

No; the contributions always amounted to 20 "lon" of rice per month for each family.

57. Were there people who refused to pay contributions?

No, none dared refuse to pay.

58. Was land distribution carried out in your hamlet?

Yes, the VC seized all land belonging to those who had gone to live in GVN-controlled areas, and distributed them to the poor in the village.

59. How many left the hamlet for GVN-controlled regions? Did they go with their families?

There were only five who had gone with all their families. Some others, GVN officials most of them, went alone but their family members, afraid of being troubled by the VC, were able to leave the hamlet later on.

60. Did the VC also seize lands of rich people who stayed behind?

No. The VC only confiscated lands belonging to those who had gone.

61. Did you benefit from such land distribution?

No. I was in the category of middle-class farmers.

62. What did the beneficiaries think of land distribution?

I don't know.

63. Were there people in your hamlet who tilled land rented from others?

There were people who cultivated others' lands but not on the basis of rent. All the expenses for seeds as well as fertilizers were borne by the landowners. At harvest-time, the yield of paddy was to be shared between laborers and owners according to certain proportions.

64. In case the landowners weren't in the hamlet, who would be entitled to have their shares of paddy? Were these shares kept by the laborers?

There were several cases in which the landowners weren't in the hamlet. Their shares of paddy were turned over to the VC on the latter's order.

65. Will you tell me something about the history of your hamlet since the Resistance period?

During the Resistance period we had all abandoned our hamlet to take refuge in the mountains, because of frequent incursions of the French troops who didn't hesitate to kill all those they came across. Then after the departure of the French and Viet-Minh and upon the arrival of GVN officials, we returned to our hamlet to rebuild our homes and work our lands again. With the GVN officials, we enjoyed a period of peace and security when everyone was able to improve their economic conditions. But then came the VC, and again life became difficult because of insecurity, compulsory work, contributions, loss of freedom, bombings, battles. At last being no longer able to endure such a life, we were compelled once again to leave our hamlet to come here.

66. Before the arrival of the VC, did such high officials as the district and province chiefs sometimes come to your hamlet?

Yes they often came to my hamlet.

67. How often during a month for example?

The province chief came once a year on the occasion of a certain ceremony celebrated in the village, whereas the district chief came once every three or four weeks.

68. Did the inhabitants of the hamlet know of the fall of Mr. Diem? What did they say about it?

We all knew that Mr Diem practised religious discrimination and we were very discontented about it. But as Mr. Diem ruled like a dictator we were afraid of him, we didn't dare to make comments or criticize him. Thus, when we learned that he had lost power we were very happy.

69. Do you know who heads the government at present?

I know that generals Nguyen Van Thieu and Nguyen Cao Ky are heading the government at present.

70. What do you think of the fact that these generals lead the government?

These generals have led the government only for some months. They have already raised soldiers' pay. We are very pleased about it. Soldiers wage war to preserve our independence. They should be well treated.

71. While in your hamlet, did you hear the VC talk about the GVN?

The GVN, they said serve the interests of the Americans, and it is for this reason that they are fighting the GVN.

72. Has there any fighting in or near your hamlet?

Yes, fighting once involved GVN forces and the VC near my hamlet. There were four VC killed, and the GVN troops seized one machine gun and several rifles. I don't know about GVN losses.

73. Was your hamlet sometimes bombed by aircraft, or pounded by GVN artillery?

My hamlet had never been bombed by airplanes. But it came under GVN artillery shelling on more than one occasion.

74. What damage was caused by GVN artillery?

Shells always fell outside the hamlet, so there was no damage.

75. What did the inhabitants say about artillery shelling?

Such artillery bombardment had been provoked, they pointed out, by the presence of the VC in the neighborhood of the hamlet.

76. Did such bombardment interfere with the inhabitants' work?

Yes. A great number of us didn't dare to work in the fields for fear of being wounded or killed by the bombardment.

77. Do you know what the Front's aims are?

No.

78. Have you relatives or friends working for the VC?

No.

79. Have you relatives or friends working for the GVN?

A cousin of mine is at present deputy-chief of [redacted] district.

80. When you were in your hamlet, did he come to see you occasionally?

No.

81. Before coming here, did you plan to take refuge in another GVN-controlled area?

Yes, I had intended to settle down in another GVN-controlled region.

82. Why didn't you do it?

I had always lived on my land. If I had to abandon my lands all of a sudden, I must have some savings to rely on. Since I had none, I hesitated to leave my hamlet.

83. Before coming here, did you know about life in GVN-controlled areas?

Yes, I knew that work could be found easily in GVN-controlled areas and life was easy there.

84. Who told you so?

Nobody. I knew it myself. Before the arrival of the VC, I had made frequent trips to other GVN-controlled areas and seen things for myself.

85. Did planes sometimes drop leaflets in your hamlet?

Yes, on four occasions, planes flew over and dropped leaflets.

86. What did those leaflets say? What did the people think of them?

When there were leaflets about, the VC forbade the people to read them. They collected them and burned them. I never had a chance to read them, so I don't know what they said.

87. Were there aircraft which made broadcasts? At what time of the day did they usually fly over? What did such broadcasts say?

Several times planes flew over to make broadcasts, sometimes in the morning, sometimes in the afternoon. They were clear. I listened to them but as it was long ago I forgot all about them.

88. Have you heard of the Chieu Hoi program?

Yes I have.

89. What do you know about it?

The Chieu Hoi urged those who had mistakenly worked for the VC to return to the GVN. The GVN authorities were prepared to pardon them for their unlawful activities and help them remake their life.

90. Who had told you all that?

I heard it from the aircraft broadcasts (Interviewer's note: He had just said he had forgotten everything).

91. Did you believe what they said?

Yes I did.

92. Will you tell me why?

I had lived under GVN administration for a very long time. I knew how the GVN behaved. It didn't fool the people.

93. How long do you plan to stay here?

We intend to stay here until the VC have been beaten by the GVN and peace has been restored.

94. Were you able to bring along something with you when you came here?

The GVN provided us with junks. We were able to bring along all our belongings. I had two houses, a large one and a small one. I was able to dismantle the small one entirely to transport it over here, and I was also able to dismantle part of the large one.

95. Is there anyone who will look after what you left behind?

No. All the people of my hamlet have gone. Now there's nobody there.

96. Had you been able to have other means of transportation, what would you like to have brought along with you?

All my property.

97. Did the VC try to prevent the people from going?

The VC tried to stop the inhabitants by saying that all youths would be arrested by the GVN as soon as they left the hamlet.

98. Did the VC take other steps?

They compelled a number of families whose children worked for them, to follow them to somewhere else.

99. Were there many youths working for the VC?

There were some but not many. I don't know the exact number.

100. Were all the families whose children served in the VC ranks, compelled to follow the VC to some other place?

Not all of them. Some flatly refused to follow them.

101. The VC said that youths would be arrested by the GVN as soon as they had left the hamlet. Do you notice that actually happened?

No, what the VC said was untrue.

102. You have been obliged to leave your hamlet, your house, your land to come here. Do you blame someone for that?

Yes, I blame the VC. It was because of them that all the people of my hamlet, like myself, have had to give up everything to come here.

103. Since you came here, have you received effective help from the GVN?

The GVN has helped us a lot -- to make the trip, transport our property, rebuild our houses, provided 14 kilos of rice per month.

104. Has the GVN promised to do other things for you?

It has promised to give each family a sum of VN$3500, to provide lands for cultivation as a means of living.

105. What do you think of these promises?

We know that the GVN always keeps its promises. When it says it wants to do certain things, it will do it.

106. Since you came here, have you heard about your hamlet?

No, we have no news about it.

107. Since you came here, is there anyone who advised you to go back to your hamlet?

No.

108. Among the inhabitants of your hamlet who came here at about the time you did, is there anyone who has gone back to the hamlet?

Yes, a woman has returned to the hamlet.

109. Do you know why she returned to the hamlet?

She has a child who works for the VC. This is the reason, I suppose.

110. Is she in the hamlet at present?

I don't think so. She must have gone elsewhere with the VC, I think.

111. Were you able to talk to her before she left here?

No, I have never talked to her.

112. Have you seen any Americans? What have you heard about them?

Yes I've seen some Americans. The Americans, it is said, have come to help the GVN fight the VC.

113. Do you believe that?

Certainly I do.

114. Will you tell me why?

The United States is the richest country in the world. The Americans want nothing from our country. They don't like to see our country and the other Southeast Asian countries fall into Communist hands. That's why they've come to help our country.

115. How long, in your opinion, will the present war go on?

I can't answer this question.

116. Who, in your opinion, will win this war, the GVN or the VC?

The GVN.

117. On what facts can you make this assertion?

I heard about the successes of GVN troops at Thua Thien. I knew that US-GVN airplanes had bombed North Vietnam. From these facts I conclude that the GVN will win this war.

118. What do you know about the air strikes on North Vietnam?

US and GVN planes have destroyed roads, bridges, barracks, ammo depots in the North. I don't know if the civilian population has suffered any loss of lives and materials.

119. What do you think of these bombing raids?

Like the other people, I am pleased. Such strikes, I think, prevent the North from sending supplies to the VC in the South and can thus shorten the duration of the war.

120. Do you know of other foreigners who came to help the GVN, apart from the Americans?

Yes, there are the Australians, the Koreans and others from the other countries of the free world.

121. Have you seen any Australians or Koreans with your own eyes or have you heard about them?

I've seen some Australians and Koreans with my own eyes.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

The subject is a man of limited intelligence. He knew very little. He spoke with difficulty and hardly understood the questions put to him, even the simplest ones. His answers were never spontaneous, and were preceded, even the shortest ones - "yes" or "no" - by a long moment of hesitation.
Besides he was rather afraid of the tape recorder used to interview him, in spite of all the assurances and explanations made by the interviewer.
The interview was arduous.

NO. AGR 17

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

1. Name of interviewer [redacted] 5

2. Name of subject [redacted]

3. Time and date of interview :

   From 3:00 p.m to 5:30 p.m on July [redacted] 1965

   From _____ to _____ on _____ 19 ___

   From _____ to _____ on _____ 19___

4. Place of interview :

   [redacted] (refugee) village (Thua Thien province)

5. Sex of subject : Male (XX) Female ( )

6. Age of subject : 40

7. Ethnic background : Vietnamese

8. Place of birth :

   hamlet [redacted]

   village [redacted]

   district Nam-Hoa

   province Thua-Thien

9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :

   hamlet [redacted]

   village [redacted]

   district Nam-Hoa

   province Thua-Thien

10. (a) Length of residence in last location : _____

    (b) Who controlled the place of residence :

    GVN ( ) VC (X) Contested ( ) How long? 16 months

NO. AGR 17

11. Number of brothers (1) and sisters (1)

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : One

13. Marital status : Married

14. Number of children : Four

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age : 0

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject( ) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject (X) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject(X) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion : Buddhist

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : Farmer

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation _____
(b) Landowner? Middle

20. Education :
illiterate ( )
literate (X)
schooling completed : five years of elementary school

21. Any relatives in VC : a cousin is a regroupee in North Vietnam (since 1953)

22. Any relatives in GVN : a cousin is a deputy chief of [redacted] district.

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by :
(a) French an uncle shot by the French in 1947
(b) GVN
(c) VC

24. When became a refugee : November [redacted] 1964

AGR

INTERVIEW

18

THE RAND CORPORATION

[redacted]

STUDIES OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT
OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR- 18

Date of Interview : July [redacted] 1965

Subject's Category : Refugee - May [redacted] 1965

Area of Residence : [redacted] village,
Nam Dong district,
Thua Thien province

COMMENT :

Although perhaps somewhat overeeger to give what he thought were favorable answers, the subject had interesting opinions on VC terrorism and exploitation of villagers (Q.35-38), VC recruiting (Q.43-45), village opinion of the bombing of NVN (Q.53-59), GVN aid to villages (Q.84-88), ARVN troop behavior (Q.92-95), and the effects of air attacks on SVN (Q. 109-114, 128-129, 133-134).

1. How big was your village?

   It was very big, it covered some hundreds of hectares. It had [redacted] hamlets [redacted] and [redacted].

2. How big was your hamlet?

   When I settled in [redacted] hamlet, there were about 100 houses for 83 families. The total population was over 400 persons, including the old people and the children.

3. When did you and your family settle in [redacted] hamlet?

   On September [redacted], 1961.

4. Where did you live before settling in the [redacted] resettlement area?

   I lived in [redacted] near the [redacted] Pass, [redacted] village, Phu Loc district, Thua Thien province.

5. What was your occupation in [redacted]?

   I was a firewood and charcoal dealer.

6. Where had you lived before?

   I had been in Vientiane, Laos, from 1940 to 1953.

7. What was your occupation in Laos?

   I was engaged in opium traffic. I led a happy life in Laos. I often came back home in Nghe An to send money to my parents.

8. Why didn't you stay in Laos?

   At that time (1953), the Communists fought against the French and the Laotian Government didn't allow us to stay.

9. Do you know how many families have left the [redacted] area in the past few years?

   Ten to 15 families left [redacted] about one month before us. Some thirty families left 3-4 months ago, but some members of these families came back from time to time to gather bananas in their gardens. They left because they were afraid of the VC.

10. Where did they go?

    I don't know.

11. How many families still stay behind?

At present nobody stays behinds in [redacted]. Everyone left by plane.

12. What did most of the people in the hamlet you just left do to earn a living?

Most of the people in [redacted] were farmers. Many people grew banana trees.

13. How much land did the GVN distribute to the settlers in [redacted] before?

The GVN distributed land according to the size of each family. Numerous families obtained 2-3 mau each. I obtained only one mau.

14. What did you do to earn a living?

I tilled my land and in spare time I gathered rattan in the forests. At the time when the trucks and buses could move freely on the roads, I obtained from the Government the permission to cut timber in the jungle for making furniture.

15. Was your hamlet prosperous or poor?

Most people were middle class farmers. As I was old and weak, I couldn't work much to get rich, but I earned enough money to support my family; I was happy, because I could have what I wanted, and in my garden there was plenty of fruit and vegetables: banana, areca nut, tangerine, orange, beans, etc.

16. Were there very poor families in your hamlet?

Some families were poor owing to illnesses, but no family was too poor, because the soil was very fertile.

17. How much could a well-off family earn per day?

By cutting wood and timber in the forests, some people could earn 400 to 500 piasters a day.

18. What category did the Front assign to your family, such as rich, medium, poor, or very poor?

The VC occupied my hamlet for one month and five days, so they hadn't yet carried out the classification.

19. How much land did you own? How much did you work?

I owned a garden of over 3 mau, and I worked on one mau of ricefield.

20. Were there any changes in your or your family's economic conditions in the past years.

No, except that when the road from [redacted] to [redacted] was cut off I was unable to sell my bananas.

21. How much education have you had?

I can read and write. When I still lived in Nghe An, I studied for over one year with a private teacher.

22. Did your children go to school?

They are still very young. My eldest son is only 5 years old, because I married my wife very recently.

23. Was your hamlet a Strategic Hamlet?

Yes.

24. When was it organized?

In 1963.

25. Was it destroyed by the Front? When?

It was destroyed by the VC on February [redacted] 1965, but the damage was very slight. Only 2 or 3 fences were destroyed.

26. How did living in a Strategic Hamlet affect your life and earnings?

It didn't affect my life and earnings at all. The Strategic Hamlet was a good thing for the people, because it protected them from the tigers in the jungle nearby, and therefore security was strengthened.

27. How was the hamlet administration?

There were a hamlet chief and his assistant, and also a 3-member Assembly of Notables (chairman, vice chairman and secretary).

28. How did the GVN village and hamlet authorities behave?

Under the Diem regime, the GVN cadres were haughty and didn't win the people's confidence, but after the November 1, 1963 Revolution with the ARVN generals in power, the GVN cadres behaved well toward the people. They encouraged the villagers to increase production.

29. Who controlled your hamlet a year ago?

The GVN.

30. Did the VC often come to [redacted]?

Over a year ago, they came to the [redacted] area, but they didn't come yet to my hamlet. About June or July last year, there was a battle in [redacted]. This year, about one month ago, another took place in [redacted] and in my hamlet.

31. Could you describe this battle?

On May [redacted], the VC attacked the [redacted] post, and next day the GVN forces in [redacted] post moved to [redacted] but they were stopped by the VC who attacked them in [redacted] hamlet, causing two dead and one wounded among the civilian population. After this battle, the GVN authorities issued an order to concentrate us for evacuation to this place. Because all the people were afraid during the attack -- they took cover in the shelters -- everyone wanted to leave.

32. Did the people of other hamlets leave at the same time?

Yes.

33. How many families in the [redacted] area have left?

Four hundred families living in 7 hamlets of 2 villages. The names of these hamlets are : [redacted]

34. Which hamlet ranks first in number of refugees?

[redacted] with 200 families. Then come [redacted] with 70 families, [redacted] with 50 families, [redacted] with 50 families, [redacted] with 40 families, etc.

35. Did the Front carry out any terrotistic acts in your village?

Since last year they (VC) have killed over 20 people, including a hamlet chief. A woman in [redacted] was beheaded for spying for the GVN. I forgot to mention that the chief of [redacted] was killed. The other hamlet chief I mentioned was the chief of [redacted] hamlet.

36. Was anyone arrested by the VC?

Yes. Four or five villagers were recently arrested by them, and they haven't been released yet. It's very likely that these villagers have been killed. The terroristic acts sowed panic among the people who became close-mouthed and fearful.

37. Did the Front carry out sabotage acts? Did the VC extort money from bus passengers?

Yes. [redacted], the VC stopped buses 2-3 times. They often forced the rice dealers to sell rice at an unfairly cheap price. For instance, if rice cost 100 piasters, they only bought it at 20 piasters, and if any rice dealer refused to sell it to them, they would arrest him at once.

38. Did they ever confiscate rice?

No, they didn't confiscate it, but they bought it at a cheap price.

39. If your hamlet was under Front control, how did the villagers feel about it?

When the VC took control of my hamlet for over one month, the villagers were dissatisfied, but they dared not speak out. They hoped that the GVN troops would arrive to liberate them. We refugees have been living peacefully under the regime of the Republic of Vietnam, we have given up everything to follow the Government.

40. When your hamlet was under Front control, was it a Combat Hamlet?

No.

41. How many young men 16 years old or more were in your hamlet?

I don't know, because many young men have taken refuge in the GVN- controlled areas, and only 12 of them stayed behind before I left my hamlet.

42. How many joined the Front in the last year?

Seven or 8 youths joined the Front in February as new recruits, but 2 of them have rallied to the GVN.

43. How many youths were recruited by the Front for military service in [redacted]?

About 12 youths. But 5 of them defected when the GVN troops liberated [redacted].

44. Did the Front persuade most of them through propaganda or did it order people to serve in the military forces?

Two or 3 youths voluntarily served in the Front forces; the others were forced to serve.

45. How did the villagers feel about the recruiting?

I know an old man who has only one son, and this son was drafted by the Front. He and his wife wept very much, but they dared not complain about their situation, because they were afraid. The other families whose sons were recruited for military duty also wept very much.

46. Were you or any members of your family taken by the Front for re-education?

No. But in [redacted] 2 men were taken by the Front for re-education and they've come back home. However, the chief of the New-Life hamlet nearby was taken away by the VC when he came to [redacted] to see his wife, and he's been missing since then.

47. Were you afraid of being taken by the Front for re-education?

No; because I am very old, I'm not afraid at all.

48. Did the Front hold meetings with the villagers in your hamlet?

My hamlet was under Front control from February 7 to March 13 of this year, so the Front had no time to organize anything. However, it held meetings very often -- every night or every two nights.

49. Did you attend these meetings?

Yes.

50. What did they say on each occasion?

They only said they wanted to liberate the South and to fight against the Americans.

51. Did the Front cadres talk about the attacks on North Vietnam in these meetings?

Yes. They said that the planes had been shot down. In any meeting, we villagers came to sit down and hear what they said, and we remained close-mouthed from the beginning to the end of their speeches.

52. How often did they talk about the attacks on North Vietnam?

Many times. They talked about them in January of this year, but last month about July a GVN captain in the [redacted] post told us one evening that if ever North Vietnam was attacked by aircraft, the march to the North would be realized.

53. Did you hear about the air attacks on North Vietnam in August of last year?

Yes. I heard about them through the radio and newspapers.

54. How many radio sets did your hamlet have?

None, but the GVN troops transmitted to us the news.

55. Did your hamlet have an information hall?

Yes. The GVN had set up an information hall.

56. Did this information hall announce news on the attacks on North Vietnam?

Yes. Anytime it received news bulletins, it distributed them to the people.

57. What did the people think about these attacks?

They thought that when all the Communists are killed, peace will come; they said that the GVN should not hesitate to attack and defeat the VC once for all, because the unchanging situation only makes them suffer so many hardships.

58. Did the people feel happy to hear about the attacks on North Vietnam?

Yes. They feel happy because they want security and peace. They want the [redacted] area to be bombed...

59. What effect did the attacks on North Vietnam have on the people's morale?

The people become very enthusiastic, they hope that the two parts of Vietnam will be reunified.

60. When the Front took control of your hamlet, did they organize the Farmers' Association yet?

Not yet.

61. Did you pay taxes to the Front?

No.

62. Did you pay taxes to the GVN?

No.

63. Did the Front oblige other people in your hamlet to pay taxes?

No. But in [redacted] area the VC have levied the agricultural tax.

64. How much has each person paid to the Front in agricultural tax at Vung Vang?

I don't know.

65. To your knowledge, is this tax higher or lower than the GVN tax?

Higher than the GVN tax.

66. Why didn't the GVN collect taxes in your hamlet?

The GVN hadn't thought yet of levying taxes on the people who settled in the [redacted] Resettlement Area. Only the trucks transporting wood logs were taxable, but this tax was low, only some dozens of piasters per truck. After the November 1, 1963 Revolution, this tax was also abolished.

67. Did the Front carry out land distribution in your hamlet?

No. Maybe they have carried it out in [redacted] which they have controlled for over one year.

68. Was there any fighting in [redacted]?

No. [redacted] is covered with thick jungle, so the GVN troops were not stationed in the area.

69. Could you estimate the strength of the Front forces there?

It is likely that a battalion is stationed there. [redacted] is like a Combat Village. The VC penetrate the forests to pick up the rush (rattan) and the highlanders exploit all the riches such as rattan, honey, etc., for exchange against salt.

70. I forgot to ask you this question: where is [redacted] located?

[redacted] is located between [redacted] and [redacted] It is about 19 km from [redacted] and 13 km from [redacted]

71. Were there many landlords in [redacted]?

Yes. One half of the 200 families in [redacted] had much land each. In my hamlet, only five families were landlords. As a matter of fact, these people were not rich farmers because they were new settlers who farmed two or three mau of ricefields at most.

72. Did you pay the land tax to the GVN?

No.

73. Tell me something about the history of your hamlet since you came to settle there.

When we came to this place, the GVN sent tractors to assist us in clearing the land. We were each given for housing a plot of land, 40m wide and 50m long. We built our houses and we transformed the barren, uncultivated land into arable land. As the soil proved to be very fertile, we devoted all our efforts to increasing production.

74. When did the Front become active in your hamlet?

We came to [redacted] in September 1961. Next year, the VC attacked the [redacted] post, but the situation became normal again until 1964 when the VC activities began to intensify.

75. What form did these activities take?

All their activities were primarily underground. For instance, they threatened the GVN cadres, they blindfolded the villagers whom they took away for re-education. I have already told you that in my hamlet 2 or 3 people were taken away for re-education.

76. Do you know who the GVN village, district and province chiefs are?

The GVN officials sometimes visited the [redacted] area. They came to [redacted] on the invitation of the Director of the Agricultural Resettlement Center; they often visited [redacted] and [redacted] and they seldom visited [redacted] hamlet.

77. Do you know how many GVN cadres worked in the [redacted] Agricultural Resettlement Center?

Eight GVN officials to supervise a population of 300 people.

78. What did the people in your hamlet think of the fall of the Diem regime?

Mr. Diem's policy was good in some ways, but the men around him did more harm to him than to anyone else. However, the people didn't care about politics, because they were caught up in their own work.

79. Do you know who heads up the present government?

I believed that Mr. Nguyen Chanh Thi (Commander of the 1st Tactical Area) heads the government, but I was mistaken. After my return from the hospital here, I am now aware that Mr. Nguyen Van Thieu heads up the present government.

80. What is Mr. Thieu's position?

He is the President of the National Assembly.

81. What have you heard about the present government and its policies?

I have been told that the "misters" of the present government are not demagogues and they help our people gain national independence. I have also heard that the U.S. helps our country fight against the Communists; the people must stand together to fight Communism.

82. Do you know what countries help Vietnam fight Communism?

All the countries of the Free world, I cannot remember the names of these countries, but the U.S. devotes all its efforts to assist Vietnam.

83. What did the Front tell the villagers about the present government?

No

84. Did the GVN carry out any programs in your hamlet to help the villagers?

The GVN carried out many programs to help the village. A fund of 240,000 piasters was appropriated to the Nam Dong resettlement area, and rice was shipped here for resale to the people. We would have starved if this rice wasn't shipped here.

85. When was the sum of 240,000 piasters appropriated to Nam Dong?

Last year. It was appropriated to the whole Nam Dong area for the construction of a school, etc. We received rice and material.

86. How much rice did you receive?

Last year I received 7 kg of rice, 1.8m of material and 1 mat.

87. How about this year?

I have received from the Administrative Office 150 piasters. Only very poor people were given this aid. The GVN helped the poor people right after they liberated my hamlet from the VC control.

88. What did the villagers think about this aid?

We are poor and the Government has been generous in granting us this aid, so we are very grateful to the Government.

89. Were there any military or self defense forces stationed in your hamlet?

No. They were only stationed in [redacted] and [redacted] posts.

90. How many men were there?

I don't know.

91. How did they behave towards the villagers?

They behaved very well towards the people.

92. Did GVN troops pass through your hamlet?

Yes. They passed through my hamlet almost every day.

93. How did they behave towards the villagers?

They behaved very well towards the people. They were never arrogant or haughty.

94. How did the villagers feel about the GVN troops?

They liked them. They felt happy to see them. The protection of their lives was guaranteed as long as the GVN forces stayed on, but if the latter withdrew, they got scared.

95. When your hamlet was controlled by the Front, how many guerrillas were there?

None.

96. What have you heard about the aims of the Front?

On February [redacted] 1965, a VC political cadre told the villagers about the aims of the Front of Liberation of South Vietnam. He said that the Front would liberate the people from poverty and sufferings. He exhorted the villagers to rise up.

97. Did he say anything about the changes in Saigon?

Yes. He said that in Saigon the situation became unstable as one man always replaced another, and that the Liberation would take advantage of it to fight more strongly and to quicken its victory.

98. What did the villagers think of it?

The people maintained absolute silence while listening to what he said, they were very afraid.

99. Did he say anything about plans for the campaign during the rainy season?

No.

100. Did any cadre say anything about ways to stop the attacks on North Vietnam?

No. I only overheard a VC talk about the bombings of Quang Binh, and the shooting down of an aircraft in March.

101. When the GVN forces came to pacify your hamlet, how many men were there?

Very many people.

102. Did any fighting take place at that time?

No. Neither side suffered casualties. The VC troops had withdrawn well in advance. The pacification took place on March [redacted] 1965. The GVN troops advanced under the protection of a barrage of mortar fire. In my hamlet, everyone took cover in the shelters, so nobody was hit except for a man slightly wounded by a mortar shell fragment that fell onto his own house. This man wouldn't have escaped death if he hadn't taken cover in the shelter in time.

103. Before this fighting, have any battles taken place near or in your hamlet?

Yes. One fighting took place in July last year when the ARVN lieutenant in the [redacted] post organized an ambush near my hamlet. Two villagers in my hamlet were wounded.

104. Was there any intervention of the GVN artillery or aircraft in this battle?

No. The fighting only lasted a few minutes and some mortar shells pounded the area outside my hamlet.

105. Did the Front or the GVN warn the people to take cover or to leave the area before the fight?

No.

106. How did you feel about the attacks? Why do you think your hamlet was attacked or bombarded?

I think that the people suffer many hardships if both parties fight against each other. South Vietnam belongs to the South Vietnamese Government, but now the VC sow troubles and cause the deaths of so many people. These people have died in an unjust way.

107. What did the Front say about it?

They said nothing.

108. What did other villagers say about it?

They also said nothing.

109. What kinds of attacks frightened you and the other villagers most?

The bombardments by aircraft.

110. Did any persons in your hamlet join the Front because they resented the attacks?

I don't know.

111. Did any persons move to GVN-controlled areas after the attacks?

About 50 families including mine moved to the vicinity of [redacted] post to take refuge for a few days after each attack.

112. Did any villagers move to Front-controlled areas after the attacks?

No.

113. Did the attacks interfere with your work and your earning a living?

Yes. I immediately took cover in a shelter as soon as I heard a shot fired. My sleep was interrupted about 7 or 8 times a month during the past few months. Last April and May I often had to give up eating to take cover, and twice I had to take my meal in the shelter.

114. What effect did the attacks have on your living conditions?

My earning a living was greatly reduced. I only worked 12 to 15 days a month, and each day my work was reduced by one-half or more. Last year, I still went to the forests from time to time to cut wood, but this year I was unable to do so due to the insecure conditions.

115. Did the GVN warn your hamlet that it would be attacked?

No.

116. How did you and the villagers get news about what was going on?

Previously, there were the newspapers, and from time to time the GVN authorities distributed to my hamlet some news bulletins, but the villagers received nothing for about one year. There was only one radio set for the whole hamlet, but this apparatus was out of order 5 months ago and no repair has ever been made, so we couldn't hear any news at all.

117. Did anyone bring newspapers from Saigon or Hue to your hamlet?

No. I learned from hearsay that the VC have forbidden anyone to bring GVN newspapers here, so nobody dared bring them.

118. Had you or your family thought of moving to a GVN-controlled area before?

No.

119. What property did you or your family bring with you?

I left behind all my property, including a 3-room house, an altar, two beds, and many other things.

120. Could you estimate the value of your property you left behind?

I couldn't estimate its value, because I left behind my large garden which produced oranges, tangerines, tobacco leaves, etc. My heart sinks when I recall all that I have lost. In my opinion, 50,000 piasters cannot suffice to buy it all, since the tobacco leaves alone already cost up to 10,000 piasters! My house might be valued at 20,000 piasters or more than that, but my garden with its fruit trees is invaluable.

121. What could you bring with you?

My entire family and a few leaves of tobacco.

122. When did you or your family decide to leave your hamlet to come here?

In May of this year, my family moved to the [redacted] post with other families to let the GVN troops mop up the [redacted] area. Recently the GVN decided to move all our families from [redacted] to this place.

123. Did anyone induce you to move?

All the people in my hamlet moved to [redacted] without anyone inducing them to move.

124. Did you hear any rumors of a possible attack on your hamlet?

No.

125. How far is your hamlet from the [redacted] post?

About 2 km.

126. Did you expect to leave your hamlet for a long or a short time?

We moved to [redacted] so as to take refuge in a safer area, and we expected to come back to our hamlet as soon as the security conditions there would allow us.

127. Do you expect to stay here for a long or a short time?

I don't know. As we refugees know that the GVN will assist us, we have come here according to the decision of the government.

128. Suppose that your hamlet now becomes very secure. Do you want to come back?

Yes, provided that all the villagers should return to the hamlet to earn their living, and the GVN troops should assure security permanently.

129. What did the Front people in your hamlet say or do when you and the other villagers decided to leave and take refuge in [redacted]?

On May [redacted], the VC withdrew from my hamlet. All the families in my hamlet immediately moved to [redacted] which was then completely pacified by the GVN troops. Recently, the GVN authorities at the Administrative Office asked the people of my hamlet whether they wanted to stay behind or to go to this place, and all of them agreed to move here.

130. Has the Front threatened to punish you or other villagers for leaving the hamlet or for settling in a GVN controlled area?

No.

131. How many families left the village at about the time you did?

I don't know. All the people of my hamlet left except for a few youths who had joined the VC in February of this year.

132. Did your entire family come with you or did some members stay behind?

My entire family came with me.

133. Do you blame anyone for causing you to leave your village?

No. I only blame the VC for causing me to leave my house and my ricefields for which I have toiled for many years to earn my living, and now I suffer very much for giving up all my properties.

134. What do the other refugees say?

We here all hate the Communists who cause us to leave behind all our properties.

135. What help did the GVN authorities give you and your family after you left your hamlet?

Each member of my family has received 400 gr. of rice and 7 piasters a day. In addition we have received one pan and a pair of mats.

136. What did the GVN authorities tell you they will do for you and your family?

Three or 4 days ago, a GVN delegation came here and I learned that its members had said that they would assist the refugees as much as possible, but I don't know what kind of assistance they will give us.

137. What do you think about what they told you to help you and your family?

We refugees completely depend on the GVN assistance however small it may be, and we are not dissatisfied since we know that we are taking refuge to avoid the Communist danger.

138. What did you plan to do when you left your village?

I didn't plan to do anything when I left my hamlet.

139. What sort of work do you plan to do?

I was a farmer, but I realize that there are no ricefields available to the refugees here. I know that the Government will only assist the refugees for some time, but not forever. Therefore, we want to have some land to cultivate in order to increase production.

140. Did you have any other occupation besides farming?

No. But I was occasionally engaged in wood-cutting.

141. Have you cut wood here?

Not yet. I have just come back from the hospital, because my son was very sick.

142. What is the matter with your son?

Upon our arrival here, he vomited and had fever. The Public Health Service sent a car to transport him to the hospital. He is pretty well now.

143. Are the medical facilities here adequate?

Yes.

144. Did anyone try to persuade you or the other refugees to go back to your hamlet?

No.

145. Have you seen any Americans?

Yes. I often saw them in [redacted]. They were advisors in the post there. I didn't understand their language, and they laughed when they saw us.

146. What have you heard about them?

I read the newspapers which said that Vietnam is partitioned into two parts and our people are still backward. The U.S. is the first country in the Free World to help our country fight against Communism to liberate our people.

147. Did you believe it?

Yes.

148. Have you seen people from other countries other than Americans (Koreans, Filipinos, etc.) who are helping the Vietnamese?

No. I learned from the newspapers that other countries, such as Thailand, and others whose names I don't know, have helped Vietnam.

149. Do you want to enjoy the same life as the refugees from Hoa Luong? (A group of refugees settled in the same area about one year ago.)

Yes.

150. Have you talked to these people from Hoa Luong?

No. Moreover, we've never talked to any stranger.

151. While in [redacted] did you have many friends?

No. But if someone asked me to cure a patient, I didn't hesitate to practice my skills.

152. How? Were you a medic?

No. I know acupuncture.

153. How long did you treat the patients with acupuncture?

My uncle taught me how to treat the patients with acupuncture when I was about 40 years old and I still lived in North Vietnam.

154. Did you receive any fees for each treatment?

No. But from time to time my clients offered me wine when their families celebrated anniversaries.

155. Who were your best friends in the village?

I didn't have any friends.

156. Did you talk with anyone in your village about matters that concerned you?

No. The villagers with whom I talked are those who have come here. They are just acquaintances.

157. Could you talk freely to them about all matters that concerned you?

I only talked with them about business and how to increase production. I did what the GVN authorities ordered me to do, and I didn't praise anyone for his accomplishments.

158. Could you talk freely to all members of your family?

Yes. But I only talked with my wife about all matters that concerned my family. I always advised my wife to save money.

159. Does your wife know everything you know?

Yes.

160. Did other families or individuals help you or your family when you were in trouble?

Yes. Last year when I had sore feet, my neighbors gave me some money to buy medicine.

161. Who would you say was the most important person in your village, after the village chief?

I don't know.

162. Who would you say was the most important person in [redacted]?

Captain [redacted], Chief of the [redacted] post. He kept the people informed of what was going on in the area, and he was respected by them. He was very energetic.

163. Who would you say were the best-informed people in your hamlet?

The hamlet chief and his assistant. They were also assisted by an Assembly of Notables and I was the chairman of the

Assembly of Notables in my hamlet. I still held this position before I left my hamlet.

164. Have you ever been threatened by the VC because you worked for the GVN?

No. Once, a VC cadre asked me :"What do you do?" And I answered: "I do nothing."

165. You have said that a hamlet chief was killed by the VC. Why is that you, as chairman of the Assembly of Notables, that is, an important person in the hamlet, could be safe?

The hamlet chief killed by the VC was not the chief of my hamlet. Moreover, I was in charge of the financial matters of my hamlet, and I only signed unimportant bills.

166. How many members were there in the Assembly of Notables?

Three members. I was the chairman, Mr. [redacted] was vice-chairman, and Mr. [redacted] was secretary.

167. Did the Front people say anything to you and the other members of the Assembly of Notables?

In February of this year, they told us to dissolve this Assembly, and of course we had to obey their orders for a while.

168. When did you become chairman of the Assembly of Notables?

I've held this position from 1963 until now. I was elected by a show of hands at the Administrative Office of [redacted]. My function was purely financial and economical. I also acted as counsellor in the distribution of land to the resettlers.

169. Do you think that the people in your hamlet were satisfied with your handling this job?

Yes. I managed to satisfy everyone.

170. Did you receive any salaries?

No.

171. Did you get any privileges?

I got no privilege at all.

172. Before coming here, were you informed about what was going on in Hanoi and Saigon?

I sometimes read the newspapers given me by the GVN troops.

I read them by using spectacles, and I couldn't remember what I had read.

173. Did you hear about the attacks on North Vietnam?

Yes.

174. When did you hear about them?

I heard about them recently. I read a newspaper in the hospital here which said that the GVN-American aircraft had attacked Phu-Qui, Do Len, the Ham Rong bridge, etc.

175. Did you hear about them while still in your hamlet?

Yes. I heard about them over the radio.

176. What people did you talk to most frequently?

I talked to people very seldom, and those I did were my clients I treated with acupuncture.

177. How could you learn about what the village administration was doing?

The village administration held its meetings every month or every two months to discuss matters relative to the increase of production and the fight against the Communists. I attended these meetings regularly.

178. Did the GVN cadres talk about the attacks on North Vietnam in one of these meetings?

Yes.

179. Could you tell me the comments by the people about these attacks?

They didn't say anything, but they seemed to be very happy at this news. Some clapped hands on hearing about it over the radio.

180. What comments were made by the VC cadres about the attacks on North Vietnam?

I didn't move around, so I couldn't hear their comments, but I learned from hearsay that a GVN aircraft had been shot down in Quang Binh province.

181. Did your hamlet have a radio set?

No. Nobody in my hamlet had a radio set.

182. Did you see any reformed opera or other entertainment?

There was no reformed opera, but the children sang many songs on the occasion of Buddhist festivals. There was a pagoda in my hamlet.

183. Were there many Buddhists in your hamlet?

Yes. But there were also Catholics and they didn't have a church yet. Only five to six people were Catholics. They had settled in my hamlet at the same time as the other people.

184. How would you describe the best life you can imagine for yourself? What would it be like?

As I am very old (The subject is 59 years old), I don't have any hope at all. I have come from North Vietnam, and I consider any place as my home. I don't know when I'll die, but I think I still have these children who will bury me. (The subject showed the interviewer his five young children.)

185. What kind of life do you hope your two sons will have?

I don't know. I hope they'll have some education and obtain at least the Baccalaureate degree to be able to get an adequate job, serve the country, and help their family.

186. Did you correspond with your brother in North Vietnam by means of family cards?

No. All the relations with my family in North Vietnam have been cut off for a very long time.

187. What do you imagine the life in North Vietnam would be like?

I don't know. Before the armistice, I heard about the Communist đấu tố method -- denunciation of landlords' crimes. I heard about it when I was still living in Laos. After coming to the South, I also heard many dreadful stories about the đấu tố method. So I'm sure that my family in North Vietnam already underwent this punishment, and if any member of my family there still survives, he certainly has become very poor and unhappy.

188. Do you hope to come back to your native village in North Vietnam?

If the country is reunified, I'll return to my native village because as the proverb says, Birds have their nest. When Mr. Diem was still in power, I once said, "I'm very homesick." And I was arrested as a suspect.

189. What did you say so that you were arrested as a suspect?

I said, before that, 'If Mr. Ngo acts likewise, all the members of his family will do all the state affairs.'

190. How long were you arrested?

I was put in jail for over a year, from 1957 to 1959. I was beaten and tortured by the electrocution method. I was accused of being a VC, of having disturbed the national order, and so on. I narrowly escaped my deportation to the Con Son islands. The Security Service interrogated me again; I confessed I was guilty of having criticized President Ngo, but I denied all the other charges.

191. Were you brought before the court?

No.

192. After your release from the jail, what did you think about this affair?

After my release, I remained as close-mouthed and stupid as an owl. I never dared speak out anything, and I followed to the letter all the orders given by the GVN officials.

193. So, when Mr Diem was overthrown, you were satisfied, weren't you?

Yes. I was satisfied. Frankly speaking, Mr Diem's policy was apparently good, but internally this policy contained some abuses with respect to the religious problem.

194. Did you hear anything about Mr Diem's brother, i.e., Mr. Ngo Dinh Can?

I only heard that Mr. Ngo Dinh Can was the Political Advisor in Central Vietnam, but I didn't hear about his arrests.

195. Here is a picture of a ladder. The bottom rung is numbered ten, and the top rung is numbered one. Now let's say that the top rung represents the best life you can imagine, and the bottom rung represents the worst life you can imagine. Where on this ladder would you say that your life was before you left your hamlet?

It was No.3 or No.4 before the VC came; No.9 or No.10 after they came. It was lower than No.10 when I was in jail for over one year in 1958.

196. How about the time when you lived in Laos?

No. 1.

197. About where on the ladder do you think your life will be now?
No. 7 or No. 8.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

The subject was intelligent, cooperative, and seemed fairly honest. Despite his old age, he answered very loudly and he appeared to be "formal" during the interview.

NO. AGR 16

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

1. Name of interviewer [redacted] 3

2. Name of subject [redacted]

3. Time and date of interview :
   From 09:30 am to 12:00 am on July [redacted] 1965
   From 2:30 pm to 3:30 pm on " 1965
   From _____ to _____ on _____ 19___

4. Place of interview :
   [redacted] REFUGEES CENTER, THUA THIEN province

5. Sex of subject : Male (X) Female ( )

6. Age of subject : 59

7. Ethnic background : Vietnamese

8. Place of birth :
   hamlet [redacted]
   village [redacted]
   district Nam Dan
   province Nghe An (North Vietnam)

9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :
   hamlet [redacted]
   village [redacted]
   district Nam Dong
   province Thua-Thien

10. (a) Length of residence in last location : Nam-Dong
    (b) Who controlled the place of residence :
    GVN ( ) VC ( ) Contested (X) How long? 6 months

NO. AGR 18

11. Number of brothers (1) and sisters ( )

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : 1

13. Marital status : Married

14. Number of children : 5

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age : none

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject (X) died long ago
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject( ) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject (X) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject(X) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion : Ancestor worship

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : Farmer

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation _____
(b) Landowner? _____

20. Education :
illiterate ( )
literate (X)
schooling completed : _____

21. Any relatives in VC : Eldest brother in Nghe-An (North Vietnam

22. Any relatives in GVN : _____

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by :
(a) French none
(b) GVN "
(c) VC "

24. When became a refugee : May [redacted] 1965

AGR

INTERVIEW

19

THE RAND CORPORATION
[redacted]

STUDIES OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT
OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR- 19

Date of Interview : July [redacted] 1965

Subject's Category : Refugee December 1964

Area of Residence : [redacted] village
Nam Hoa district
Thua Thien province

COMMENT : Subject had interesting opinions on GVN vs. VC taxes (Q.27-32), villager attitudes toward the ARVN (Q.96-97), toward the VC (Q. 98-99, 165-166), and toward the Americans (Q.169-173), hardships of refugees (Q. 143-145), and Crop spraying (Q. 195-202).

1. How big was your village? How many hamlets?

[redacted] hamlets. The hamlets are called [redacted] in Vietnamese. They are: [redacted], [redacted] and [redacted]. I lived in [redacted] or [redacted] ([redacted] hamlet), or [redacted] hamlet.

2. How long have you been here?

I have been here since December 1964.

3. Where did you get here?

I came from [redacted] hamlet, [redacted] village, Nam Hoa district (Thua Thien province).

4. How did you get here?

The VC became active in my hamlet, and the people couldn't bear all the hardships, so they requested the GVN to let them take refuge in a safer place.

5. How large was your family?

Myself my wife, and my daughter. She is married to a GVN soldier. My wife and I live separately from her family.

6. By what means of transportation did you get here?

By sampan.

7. Did all the members of your family live together before you came here?

Yes.

8. How big was your hamlet?

About 90 families. or about 390 persons.

9. How many people stayed behind?

Seven families stayed behind. All the other families have come here.

10. Did they leave at the same time as you?

Yes.

11. How did most of the people in the hamlet you just left earn a living?

The people in my hamlet carried on all kinds of trades, but most people were farmers. The soil there is very fertile. Some people also worked covering the roofs with leaves.

12. Was your village prosperous or poor?

My village was medium. It had rich as well as poor people.

13. Do you know how many rich people there were in your village?

I don't know.

14. How about your family?

My family was poor.

15. Did the Front carry out the classification of families into: rich, medium, poor, or others?

No. The VC hadn't carried out this classification yet.

16. How much land did you own?

I owned 1.5 mau, and my land was entirely planted with fruit trees, such as orange and tangerine trees. I didn't own any ricefields.

17. Were there any changes in your or your family's economic conditions in the past years?

My family led a very happy life, but when the VC became active since February last year, it got poorer and poorer each day, until the Government decided to move us here.

18. How much education have you had?

I didn't go to school.

19. Can you read and write?

No.

20. Can you read and write the Chinese characters?

No.

21. Under the Diem regime or afterwards, was your hamlet a Strategic Hamlet? Was it a New Life hamlet?

Yes. My hamlet was a Strategic Hamlet, and it was organized in 1962. But later, it was destroyed by the VC.

22. How did living in a Strategic Hamlet affect your life and earnings?

It didn't affect my life and earnings at all. I liked it because it protected the people from the VC.

23. How did the GVN village and hamlet authorities behave?

They behaved well towards the people. The villagers liked them.

24. Who controlled your hamlet a year ago?

The VC. But their control was not yet complete, and there weren't many.

25. Did you stay home at that time?

Yes.

26. How many VC were there?

Five or 6 VCs, and sometimes over 10 VCs.

27. When the VC came to your hamlet, did they organize anything.

Yes. They obliged the women to buy paddy for them and to husk it carefully. Later, they asked every family to pour into a pot three handfuls of rice each day -- one handful of rice for each meal: it was rice for feeding the troops.

28. How did the people feel about it?

They couldn't bear the hardships any longer, because the VC also levied contributions on them: a rich family had to contribute 500 piasters; a poor family, 100 piasters; a very poor family, 50 piasters; and only those who were extremely poor could be exempted. I once told them: I am very poor and you still want me to pay you the contributions. How can I get money to pay you?

29. How did you pay them?

About 10 to 15 days after saying these words, the GVN came to evacuate us to this place; therefore, I didn't pay them a cent yet.

30. Did you pay taxes to the GVN before?

Yes.

31. How much?

I paid only a few piasters in land tax.

32. What did you think about this tax as compared with the VC contributions?

The VC contributions were so high that we had to ask the GVN to evacuate us to a safer place, if not we couldn't bear the VC any longer and all of us would die.

33. What else did the VC organize in your hamlet?

When they came, they always urged the women to buy paddy and to husk it very quickly. They gave them money to buy paddy, which they transported I don't know where.

34. Did they organize the Youth Section yet?

Yes. Five or 6 youths in my hamlet joined this organization.

35. Did they set up the Civil Affairs Committee?

No.

36. Did they set up the Farmers' Association?

No.

37. How about the Finance Section?

No.

38. How about the Front Committee?

Yes. The 5 or 6 youths I just taked about called themselves members of the Front Committee.

39. Do you know when these youths joined the Front?

In March last year.

40. Last year, before the VC became active in your hamlet, were there any guerrillas?

Yes.

41. How many?

Five or six.

42. Were they well equipped?

Yes. They were armed with rifles and grenades.

43. Did they mount sentries?

Yes.

44. Was your hamlet a Combat Hamlet?

No. The VC planned to make it a Combat Hamlet, but they didn't carry out their plan yet.

45. Were you satisfied or dissatisfied with the Front administration and policies in your hamlet?

The whole people in my village were dissatisfied with it, not me alone. They were unbearable!

46. How many young men 16 years old or more were in your hamlet?

I don't know, but there were very many.

47. Were they recruited by the Front for military duty?

A lot of them joined the ARVN and some joined the VC.

48. How many joined the ARVN?

I don't know.

49. How many joined the Front?

Six or 7 youths.

50. Did these youths join the Front voluntarily?

The VC indoctrinated them beforehand, and afterwards the youths joined them.

51. Do you know how the VC indoctrinated them?

The VC said that they set up the National Liberation Front in order to liberate South Vietnam, so it was useless for the youths to join the GVN, and they should join the Front to fight against the Americans in order to enjoy life in the future. They said that to die for the GVN means to sacrifice one's life in a stupid way, and the parents whose sons serve in the GVN forces should call them back.

52. Has it happened that anyone defected from the ARVN to join them?

Yes. Two or three youths have defected from the ARVN to join them.

53. Was anyone arrested and taken away to serve in their forces?

No. The VC persuaded all of them through indoctrination. (See Q.56.)

54. How many people in your hamlet did the VC indoctrinate so far?

About 10 people including some women.

55. How many women?

Four or five.

56. What job was given the women who joined them?

To cook their rice. The night before I came here, my younger daughter -- she didn't join the VC -- was arrested by them. They said that they wanted to "borrow" temporarily my daughter for cooking rice for their troops. She hasn't been released yet. (This answer obviously contradicts his answer to Q.53; being an old man, he sometimes spoke quickly with a faulty memory.)

57. Was anyone in your hamlet taken by the Front for "reeducation"

Yes. Five to seven people were taken by the Front for " reeducation" and joined them afterwards.

58. Were these people young men?

There were both young and old men in this group.

59. How long were they away?

For just one day.

60 Did anyone in this group tell you what had happened?

No. They only said that they had been taken away not far from the village, they had made a roundabout walk, and they had been recommended by the VC to continue to farm their land so as to contribute more to the Front, and to enable the Front troops to fight...

61. Did the Front hold meetings with the villagers in your hamlet?

Yes.

62. How often?

Every five to seven days, since last year. The meetings were held at night.

63. Did you attend these meetings?

Yes.

64. How many people attended them each time?

50-70 people.

65. What did they say on each occasion and what was the occasion

They held meetings to recommend the villagers to continue to work normally.

66. Did they hold any meetings on the occasion of the celebration of any victory?

No. In one meeting, they said that they have taken control of Quang Nam and Quang Ngai provinces, so the people must make more efforts to liberate the South in order to enjoy happiness. I just sat down and listened, but I didn't know what they said.

67. Did they say anything about the attacks on North Vietnam?

No.

68. Did you belong to any village organization while the Front was in control of your hamlet?

No.

69. Did the Front carry out land distribution in your hamlet?

No. But they planned to carry it out. They had said before I left that they would confiscate the land from the absent landowners to distribute it to the very poor villagers.

70. Let us suppose that you didn't leave your hamlet. So, could you or your family receive any land?

No, because I was only a poor farmer (bần nông). Only the very poor farmers (cố nông) could benefit from the land distribution. Moreover, I had 1.5 mau of garden...

71. Tell me something about the history of your village during the Resistance period.

At that time I suffered many hardships because of the French bombardments. Six or seven people in my hamlet were killed by the bombs, and many houses were reduced to ashes.

72. Were the people satisfied or dissatisfied with the Viet Minh at that time?

They were satisfied. Most poor people received fertile land from the Viet Minh. I didn't receive any. I ran away all the time to hide in the bushes, and I was very miserable.

73. When your village was under GVN control, did the province chiefs visit your village?

I don't know.

74. Did the district chiefs visit your village?

Yes. They came to my village every three months.

75. Did you see any of them?

Yes. I saw them all.

76. How do you feel about them?

They behaved very well towards the people. District chief Thi Thang was the best of all. He was succeeded by Mr. Huy, then by Mr. Dat.

77. Did your village have a Village Committee?

Yes. The village chief has also come here.

78. How do you feel about him?

He is sympathetic and the people like him.

79. What did you think of the GVN administration?

With the GVN administration, the people could live fairly well.

80. What did you think of the fall of the Diem regime?

The people were dissatisfied with Mr. Diem in some ways, because he made some abuses.

81. Were there many people in your village who were dissatisfied with him?

Yes.

82. Why?

Because he repressed the Buddhists.

83. Were most people in your village Buddhists?

Yes. Ninety percent of the people in my village were Buddhists. All my family is Buddhist.

84. What did the people think of Mr Ngo Dinh Can, Mr Diem's brother?

Nobody liked him.

85. Why?

He was a playboy. He didn't order anyone arrested in my village, but he did in other villages.

86. Did he ever visit your village?

No. He once sailed in a motor-boat to go fishing nearby.

87. Did the GVN carry out any programs in your hamlet to help the villagers?

(The subject misunderstood the question)
The GVN has assisted the people here, but this aid is still insufficient, because they are now short of rice to eat, and unemployment still prevails. There are jobs available for them.

88. Before you came here, did your family receive any aid in paddy seedlings or pigs?

No. Very few people received this aid.

89. Why is it that some received the aid and others didn't?

Because of the floods last year...

90. By the way, was your village affected by the floods last year.

Yes. Nobody died, but the crops were much damaged.

91. Did your village receive any assistance for the flood victims?

Yes. Only those whose properties were much damaged by the floods received aid in money. I was not one of these, but a lot of people were helped by this aid.

92. Were there any military or self-defense forces stationed in your hamlet?

Yes.

93. Who were they?

They were the people's forces (dân-quân).

94. How many men were there?

One squad for the whole village.

95. How did they behave towards the villagers?

They behaved well towards the villagers. They worked for them in the daytime and mounted guard at night.

96. Did GVN troops often pass through your hamlet?

Yes. They came every three or five days then they went away.

97. How did they behave towards the villagers?

They behaved well.

98. How did the villagers feel about the GVN troops?

They had compassion for the GVN troops who stayed drenched in the rains. They supported them.

99. If your hamlet was controlled by the Front, how did the villagers feel about the activities of the hamlet guerrillas?

The villagers hated the guerrillas.

100. Have there been any changes in the attitude of the villagers towards the Front forces in the past year?

No.

101. What have you heard about the aims of Front?

The VC told the villagers that the compatriots who came here from North Vietnam were the army of liberation, so the people in the South had to try to help them by giving rice and money for the troops to win the war.

102. What do you think of them?

I didn't pay any attention to what they said, I didn't agree with them, but I was afraid of them.

103. Why were you afraid of them?

I was afraid. (The subject burst out laughing.) If they knew I disagreed with them, I would have been killed.

104. Did the Front carry out any terroristic acts in your hamlet or kill any of the people?

No. But more than one year ago, a 60-year-old woman was killed because her husband worked for the GVN as chief of the hamlet administration committee.

105. Was anyone else in the hamlet administration threatened by the VC?

All the hamlet chiefs and members of the hamlet administration committees have fled to the GVN-controlled areas for a long time.

106. What have you heard about the Front life?

(The subject misunderstood the question)
The VC said that life in North Vietnam was very happy.

107. How about life in Front military units?

The life of these men is really very hard, and no man in this world can go beyond them in hardships! Even fermented rice reserved for pigs is not refused! It's too much, isn't it?

108. What have you heard about Front successes, defeats, and losses?

They said that they were victorious in Quang-Nam and Quang-Ngai, and their forces always fought. If the people joined the Front in building up their activities, the victory was certain without any need to fight here...

109. Who told you about this?

The political cadres.

110. Did he tell you anything about the Front defeats or losses?

He never talked about the Front defeats. I heard about them when I came here.

111. Do you have any close friends serving in Front military units?

No.

112. You said that your younger daughter had been arrested by the VC. Tell me how she was arrested by them.

The night before the villagers left this place, the VC came to talk some families into calling back home their sons serving the ARVN and to talk the villagers out of taking shelter in the GVN-controlled areas. They came to my house and arrested my daughter. They said: "We want to borrow her temporarily for a few days for cooking our rice. We won't take her along with us. She isn't useful for us in any way."

113. Did they release your daughter?

Not at all!

114. Has any fighting taken place near or in your hamlet?

Yes.

115. What happened?

In April or May last year, the VC met an ARVN scouting unit in the hill near my village. The fighting took place and I don't know its outcome.

116. Do you know the casualties of both sides?

No. The VC never let the people know about their casualties.

117. Why?

Their dead were carried away by themselves.

118. Did they recruit coolies in your hamlet to carry away the dead?

Yes. Some 5 or 6 militiamen who had joined them were ordered to carry away the dead.

119. How about the GVN casualties?

I don't know.

120. Was your hamlet or village bombarded by artillery or aircraft?

In June last year, some mortar shells fell on my village, damaging a small hut but not hitting anyone.

121. Did the villagers take cover during the attack?

Yes.

122. Who told the villagers to dig shelters?

The GVN and the VC also.

123. Were the shelters covered?

Yes. They were deep and covered with earth.

124. What did you think of this attack?

The VC came to my village, and of course the GVN forces had to attack them.

125. How strong were the VC when they came to your village at that time?

Just 7 people.

126. Did anyone resent the attack?

The villagers resented the VC who were the cause of the attack. How could they resent the GVN? (The subject burst out laughing)

127. Did any villagers move to GVN-controlled areas after the attack?

No.

128. Did the attacks interfere with your work and your earning a living?

No.

129. Did the GVN warn your hamlet that it would be attacked?

No.

130. Did the Front warn your hamlet that it would be attacked?

No.

131. How did you and the villagers get news about what was going on?

Before the VC came, the villagers got news about what was going on through the newspapers from Hue. Since March last year, no newspapers were received by them.

132. Did you often hear news over the radio?

No.

133. Was there any information hall in your village?

Yes. The VC set up an information hall for each hamlet at the crossroads. My village has ■ information halls.

134. Were there many people in the information halls?

Very few people read the leaflets on the walls.

135. Did the VC hang the Front flags there?

No. From time to time, they read the news to the people by using the megaphone.

136. What did they say?

Alas! They said that Ho Chi Minh and Vo Nguyen Giap had gone to Communist China, that Communist China had made all-out efforts to help the Front. They also said about Russia...

137. Did they say anything about the Sino-Soviet split?

No.

138. Do you know anything about the Sino-Soviet split?

No.

139. Had you or your family thought of moving to a GVN controlled area before?

No. We had thought that the GVN forces would be stationed in our village to keep order and security. But after some time the VC became more and more active -- they often came to oblige the people to buy paddy and they forced the women in my hamlet to husk their paddy -- the people in my village and myself sent to the GVN authorities a petition asking them to evacuate us to a safer area.

140. How long before your request was accepted?

We had to wait for a few months before our request was accepted.

141. Were the VC aware of your request?

No.

142. Were you and other villagers afraid that your request might leak out and the VC might prevent the evacuation?

Actually, the VC have tried to keep us from moving. They probably have thought about this, because in a meeting they said, " The people should struggle to the end. In the near future the GVN will concentrate the people in one place, but the people should oppose this". We told them we'd never give up all our properties to go anywhere, but in our inner thoughts all of us wanted to quit.

143. What have you heard about conditions in GVN-controlled areas before you left?

The GVN said it would give 3,500 piasters. (The subject misunderstood the question.)

144. Who said that?

Radio-Hue. It also said the GVN would give food to the refugees for six months. So far the rice allowances have been exhausted and the subsidy of 3,500 piasters is not yet given.

145. Have the refugees here found any jobs to earn their living?

Some have cut wood, others have been hired to cover the roofs with thatch, but none of us here can pay the high prices of basic living. Most of us depend on the allowances of rice which has been eaten to the last grain.

146. Were you told what the GVN would do for you and all the refugees here?

Major General Nguyen Chanh Thi who recently visited this camp said that he would give an additional supply of rice, and the district chief said that the 3,500 piasters subsidy would be granted in the near future.

147. Do the refugees here have any other future hopes?

No. We've come here and we're grateful for the GVN assistance. Despite some hardships we long for the day when peace will come and we'll be able to go back to our native village.

148. While still living in your hamlet did you hear broadcasts from aircraft?

Yes.

149. What did they say?

They appealed to the villagers to fight against the Communists and to come back to the national cause. Alas! how tough it is to fight against these Misters VC ! It's really impossible to defeat them !

150. Why is it impossible to defeat them?

Ha! The slightest leakage of a secret means death for them! They will cut the throat at once! Whether what they say is right or wrong, one must listen to them.

151. Do you think that the VC are really strong?

The VC are strong only when they carry out terroristic acts. (The subject burst out laughing.) They cut the throat of anyone they accuse of being a reactionary.

152. Have you heard about the Chieu-Hoi program?

Yes. Chieu-Hoi leaflets have been picked up by some people and even by the VC.

153. Did anyone in your hamlet rally to the GVN?

No.

154. Did you expect to leave your hamlet for a long or a short time?

No. We refugees depend on the Government and we shall stay here as long as we're allowed to. We won't go back to our village as long as there is no peace there.

155. Did any VC come with the refugees here to persuade them to go back to your village?

No.

156. What property did you bring with you?

Nothing at all! My house had been dismantled before I left. The proceeds from the sale of some holdings, about 3,000 piasters have been spent away for six months.

157. Are you worried about the property you left behind?

No. I have given it up.

158. Is there anyone in your village who will look after your property?

No.

159. What else would you have liked to have taken with you if you had been able to do so?

I sold all my furniture, so I had nothing to take with me.

160. Thus, you made preparations before you left, didn't you?

Yes.

161. How long?

Three to five days before I left.

162. Did anyone tell you in advance about the evacuation?

I overheard some GVN cadres say that the people of [redacted] village would move some day because they couldn't bear the VC any longer.

163. What do you think might happen to you if you went back to your hamlet?

I might be taken away for re-education or I might be killed.

164. How long do you think the war will go on?

(The subject laughed before answering the question) I also owe it to the Government that I can't answer. If the Government is strong, I will go back home, but I can't answer this question!

165. Do you blame anyone for causing you to leave your village?

Blame anyone? I blame the VC.

166. What do the other refugees say?

They have the same opinion as I, because everyone lived happily in their native village, and now they've given up everything to come here, they blame the VC for causing them to leave. But about their complaints : they speak out here, unlike while they were still staying in their village, for fear the VC might kill them ...

167. Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the help you received from the GVN?

I've satisfied. I'm very grateful to the Government for its aid. And even if the Government hadn't helped me, I would have left my village all the same, because I couldn't stay behind to suffer more hardships.

168. What do the other refugees think?

They have the same opinion as I : they're worried about getting any job to do while they're waiting for the day when they'll be able to come back home.

169. Did you see any Americans in [redacted] village?

I've seen them here.

170. What do you think they are doing in Vietnam?

They're helping the Vietnamese. They give Vietnam economic and military assistance: they help the anti-Communist refugees; they give the GVN troops weapons to fight against the Communists.

171. What have you heard about them? What did the VC say about them?

The VC said that the Americans came in Vietnam as aggressors, so they urged the people to sharpen their activities. They said that now they fought against the Americans, not against the Vietnamese. Last April, a man in my village said : " I don't see that you fight against the VC at all. I only see that you fight against the Vietnamese." The VC didn't answer a word, but at midnight they took this man away for re-education, and he's been missing ever since.

172. This man was a native of your hamlet, wasn't he?

Yes.

173. Before you left, did you think that the Americans were aggressors as the VC had said?

No. The Americans are so rich that they don't have to occupy our country. They want to help the Vietnamese.

174. What effects do you think the attacks on North Vietnam may have on the war and its outcome?

By attacking North Vietnam, the GVN may have the chance to defeat the VC, because without doing so it's impossible to fight against an enemy who always hides in the thick jungle. The attacks on North Vietnam are worthwhile for the GVN because : " if the roots of a tree are cut, the top will wither".

175. Have you seen people from foreign countries, other than Americans (Koreans, Filipinos, etc.) who are helping the Vietnamese?

No.

176. What do you think of their assistance to Vietnam?

They help the Vietnamese to win over the VC. If they weren't, it'd be perhaps impossible to win over them (the VC).

177. Do you know why many people have joined the VC?

Because of their propaganda, and because many people are so afraid of them that they have to join them.

178. Have you heard any VC propaganda about plans for the campaign during the rainy season?

No.

179. Have you heard about their new weapons?

Yes. Last year I was told that they had K-50 submachine guns, and so on.

180. Did they ever say they had aircraft?

No.

181. Did they say anything about ways to stop the attacks on North Vietnam?

No.

182. Who were your best friends in the village?

Some GVN cadres in the village.

183. Could you talk freely to them about all matters that concerned you?

Yes. But in talking freely with anyone, I always chose carefully those who had no relationship at all with the VC, for fear that any disclosure of free talks might cause worries to the persons concerned.

184. Could you talk freely to all members of your family?

Yes.

185. Is everything that is known to one member of a family also known to the others in the family?

Yes.

186. Do women know everything the men know?

Yes.

187. Did other families or individuals help you or your family when you were in trouble?

No.

188. Who would you say was the most important person in your village, after the village chief?

The hamlet chiefs. But when the VC came, they moved to the GVN-controlled areas.

189. Who would you say was the most energetic person in your village when it is a matter of getting things done -- repairing roads, asking for governmental action, and so on?

The chief of my hamlet. He devoted all his time to the construction of the New Life hamlet.

190. When you lived in the village, how did the people usually learn about what was going on?

They read the GVN newspapers brought by the GVN troops when they came to the village. Some newspapers were also hung on the walls of the information halls. The GVN soldiers often talked with the villagers about what was going on in the world and in Vietnam.

191. Do you know who heads up the present government?

I learned from hearsay that Mr. Nguyen Van Thieu heads up the present government. He is a major general and holds the position of president or something like that. Mr. Nguyen Chanh Thi is also a major general. Here, in Central Vietnam, he is more powerful than Mr. Thieu. (The subject burst out laughing loudly.)

192. How do you like him?

The people like Mr. Thi, because he knows the hardships of the refugees. He once visited this camp. He is a good man.

193. Here is a picture of a ladder. The bottom rung is numbered ten, and the top rung is numbered one. Now, let's say that the top rung represents the best life you can imagine, and the bottom rung represents the worst life you can imagine. Where on this ladder would you say that your life was before you left your village?

(It took about ten minutes to make the subject understand the question)
It was at No. 4 before the VC came, and it came down to No. 10 after the VC came.

194. About where on the ladder do you think your life will now be?

No. 6.

195. When you still lived in the village, did you hear about the spraying of trees and bushes with chemicals from the aircraft?

Yes.

196. What did you hear?

When the VC came to my hamlet, they said in a meeting that the Americans had dropped from aircraft some chemicals which caused all the crops of paddy and manioc to pollute.

197. Did they say anything about the precautionary measures against the spraying?

No. They said that the chemicals had been sprayed on their agricultural farms in the mountains.

198. Have you ever seen the spraying?

No.

199. Was your village affected by the spraying?

No.

200. Do you know why the spraying is carried out?

Chemicals have been sprayed in order to contaminate the crops belonging to the VC, causing the latter to be short of food.

201. Did the VC wage propaganda that the people's crops had been affected by the spraying?

No.

202. What effect did the spraying have on the people's health?

The people's health wasn't affected.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS :

Despite his old age, the subject is in good health, but his memory is not consistently good. During the conversation, he spoke with a fairly loud voice, and he often burst out laugning in a malicious manner. Despite a few misunderstandings in the interpretation of his answers, he was very cooperative and seemed honest.

NO. AGR 19

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

1. Name of interviewer [redacted]

2. Name of subject [redacted]

3. Time and date of interview :

   From _____ to _____ on _____ 196__

   From 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. on July [redacted] 19 65

   From _____ to _____ on _____ 19____

4. Place of interview :

   [redacted] Refugees Center, Thua Thien province

5. Sex of subject : Male (X) Female ( )

6. Age of subject : 64

7. Ethnic background : Vietnamese

8. Place of birth :

   hamlet [redacted]

   village [redacted]

   district Nam Hoa

   province Thua Thien

9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :

   hamlet [redacted]

   village [redacted]

   district Nam Hoa

   province Thua Thien

10. (a) Length of residence in last location : since birth

    (b) Who controlled the place of residence :

    GVN ( ) VC ( ) Contested (X) How long? 1 1/2 year

NO. AGR - 19

11. Number of brothers (0) and sisters (0)

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : _____

13. Marital status : Married

14. Number of children : 2 daughters

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age : _____

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject (X)
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject( ) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject (X) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject(X) or not with subject (X)

17. Religion : Buddhist

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : Farmer

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation _____
(b) Landowner? _____

20. Education :
illiterate (X)
literate ( )
schooling completed : _____

21. Any relatives in VC : 1 daughter arrested by VC

22. Any relatives in GVN : _____

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by :
(a) French none
(b) GVN "
(c) VC "

24. When became a refugee : December 1964

AGR

INTERVIEW

20

MASTER COPY

THE RAND CORPORATION
[redacted]

STUDIES OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT
OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR-20

Date of Interview : August [redacted] 1965

Subject's Category : Refugee, May, 1965

Area of Residence : [redacted] hamlet, [redacted] village, Tu Nghia district, Quang Ngai province

1. How long have you been here?

   Twenty days. I actually left my village for [redacted] on May [redacted], 1965 when the VC came to occupy it.

2. How did you get here?

   The Hamlet Chief of [redacted] led me here.

3. What are your plans and prospects now?

   In my situation today, I lack everything and I cannot plan anything.

4. How large was your family?

   I am married, and have two brothers, three sisters, four daughters and one son.

5. Did all the members of your family live together before you came here or were some living apart? Where did they go and why?

   A daughter of mine who was married and lived apart in Tu-Nghia district went astray when we moved out of the village. Another is working for her aunt in Saigon. My wife, my son and my two other daughters came with me here. My brothers and sisters never lived with me and I haven't heard from them in a long time.

6. How big was your village?

   There were [redacted] hamlets in my village. Before the VC occupation, I heard from the Village Chief that there were more than 5,000 voters in my village. In regard to children, there were more than 10,000.

7. How long had you lived there?

   Thirty years, since I was married. I spent my childhood in [redacted] hamlet, [redacted] village, Tu Nghia district, Quang Ngai province.

8. What did most of the people in the village you just left do to earn a living?

   Most of them were farmers.

9. Were most of people rich, medium or poor?

10o/o were rich, 90o/o, poor, and there were no medium.

10. How much land did you own?

Nothing.

11. Were there any changes in your or your family's economic conditions in the past years?

Yes, they only went down. In this period of time, it is very very hard to get better.

12. How much education have you had?

I am illiterate.

13. Did your children go to school?

My ten year old son was at the second year of his elementary school program.

14. Do you plan to send your children to school here?

I give up here. Even if I want to send them to school, I don't know how I will be able to do it.

15. Was your hamlet a Strategic hamlet?

Yes.

16. When was it organized?

Three years ago.

17. When was it destroyed by the Front?

On May 1, 1965, and starting from this date, the VC occupied the three villages [redacted]
People in those villages became refugees on the same day.

18. How did living in a Strategic hamlet affect your life and earnings?

This made life a burden to all the people who had to muster their forces to set up the strategic hamlet. Those who were rich had to contribute 500 strakes. Those who were poor but who still could manage for themselves, 100 strakes. Those who were matter of factly very poor, 50 strakes. Notice should be taken that each 2.5 meter strake cost 5VN$. I had to contribute 600VN$ although I was very

poor. Starting from the moment we cut down the bamboo until we completed our work, we spent more than one month of labor.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

The subject is somewhat elderly. He was very reluctant and stopped answering my questions when other refugees came to listen to us. At the same time many women started to call one another names and it became impossible to go on interviewing him. The writer had to find another subject, AGR-21, who agreed to come next day to a rendezvous - outside this noisy center - for a more thorough interview.

[redacted]

MASTER COPY

NO. AGR 20

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

1. Name of interviewer [redacted] 2

2. Name of subject [redacted]

3. Time and date of interview :
   From 2:45 PM to 4:00 PM on August [redacted] 1965
   From _____ to _____ on _____ 19 ___
   From _____ to _____ on _____ 19___

4. Place of interview :
   Quang Ngai

5. Sex of subject : Male (x) Female ( )

6. Age of subject : 50

7. Ethnic background : VN

8. Place of birth :
   hamlet [redacted]
   village [redacted]
   district Tu Nghia
   province Quang Ngai

9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :
   hamlet [redacted]
   village [redacted]
   district Tu Nghia
   province Quang Ngai

10. (a) Length of residence in last location : _____
    (b) Who controlled the place of residence :
    GVN ( ) VC (/) Contested (x) How long? Since March 1965
    Since May 1965

NO. AGR 20

11. Number of brothers (2) and sisters (3)

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : 2 (45, 48)

13. Marital status : Married

14. Number of children : Five (4 daughters, 1 son)

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age : None

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject( ) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject (x) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject(3 *) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion : Buddhism

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : Mat-salesman

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation Poor
(b) Landowner? No

20. Education :
illiterate (x)
literate ( )
schooling completed : _____

21. Any relatives in VC : None

22. Any relatives in GVN : Two brothers and three sisters

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by : None
(a) French
(b) GVN
(c) VC

24. When became a refugee : May, 1965

(*) 1 daughter married (lost) Tu Nghia.
1 daughter working for her aunt in Saigon.

AGR

INTERVIEW

21

THE RAND CORPORATION

[redacted]

STUDIES OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT
OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR-21

Date of Interview : August [redacted] 1965

Subject's Category : Refugee - June [redacted], 1965

Area of Residence : [redacted] village, Tu Nghia district, Quang Ngai province

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1. How long have you been here?

   More than one month.

2. Where did you come from?

   I came from [redacted] village. Tu Nghia district, Quang Ngai province.

3. How did you get here?

   I came straight from the Quang Ngai hospital.

4. What are your plans and prospects now?

   I am trying to be enlisted in the Marine Corps.

5. How large was your family?

   My family comprises my mother-in-law, my wife, and my three children.

6. Did all the members of your family live together before you came here or were some living apart?

   We lived together.

7. How big was your village?

   There were [redacted] hamlets in my village, and 50 families in each hamlet on an average. Each family comprises about eight persons, elderly people and children included.

8. How long did you live there?

   Thirty three years. Even if I went somewhere to earn my living for a few months or a year , I always came back to my village.

9. How many families or persons have left your hamlet in the past years? Why did they leave and where did they go?

   Twenty families left my hamlet at the same time I did, when the VC came to attack on May, 1965. Those who couldn't escape were compelled by the VC to stay there.

10. What did most of the people in the village you just left do to earn a living?

They were farmers.

11. Was the village prosperous or poor? Were most people rich, medium or poor?

10% rich, 90% poor, no medium.

12. What did you, your family or your parents do to earn a living?

I enlisted in a SDC unit to raise my family.

13. How much did your monthly salary amount to?

$1,300. But I had to pay $300 for my cigarettes, and $400 for my meals. Also I had to shift for myself about clothing with the $600 left. Therefore, sometimes my wife had to work as a hired laborer to give me a hand.

14. What category did the Front assign to your family? rich, medium, poor, very poor or others?

Very poor.

15. How much land did you own? How much did you work?

I only had a straw-hut. In the past, I had had two, but last year the flood carried away one. At that time, I received from the GVN 40 "lon" of rice and 1 blanket.

16. Were there any changes in your or your family's economic conditions in the past years?

None.

17. How much education have you had? Can you read or write?

I can read.

18. Where did you go to school?

I followed a Mass Education course in the village, at night, for one year.

19. Did your children go to school?

My eldest son who is 6 years old doesn't go to school yet.

20. Do you plan to send your children to school here?

I want to send my eldest son to school but I can't do it because he has to take care of his young brothers.

21. Was your hamlet a strategic hamlet?

Yes.

22. When was it organized?

Three years ago.

23. When was it destroyed by the Front?

On May [redacted], 1965.

24. How did living in a strategic hamlet affect your life and earnings?

This made life a burden to all the people. Those who were rich had to contribute 500 stakes. Those who were poor but who could still shift for themselves, 100 stakes. Those who were very poor, 50 stakes. Each 2.5 meter stake cost five piasters. In the period of strategic hamlet building in 1963, I heard that the Americans aided the GVN to set up those strategic hamlets and maternity clinics. However, as a matter of fact the population was forced to contribute to build strategic hamlets, maternity clinics, and village-halls, etc. Some contributions of money and labor was a hundred times as much the aid the population heard about. Those who were too poor had to borrow some money or pawn their belongings to contribute. People wailed because those who didn't have money to construct the part of stockade assigned to them had to watch by the unprotected space with a lantern all night long.
More recently, people were compelled to hang some lanterns at night along the fence of the New Life Hamlets to stand guard. They were complaining about the fact that they had to work hard to earn a living in daytime and to stand guard in the open at night. They said if the ARVN, with their weapons, couldn't defeat the VC yet, how could they do it with their sticks and wooden fishes? When the VC came and

pointed their guns, they certainly could not do anything. This only caused them more dissatisfaction and the GVN didn't gain anything by it.
Besides, when the GVN arrested and beat people without any thorough investigation to ascertain whether or not those people were Communist elements, or whether they were guilty or not, many people were very dissatisfied and hated the GVN. In my opinion - I understand the problem because I mingled with my compatriots - if the GVN wants to succeed in their policy, they shouldn't compel the population to stand guard at night along the hamlet fences, but should organize some competent cadres to follow closely the Communist sympathizers and reeducate them. The GVN will succeed in such conditions and the population won't be dissatisfied anymore. They won't have any reason to join the VC. To my knowledge, so far in my area 90% of people have been with the GVN side and only 10% with the VC. However, although they didn't like to side with the VC, they had to do it because, since 1963, they have been day by day, more and more dissatisfied.

25. How did the GVN village and hamlet authorities behave?

They had to be stern if they wanted to have the work done, otherwise people would ignore their duties and the work would not be done.

26. What did the villagers think of them?

They entirely disliked the GVN local authorities because they were so hard pressed. They wailed but didn't dare complain loudly, and only whispered between themselves.

27. Who controlled your hamlet a year ago?

A year ago, the GVN still controlled my hamlet but since May [redacted], 1965, the VC have occupied it.

28. How many hamlets in your village are now controlled by the Front? How many are contested?

The GVN has recaptured four hamlets but not mine, [redacted], which is on the other side of [redacted] river. Although those four hamlets were recaptured by the GVN, they were not very safe.

29. Had your hamlet been controlled by the Front before May [redacted], 1965?

So far, they have come to attack every three or five months for one day and then withdrew. Only since May [redacted], 1965, have they occupied it.

30. Did the Front carry out any terroristic acts in your village or kill any of the people?

Yes, from time to time they came to attack the village for two or three hours. For instance, on March [redacted], 1965, they burnt the GVN Village Office and hunted for the GVN cadres to kill them. I was wounded during this attack. That was the first battle which happened between the VC and my SDC unit. It occurred at one o'clock in the morning.

31. Would you please describe this battle?

My platoon leader told everyone to take a rest on the evening of March [redacted], 1965, until midnight -- the time at which we had to lay an ambush. As a squad leader, carrying out both my platoon leader and the Village Police Chief's orders, I assigned the SDC men to stand guard, on a rotation basis, with three in each place. At about one o'clock in the morning, just after I turned over my place to another man and was dozing, I heard the dogs bark. At the same time, all the cells who stood guard found that the VC were attacking. They immediately opened fire. I ran out and saw a lot of VC who were trying to storm the place. The VC opened fire on both [redacted] and [redacted] villages at the same time, about one o'clock in the morning. For heavy weapons, my unit had only one automatic rifle while the VC had 30 mm machine guns, automatic rifles, and rifles equipped with grenade sleeves. This seesaw situation went on until three o'clock in the morning when we ran short of ammo and were forced to withdraw. With my carbine, I ran after the SDC man who had the automatic rifle to protect him and the weapon when a grenade sleeve blew up near by. Both of us fell down and I vomited blood, but fortunately we didn't suffer any injury. I told my companion to run away and if he was unable to escape, he should hide the automatic rifle. As for me, I hid in the bushes with my carbine. On my side, two SDC men were killed and eight were captured. On the VC side, I saw four killed. Later I was admitted to the [redacted] hospital in Quang Ngai for one month and the District Chief gave me $500, one blanket, two packages of cigarettes, two cans of condensed milk, and one bottle of pills. I didn't know what kind of pills they were, I only heard that they were used to kill the microbes or virus. When I came

back to my village, I had ten days of convalescence leave before rejoining my unit. I have talked to people in the village and they told me that at ten o'clock on the evening the above mentioned battle occurred, they heard the dogs bark on the side of Ho Thanh mountain and the VC infiltrated the hamlet by breaking a part of the stockade on this side. They stayed there until one o'clock in the morning when they opened fire. Probably because they didn't know that we were there to wait for them, a lot of them were killed when they stormed the place. The villagers said that there were certainly more than the four VC I had seen who were killed because the retreating VC left many traces of blood along their path. To sum up, the SDC men fought with all their might but they had to withdraw because their weapons and ammo didn't come up to that of the VC. On our side, our troop strength was not great and we didn't have heavy weapons. Therefore, although we had a very high morale, we had to bow down. Now I think it would be better for me to be enlisted in a large unit; even if I have to fight for one or two days, I am certain that after the battle I will be able to take a rest. There wasn't any schedule and/or plan, and not enough means to fight in a SDC unit. Starting from this month, if I am still in the SDC ranks, my monthly salary will be raised to 1,400VN$, but I prefer to enlist in the Marine Corps because I will have much more money and enough means to fight the VC.

32. Did the villagers think the killing of people and/or the GVN cadres was justified or not?

People were bothered and frightened because they feared that the GVN would make many unjust arrests, etc.

33. What do you know about a Combat Hamlet? Were there any differences between a Combat Hamlet and a Strategic Hamlet and/or New Life Hamlet?

Those who could escape when the VC came didn't know anything about this. Those who were compelled by the VC to stay in the hamlet and who could, after that, run away, knew that the VC forced people to dig spike pits to prevent the GVN and the armored vehicle attacks. To my knowledge, those obstacles only hampered the GVN infantry; once GVN aircraft had bombed the place, the GVN forces could move in easily, as if nothing had happened. Thus the VC only caused the population more misfortune.

34. Did your attitude and that of other villagers towards the Front change during the past year?

They didn't want the Liberation Front to come into their villages because in every village into which the VC came, the population was forced to abandon their work and houses. Recently, when people ran away to take refuge here, many families lost their children or relatives because women and children can't run like men. They fell down, got up, and fell down again, and finally were captured by the VC. Thus their families were split up.

35. How many young men 16 years old or more were in your hamlet? How many joined the Front in the last year? How many joined the ARVN?

Most of them joined the 2nd Division and the SDC. Not many were left in the hamlet. Two-thirds of the population in the hamlet became refugees here. The remainder ran out of the hamlet and stopped at a place which was about 5 kilometers from the hamlet because they thought that the ARVN would liberate their hamlet soon and from that place it would be more convenient for them to reach their homes. Unfortunately, at night they were compelled by the VC to go to the liberated areas. To sum up, only one out of ten people in my hamlet was a Communist sympathizer.

36. How did the Front recruit people in your village for military duty? Did the Front persuade most of them through propaganda or did it order people to serve in the military forces?

When the VC came to occupy the village they always compelled every able-bodied man to participate in their military forces. Therefore, excluding those who could escape, all people had to become so-called volunteers, otherwise they would be forced to do it.

37. How did the villagers feel about the recruiting?

Roughly speaking, [redacted] and [redacted] villages were just occupied by the VC but other villages in the west, e.g. [redacted] etc., had been under VC control for a long time. To my knowledge, a father who has his son compelled by the VC to serve in the Front only nopes day and night that his son would be able to flee. At the same time he fears that he will lose his prestige vis-à-vis the GVN and he is responsible for his son's participation.

38. Were you or any members of your family taken by the Front for reeducation?

Excluding my wife, my three children and my mother-in-law who came here with me, my family comprised my mother, my eldest brother and his wife, my younger sister, my two younger brothers, and five nephews. When the VC came to occupy the village, all of them left the hamlet for [redacted] five kilometers from the hamlet. One month ago they were compelled by the VC to go back to [redacted]. My two younger brothers serve in the ARVN, one in the Strike Force and one in the Marine Corps. I haven't heard from the first for two months, and from the second for two years.

39. Did the Front hold meetings with the villagers in your hamlet?

No.

40. So far, how have they carried on propaganda?

Before they occupied the village on May [redacted], 1965, they never carried on propaganda in my village. In the past some people in my hamlet cultivated vegetables, cabbages and corn, in a place between the sea and my hamlet. They were contacted by the VC who carried on propaganda but they didn't dare repeat what they had heard.

41. How much did you pay to the GVN during the past three years?

I only paid a few piasters per year to the GVN for land-taxes.

42. Before enlisting in your SDC unit, what was your occupation?

I was a tenant farmer, I didn't own any land.

43. Tell me something about the history of your village during and after the Resistance period?

At that time, I was still young and worked as a hired laborer. I only remember that the Viet Minh compelled the villagers to become civilian workers in the Resistance.

44. Do you know who the GVN village, district, and province chiefs are?

I know all of them.

45. How often did they visit your hamlet before?

The district chief dropped into my hamlet twice a month or once every two months. The province chief only visited my hamlet when he wanted to call all the people together in a meeting to talk to them about the struggle against the Communists. He might come once a month but it was not necessarily foreseen in his schedule that he had to do it regularly.

46. What did the people in your village think of the fall of the Diem regime?

Most of them said that Mr. Ngo Dinh Diem was overthrown because of Mrs. Ngo Dinh Nhu.

47. Do you know who heads up the present government?

I know but I can't recall his name. (Hesitated). Is he Mr. Tran Thien Khiem?

48. Do you read newspapers?

Three piasters for a newspaper is too expensive for me. I don't have money to raise my children, how can I read newspapers? How can I recall the names of those who live far from me while I am not able to recall my neighbors?

49. Did the GVN carry out any programs in your hamlet to help the villagers?

They have distributed insecticides and fertilizers. They built blockhouses and dug trenches for the security of the villagers.

50. What did the villagers think about these programs?

They liked those programs very much.

51. Did you or your family benefit from these programs?

We didn't receive anything, not even the rice seeds. Only when the GVN distributed some "black" rice (Note: A bad quality of rice), did I actually receive any.

52. So far, how many times has the GVN distributed such rice?

Once for that quality of rice and twice for the ordinary rice.

53. How much did you receive each time?

20 "lon" for my family.

54. Were there any military or self defense forces stationed in your hamlet? How many men were there?

There were two platoons of SDC scattered in the five hamlets. However, as a part of them were assigned to work with the village or hamlets chiefs, the real combat unit only comprised five squads.

55. How did they behave towards the villagers?

Those who were somewhat elderly behaved well. Only the youths acted and talked thoughtlessly, and thereby inspired hatred.

56. How often did GVN troops pass through your hamlet?

Once every month, or every two or three months. When need be, the village sent word to the province to ask for reinforcements. The Strike Forces came more often, once every three or five days.

57. How did they behave towards the villagers?

They weren't at odds with anybody.

58. How did the villagers feel about the GVN troops?

They didn't hate them and weren't afraid of them. They liked the GVN troops to come into the hamlet in great quantities to fight the VC more efficiently and spare them from VC activities of which they were afraid. They used to offer coconuts or sugar to the GVN troops.

59. What have you heard about the aims of the Front?

When the villagers were concerned and couldn't flee, they were resigned to side with the VC, but they knew that the Front could not hold off the GVN when the latter was so well equipped with aircraft, tanks, and armored,

vehicles, and had such a strong Navy, Air Force, and infantry. Therefore, they never believed in the VC propaganda. They liked the GVN because they could enjoy freedom and were well-fed. For instance, under the Viet Minh regime, nobody could build a brick and tile house. Later, under the GVN, one out of ten people had such a house. To sum up, they were very pleased when they heard that the Americans and other friendly countries helped the GVN to struggle against the Communists. Through the conversations between villagers in the hamlet, I knew that everybody wanted to stop fighting in order that they could earn a living freely. This was the population's aspiration; when both sides were fighting, the civilians who were in between suffered everything. Even if they wanted to run away, they sometimes didn't have time to do it. The worst thing was when the VC occupied a hamlet, they stood guard around and even if people wanted to flee, they couldn't.

60. Do you have any close friends serving in Front military units?

I strongly affirm that no one had served in the Front. Those who were my age enlisted in the 2nd Division, the SDC, or were called to bear arms in the ARVN.

61. Are any members of your family or relatives serving in the Front?

None.

62. Did the Front or the GVN warn the people to take cover or to leave the area before the fights?

The GVN sent its aircraft to warn people but the latter couldn't flee because they were guarded by the VC. Also, when the ARVN withdrew after a battle and there were only the SDC left in the hamlet, those people who had been able to flee were brought back to the hamlet by the VC.

63. How often was your hamlet attacked?

After the battle of March [redacted], 1965, I told you about, the VC attacked and occupied both [redacted] and [redacted] villages on April [redacted] 1965, at night. The population took refuge in Quang Ngai city. On June [redacted] 1965, at noon, the ARVN recaptured [redacted] village and [redacted] out of [redacted] hamlets of [redacted] village, [redacted] hamlet excluded.

A lot of VC were killed during this battle. At the time the ARVN withdrew, my SDC unit camped in [redacted], five kilometers from my hamlet of [redacted] and I told my wife to take refuge in Quang Ngai city with my children. At night, the VC recaptured all of those places. On June [redacted], 1965, the ARVN came back again and recaptured the same places as they had done before and, as before, when the ARVN had withdrawn, the VC came to avenge and attacked fiercely. The SDC couldn't hold them off and they (VC) took advantage of this to seize also [redacted] village. From that time, a seesaw situation went on through June [redacted] 1965. During this period of time, my unit was fed with balls of rice provided by the villagers. On June [redacted] 1965, both sides were engaged in a fierce battle. As I was sort of affected by the first battle of March [redacted], I was completely worn out and fainted. My unit took me to the [redacted] hospital where I stayed for fifteen days. When I got out of the hospital, I came straight to this refuge center to join my family. I don't want to go back to my unit and am planning to enlist in the Marine Corps. I already had my picture taken and in a couple of days when I have my photos I will present myself to the Bureau of Recruitment of the Marine Corps.

64. Was your hamlet bombarded by artillery or aircraft?

Since the VC have occupied my hamlet, GVN aircraft bombed the place three times and the Quang Ngai Sector often shot its artillery at my hamlet.

65. What did you and the villagers do?

I was in my unit during those attacks.

66. What damage was inflicted?

About five or six villagers were killed and many people were wounded.

67. What did the villagers say about it?

The population hated the Communists who caused them disaster everywhere they went. People understood that the GVN forces attacked because of the Communists.

68. What kinds of attacks frightened you and the other villagers most?

Bombs and artillery shells. They said that they could hide if both sides didn't use bombs and/or artillery. But in my opinion, if we don't use such weapons, how can we fight the VC?

69. Did any persons in your hamlet join the Front because they resented the attacks?

None.

70. Did any villagers move to GVN-controlled areas after the attacks?

Yes, a lot.

71. Did any villagers move to Front-controlled areas after the attacks?

No. Only when they heard that the GVN forces were mopping up those areas, did they follow them to find whether or not their houses still existed.

72. How did you and the villagers get news about what was going on?

The Village Information Service broadcast news over loudspeakers, or called people together in meetings.

73. Were there any radios in your hamlet?

Yes, but not many. About 10% of the people had radio sets.

74. What station did you listen to?

Mostly Radio Saigon and Quang Ngai and then, Radio London. They didn't dare pick up stations of the other side for fear of being arrested (by the GVN).

75. Were there any newspapers read in the village?

Those who were well off sent for newspapers from Quang Ngai city. Those who were poor sometimes received a newspaper from the Information Service.

76. What information did the village office of the Vietnamese Information Service give the villagers?

News from different battlefields, booty got from the VC, and everything provided by the American aid.

77. How often did the Vietnamese Information Service give this information?

Once every five or ten days.

78. Had you or your family thought of moving to a GVN-controlled area before?

On April [redacted], 1965, some villagers came in a hurry from [redacted] village and told us that the VC had just occupied their village. I feared that the VC could carry out a large-scale attack. Therefore, I immediately sent my wife and children to [redacted]. I did this because when the VC attacked a village, they looked first for the wives and children of the GVN cadres and SDC and arrested them.

79. Have you taken refuge or tried to take refuge in a GVN-controlled area before?

No. I took refuge here for the first time.

80. Were you told what the GVN would do for you and your family?

We didn't hear anything. We only tried to escape from danger.

81. What did you expect the GVN to do for you?

When we fled, we thought that the VC would stay there for only one or two days and after that we would be able to go back to our home. We didn't dream that this time they would occupy the hamlet for such a long time. Since we have been here, more than two months now, each of us have twice received only one kilo of rice. Also, we (my family) have received a one-gallon can of vegetable oil.

82. Did you hear broadcasts from aircraft or read leaflets telling you to leave? What did they say?

Yes. They said: "Please leave the village and let the ARVN attack the Communists. Those who don't leave will have to put up with all damage they may suffer."

83. Could you hear clearly what the broadcasts from aircraft said?

Yes.

84. When did you hear them best?

Those broadcasts were only given in daytime. For instance, if the ARVN decided to open fire at noon, the broadcasts were given at seven o'clock in the morning. Or the broadcasts could be given the day before the attack.

85. What did the population think of what they said?

They didn't think anything, they only worried about their escape. Those who fled without taking anything with them came from places already occupied by the VC. Those who could learn that the VC were coming, for example when they were at one end of the hamlet and the VC had come to the other were able to take a few things with them. But after so long a time, everyone has become penniless. Nobody could dream that at this time the VC would occupy the hamlet for such a long time.

86. What property did you or your family bring with you?

Nothing except a suitcase and a few clothes.

87. Are you worried about the property you left behind?

I don't take it in consideration and don't need it anymore. I only worry about my life and am waiting for the GVN mopping-up operation to go back to my home.

88. Is there anyone in your village who will look after your property?

No one.

89. What else would you have liked to have taken with you if you had been able to do so?

I had a little paddy left which I would have liked to have taken with me, and also a bed for my children who have slept on the ground since they have been here.

90. What did the Front people in your hamlet say or do when you and the other villagers decided to leave?

"If you wans to run away, run for good and never come back, otherwise we will kill you all. We will get in the Quang Ngai city soon." These were the VC threats. Later, when everybody moved to [redacted] and there were only the VC left in the hamlet, the latter had to go to [redacted] to compel people to return to the hamlet.

91. How many families left the village at about the time you did?

One after another, everybody fled. Later, those who regretted their lost belongings tried cautiously to get back to the village to break up the ricefields for tilling, etc. They were compelled by the VC to stay.

92. What do you think might happen to you if you went back to your hamlet?

The VC would kill me immediately. In a thousand years, they would never set me free.

93. How long do you think the war will go on?

I don't know.

94. Do the other refugees blame anyone for causing them to leave their village?

The Communists. Nobody blamed the GVN because if the Communists hadn't come, the population wouldn't flee.

95. Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the help you received?

About the help we received from the GVN, as I told you, I consider it a favor granted by the government and I was satisfied with what I received. The only thing we all hope now is that the government can afford a job for each of us so that we can earn a living and raise our families. We have heard that the GVN helps the refugees by granting them VN$3,500 and feeding them for six months but we have received almost nothing and we are, as a matter of fact, very miserable. If only each of us had received that VN$3,500, we could increase this capital and earn a living, we could become peddlers and at least live from hand to mouth. But as we haven't received anything and don't know

whether or not we will, we are impatient to see the GVN carry out its aid program. An old refugee told me that even if the GVN haven't yet carried out its aid program, he still thanks the GVN very much. But he thinks it would be better if the GVN could expel all Communists so that everybody could go home and till their ricefields and earn a living. That old man added: "I think that all refugees who are here only expect the GVN to do this because most of them are farmers, they don't know anything but tilling their ricefields. They can neither deal with other people nor work as hired laborers. Therefore, they only expect to be able to go back to their homes soon."

96. What did the GVN authorities tell you they will do for you and your family?

I didn't see that they promised anything. However, I have noticed that they made a list with all refugees' names and I have been told that the District would set up a series of houses in accordance with that list. Each refugee's family will receive a house and rice.

97. What did you plan to do when you left your village?

At that time, I only had my wife and children take refuge. I hoped that with my monthly salary I would be able to let them live from hand to mouth.

98. Have you heard about or from the people who stayed behind in your hamlet? What did you hear?

I only heard from the people who took refuge here. They said that they worried about those who couldn't flee and were compelled by the VC to stay behind in my hamlet. They didn't know whether or not those people would be killed by the bombs or artillery shells.

99. Has anyone tried to persuade you or the other refugees to go back to your hamlet since you have been here?

No, only a few people have complained about the hardships. They want to go back to their village to till their rice-fields but they don't dare do it for fear of death.

100. Have any of the villagers who left with you moved back to your hamlet?

Nobody did from this center, but I don't know whether or not people who went to other centers in Quang Ngai have left.

101. Have you seen any Americans?

When I was still in my SDC unit, some Americans fought the VC with us. When they ran, they huffed and puffed, looked tired and very funny.

102. What do you think they are doing in Vietnam?

I only saw that they were fighting the Communists like us. I only know what I see with my own eyes, nothing else.

103. Have you seen people from countries other than America (Koreans, Filipinos etc.) who are helping the Vietnamese?

I have heard that there were Australians but I haven't had the opportunity to go with them. So far I have only gone with the Americans. I liked to fight the VC in the company of Americans because, when need be, they sent word and immediately aircraft and tanks came to help us.

104. Did other families or individuals help you or your family when you were in trouble?

As a matter of fact there was nothing they could do. However, my hamlet chief was always ready to give a hand to my wife and children when I was away from home, namely to make out necessary papers or declarations, etc. A long time ago, under the Diem regime, I served in the Combat Youths, then in the Armed Youths (Thanh Nien Vo Trang) without any salary. When I was tranferred from the Combat Youths to the Armed Youths, I was sent to attend a training course in Quang Ngai city for 15 days. At that time, my wife had just givenbirth to my boy and we were so poor that we didn't have rice to eat. During my absence, thanks to the hamlet chief's fund drive, my wife and child could get a livelihood. (Cried). I enlisted in the SDC one year ago and only since that moment have I had a salary. So far I have fought wholeheartedly for the GVN, even though in the past I was very wretched, didn't have a piaster, and my wife and children were entirely neglected (Cried.)

105. Who would you say is the most important person in your village, after the village chief?

The village police chief.

106. Are there other people whose opinions are particularly respected?

Only the village representative and the village police chief.

107. Which of these people sympathized or worked for the VC?

A very small and unworthy number did so because they were dissatisfied and another group because they had some relatives who regrouped. But later, after having attended many courses, they changed their minds. More exactly, the few people who joined the VC, did so only because they were so afraid of the GVN. Although they were not Communist sympathizers, the GVN arrested and beat them. Therefore, they were forced to join the VC.

108. Who would you say is the most energetic person in your village when it is a matter of getting things done - repairing roads, asking for government action, and so on?

Nobody.

109. Who do you think are the best informed people in your village about what is going on in the village?

Nobody, except the Village Security Service.

110. Who do you think are best informed about what is going on in Saigon? in Hanoi? What about the world outside of Vietnam who knows most about that?

Nobody I know of. There might be such people who are well informed but I don't know that there were.

111. When you lived in the village how did you usally learn about what was going on?

Those who had radio sets could learn it.

112. Did they tell other people what they had learned about?

Yes, they did. When I told you about Radio London, I meant Radio American (Note: VOA), and they only talked about the American aid.

113. What people did you talk to most frequently?

I only worried about ways to find a job to earn more money.

114. Who do you think are the best gossips in your village? (Interviewer put this question because he thought subject's answer to #109 was not satisfactory)

Only a few women and I think that's natural.

115. What is the latest information you have received about what is going on in Saigon?

I have heard that the Americans sent their troops here to help Vietnam to resist the Communists, but I can't recall the exact figure of those troops.

116. How did you receive this information?

Those who had radio sets told me this.

117. Did you see any reformed opera or other entertainment? Where?

From 1954 to 1957, I worked in a brickfield of a Catholic Sisters Order in Saigon at [redacted] street. Before leaving for Quang Ngai, my colleagues invited me to see a reformed opera in Saigon.

118. Here is a picture of a ladder. The bottom rung is numbered ten, and the top rung is numbered one. Now, let's say that the top rung represents the best life you can imagine, and the bottom rung represents the worst life you can imagine. Where, on this ladder, would you say that your life was before you left your village?

The bottom rung.

119. How about one year ago?

Always on the bottom rung. When I worked, I could eat; when I didn't work, I had to tighten my belt.

120. And how about five years from now. About where on the ladder do you think your life will be then?

The 6th rung, I hope. Even if I win 1,000,000VN$ in the lottery, I won't consent to climb to the top rung, but will distribute a part of it to those acquaintances of mine who are on the bottom rung like me. I will be, thereby, on the 6th rung and will be satisfied with it. Suppose that I climb up the top rung, who, among my wretched acquaintances, will dare come to me? I would rather have to share with them what I have and stay side by side with them than to put my life on the top rung of the ladder and not have any friends.

121. How would you describe the worst life you can imagine yourself living back in your village?

I would be killed.

122. Now try to describe the best life you can imagine for yourself. What would it be like?

First we must eliminate the Communists to have a real peace. Only then will we be able to have a happy life. I am not the only one who thinks this, everyone thinks like me. My only wish that I would like to have fulfilled as soon as possible is a small latania-covered hut to spare my children from bad weather. Then, we must wipe out the Communists in order to eat and sleep in peace. This is my fondest wish.

123. What comments or explanations were made about the attacks on North Vietnam by the population in your hamlet?

They approved those attacks and wondered why we didn't attack the North earlier when people in the North had come to attack us in the South.

124. You often mentioned the necessity of wiping out the Communists. Do you have any ideas about such operations?

I agreed with the GVN on the fact that in the western villages (in regard to the Quang Ngai city) it was impossible to eliminate the Communists because they could hide in the mountains. But I wondered why the GVN didn't mop up the eastern area running from Tu Nghia district to the sea where the VC hasn't and will never have any support. If only the GVN mopped up this eastern area, the villagers would suffer less hardships because the VC wouldn't be able to come to bother them.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

The subject was intelligent and cooperative, but starting from question #105, he became reluctant. From the beginning of the interview to the last minute, he refused to give his name because he feared that some local authorities would retaliate against him. Finally, he was convinced and showed the interviewer his identity card.

The interview was conducted in a friendly atmosphere. Regarding the Strategic Hamlets, both AGR-[redacted] and [redacted] answered almost in the same way.

NO. AGR- 21

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

1. Name of interviewer [redacted]

2. Name of subject [redacted]

3. Time and date of interview :
   From 4:40 pm to 5:15 pm on August [redacted] 1965
   From 8:00 am to 12:00 on August [redacted] 1965
   From 1:00 pm to 4:45 pm on August [redacted] 1965

4. Place of interview :
   Quang Ngai

5. Sex of subject : Male (XX) Female ( )

6. Age of subject : 33

7. Ethnic background : Vietnamese

8. Place of birth :
   hamlet [redacted]
   village [redacted]
   district Tu Nghia
   province Quang Ngai

9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :
   hamlet [redacted]
   village [redacted]
   district Tu Nghia
   province Quang Ngai

10. (a) Length of residence in last location : Thirty years
    (b) Who controlled the place of residence :
    GVN ( ) VC (X) Contested (XX) How long? [redacted] June [redacted]
    Since beginning of May 1965 Since March 1965

and sisters
years of age
ed
ree
rs of age :
or not with
or not with
or not with
or not with
or not with
refuge :
Very poor
No
Two brothers
When?) killed

NO. AGR - 21

11. Number of brothers (2) and sisters (2)

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : Two

13. Marital status : Married

14. Number of children : Three

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age : None

16. Parents with subject (1 *) or not with subject ( )
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject( ) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject (XXX) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject(3) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion : Buddhism

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : SDC

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation Very poor
(b) Landowner? No

20. Education :
illiterate ( )
literate (XX)
schooling completed :

21. Any relatives in VC : No

22. Any relatives in GVN : Two brothers (ARVN)

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by :
(a) French None
(b) GVN None
(c) VC None

24. When became a refugee : June [redacted] 1965

* Mother in law

AGR

INTERVIEW

22

THE RAND CORPORATION

[redacted]

STUDIES OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT
OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR-22

Date of Interview : August [redacted] 1965
Subject's Category : Refugee - June [redacted] 1965
Area of Resisdence : [redacted] village
Nghia Hanh district
Quang Ngai province

Comments : Of interest are subject's motivations for leaving his village (Q.#1), and his remarks on GVN refugee-aid (Q.102-104), psywar (Q.79-86), riot control gas (Q.39), and the presence of Americans in VN (Q.106-107).

1. How long have you been here ?

   Since July [redacted] 1965

2. Where did you come from ?

   NGHIA HANH district.

3. How did you get here ?

   The GVN district authorities headed me here.

4. What are your plans and prospects now ?

   As my wife and children are taking refuge in Nghia Hanh district, I only hope that I will be able to go home soon to live with my family and earn a living on the GVN side.

5. How large was your family ?

   I have two legitimate wives and nine children. I married my first wife when I was 18 years old. After nine years together, we didn't have any children. So I got married a second time; we had an official "second-class" marriage certificate. One year later, my second wife gave birth to my first child. My first wife didn't give up, she gave me another. Thus I now have nine children--five boys and two daughters, from my second wife, and one boy and one daughter, from my first wife.

6. Did all the members of your family live together before you came here or were some living apart ?

   We lived together. As a matter of fact I had a piece of land where I had built two houses. As all people in my hamlet took refuge in the district, my wives and children also came there with them to earn a living. For the time being, my first wife is in Quang Ngai city with her son to give a hand to her cousin who is being brought to bed. Later she will get back to the district to live with my second wife and children.

7. How big was your village ?

   There were [redacted] hamlets in my village and 303 families in my hamlet. Excluding my own crowded family, each other family comprised about six or seven people.

8. How long have you lived there ?

Since my birth.

9. How many families or persons have left your hamlet in the past years?

Twelve families have left for Land Development Centers or other hamlets. Only one moved to the mountains (tc join the VC).

10. What did most of the people in the village you just left do to earn a living ? Was the village properous or poor ? Were most people rich, medium or poor ?

Most of them were farmers. There were eight villages in Nghia Hanh district and my village, [redacted], was in the third place in regard to the economic situation of each village. Most people were well off.

11. What did you, your family, or your parents do to earn a living?

I was a barber; and my wives, tenant farmers.

12. What category did the Front assign to your family ?

Medium.

13. How much land did you own ? How much did your wives work ?

My father-in-law had 6 "sao" of ricefields and my wives also worked on other people's land. I didn't know how much.

14. Were there any changes in your family's economic conditions in the past years ?

We led a pretty hard life under the Resistance. Later under the GVN regime, we felt more at ease and sort of happier.

15. How much education have you had?

Elementary school.

16. Where did you go to school ?

Village public school.

17. Did your children go to school ?

Yes, they went to the village public school.

18. Do you plan to send your children to school here ?

My family's conditions are still unsteady and I can't think of it yet.

19. Was your hamlet a Strategic Hamlet ?

Yes, but it's now become a New Life Hamlet.

20. When was it organized ?

Four or five years ago.

21. Was it destroyed by the Front ?

In the past they often came to attack and burn it. Recently when they occupied it, they reinforced the stokade at many places; they also pulled down many others in order to move in and out more easily.

22. How did living in a Strategic Hamlet affect your life and earnings ?

There were small drawbacks and great advantages. On the one hand, the Strategic Hamlet hampered people's moves. Usually in the morning people wanted to go and till their ricefields very early, but the GVN authorities barred the exit until 7 or 8 AM to have people clean up the hamlet. Then, in the evening, people had to go back to the hamlet long before dark because the local authorities wanted to barricade the hamlet to guard it against the VC.
On the other hand, during the night people were able to sleep peacefully. The VC didn't come to bother them.

23. What did you like about it ? What did you dislike about it ?

To sum up, my family had no reason to dislike anything about it because we led a comparatively happy life on the GVN side. Because today the VC occupy our hamlet we of course have had to give up.

24. How did the GVN village and hamlet authorities behave ?

They were well thought of, and the people admired them. (Note: The subject emphasized that he was speaking of the GVN authorities just before the occupation of the VC--not the former ones.)

25. Who controlled your hamlet a year ago ?

The GVN.

26. Who controlled your hamlet when you left it for here ?

The VC.

27. How many hamlets in your village are now controlled by the Front ? How many are contested ?

[redacted] are controlled by the VC, and [redacted] contested.

28. Did the Front carry out any terroristic acts in your village or kill any of the people ?

Yes, they have hunted for GVN cadres to kill them but they didn't find them. They have arrested three people, one SDC man, the former village Office Secretary and one Village Consultative Council member, to send them to a re-education session.

29. When your hamlet was under Front control , how did the village feel about it ?

When the VC occupied my hamlet, 70% of the people who were still left in the hamlet were afraid of both sides. Six or seven days later, that 70% had left for the GVN side. Then there were only 30% left in the hamlet.

30. How could those seventy per cent of the people leave the hamlet ?

As the VC only stood guard at the main exits, and as the villagers were familiar with the layout of the Strategic Hamlet, the people fled one after another. Later, when the VC controlled the hamlet more tightly, people could always leave for the district at dawn. To my knowledge, at present there are only 10% of people left in the hamlet, instead of 30%.

31. Were you satisfied or dissatisfied with the Front administration and policies in your hamlet ?

If I had been satisfied I would have stayed there. The main reason why I was dissatisfied was the fact that the VC compelled me to gather all the belongings of those people who had left the hamlet and to burn their houses. How could I do it when most of those people were my friends? Another reason was that they compelled us all, even children, to dig tunnels. If we couldn't do it by day, we had to work at night--each of us for three hours. Those tunnels connected one hamlet to another. To sum up, we didn't have time to earn a living and furthermore we had to endure many [illegible] pressures, the GVN shot its

artillery, and we were so afraid that we had to take cover in trenches all day long. I sent my family to take refuge in the district a half-day before I fled.

32. Did your attitude and that of other villagers towards the the Front change during the past year ?

Before the VC occupation, living on the GVN side, nobody had sympathized with the VC. Only since they've occupied the hamlet have about 20% of people sided with them.

33. When your hamlet was under Front control, was it a Combat Hamlet ?

They immediately changed the name of my village to "Combat-Village". They dug more communication trenches, pitfalls for armored vehicles, and tunnels. The last were umcompleted. They set up roadblocks, destroyed roads, and so on. They called such operations, "the betterment of topography".

34. How did you feel about living in a Combat Village ?

I felt that I lived again under the nine-year Resistance.

35. What do you mean by this ?

I thought that I would certainly endure hardships as in those days before the armistice.

36. How did life in a Front Combat Village differ from life in a GVN Strategic Hamlet ?

In a Combat Village, people endured more hardships and it was difficult to move about because of roadblocks and so on. We couldn't move by bicycle. Sometimes at night people fell into those pits or obstacles.

37. How did the Front recruit people in your village for military duty ?

They hadn't recruited people for military duty yet. Only those who had escaped from GVN conscription were talked into joining the guerrillas. They were from sixteen to twenty years old.

38. Were you or any members of your family taken by the Front for re-education ?

No.

39. Were you afraid of being taken by the Front for "re-education"?

As its under-cover agents maintained that I had worked for the GVN, I knew that if I stayed there, I would be sent away for "thought reform." I was a Party member under the nine-year Resistance. Later I worked for the GVN. Then the latter decided that I dissociated myself from the Party. Just before the VC occupation, the GVN authorities planned to appoint me the position of a SDC man detailed to the District Police. But I hadn't been assigned yet when the VC occupied my village. With such a background the VC didn't assign me to a cadre's position but only compelled me to dig trenches and tunnels and so on. Now I think I was very lucky because if they'd trusted me I would've gone on working for them and by now probably my family and I would've killed by GVN operations. My son just came from the district and told me that recently when the GVN conducted its operation into the village the VC main Forces all fled and the villagers were driven by them into tunnels and trenches. The GVN captured more than 40 villagers. Many others were suffocated and vomitted blood and were killed by choking gas. First the ARVN called upon them to get out from those tunnels and trenches, but those people were compelled by the guerrillas and the VC cadres in charge of the Autonomous to stay in. Then the ARVN sent choking gas into those tunnels and trenches and a lot of people and children died unjustly.

40. Did the Front hold meetings with the villagers in your hamlet ? How often ?

Since they have occupied my hamlet, they called people together in a meeting every day, except only one night when they let us take a rest.

41. What did they say on each occasion and what was the occasion ?

They said that they had been regrouped in the North for nine or ten years. Now they come back here to build a just cause to expel the American imperialism and the GVN, to liberate the people and so on. Our uncle and the Party will eliminate all elements living in cities, and in a short time people in rural areas will have all advantages and so on.

42. What did the villagers think about what they said ?

I didn't know what they thought. When the VC told them a meeting was to be held, they immediately met together, and when the VC told them to applaud, they immediately shouted

"hurrah," etc. But later all of those people escaped and took refuge here. As for me, I've been here for two months already and I haven't seen them liberate Quang Ngai city yet (laughed).

43. Did the Front people say anything about the bombing of North Vietnam ?

Their Information Service only stated that the North had its well equipped Air Force. They only demonstrated the success of the Front through the Ba Gia battle, and didn't say anything about the bombing of North Vietnam.

44. Did you belong to any village organization or Farmer's Association while the Front was in control of your hamlet ?

They just organized the Executive Committee and couldn't gather the farmers yet. They just set up the Autonomous Committee and the Farmer's Association Executive Committee. They perfected the Inter-Family Groups to work for them.

45. To whom did you pay taxes during the past three years ?

To the GVN.

46. Did the Front carry out land distribution in your hamlet ?

When I was still in my hamlet they hadn't carried this out yet, but I think that now they've done it already. They seized the village-owned ricefields and the GVN cadres' belongings to distribute them to the farmers.

47. Tell me something about the history of your village during and after the Resistance period.

The two most typical forms under the Resistance were the "quantative equalization of production norms" and the "civilian workers." They always called upon democracy, but as a matter of fact there was no freedom at all with their one-party system. On the other hand, the most noticeable thing about the GVN side was private ownership. The betterment of people's living, e.g. the land development program, brought to many people a wonderful life.

48. What did people in your village think of the fall of the Diem regime ?

The Catholic people didn't say anything, but the Buddhists shouted "hurrah."

49. What did the Front tell the villagers ?

They said: Even the damned guy, who had governed for nine or ten years was killed. Now what can they do, those military guys who side with the Americans to exploit people? These last few times, they didn't even know who headed up the government in the South. Therefore they only called it "the GVN."

50. Do you know who heads up the present government ?

Yes, I know. I read newspapers just now, but I can't recall his name. Really I only know that he's a revolutionary military. I didn't pay attention to his name.

51. Did the GVN carry out any programs in your hamlet to help the villagers ?

Yes, They helped people without paddy after the last flood and typhoon. They also set up an agricultural credit bureau for the farmers'sake.

52. Was this agricultural credit program carried out under the Diem regime, or more recently ?

More recently. Since the military people have carried out the Revolution, people were very pleased because they didn't have to go to Land Development Centers anymore. So they could have some land and so on, even if they didn't go to those centers.

53. Why were people afraid of Land Development Centers ?

Vietnamese traditions; they didn't like to be far from their native country, despite the fact that some people who had gone to those centers became richer.

54. Did you or your family benefit from these program ?

Yes, When the last flood occurred, we received from the GVN authorities 800 VN$. 5m of clothing material, a mat, and a bag of rice (almost 100 kgs).

55. Were there any military or self defence forces stationed in your hamlet ?

Yes, there was a platoon of SDC.

56. How did they behave towards the villagers ?

The villagers sympathized with them.

57. Did GVN troops pass through your hamlet ? How often ?

They passed through our hamlet once every ten days or every fortnight, and never stayed in.

58. How did the villagers feel about the GVN troops ? Did they like them ? Were they afraid of them ? Did they hate them ?

They sympathized with them, as they did with the SDC men.

59. When your hamlet was controlled by the Front, how did the villagers feel about the activities of the hamlet and village guerrillas ?

They hated the childish guerrillas who prevented them from carrying their paddy or belongings away.

60. How did the villagers feel about Front troops stationed or passing through your hamlet ?

Some families who had regroupee-relatives sympathized with them. Besides, other people only tried to say "yes" all the time. If only their policy had changed, people would have approved of them. However, people have noticed that it looked like that of the nine-year Resistance. Therefore they were tired of it. They were afraid of them but they didn't dare say their thoughts out loud.

61. What have you heard about life in Front military units ?

Their soldiers related that they didn't have enough rice to eat, and they only drew twenty piasters per month. Also they had to save ammunition. However, they always said that everything they did was for their uncle, the Party, and the just cause.

62. What have you heard about Front successes, defeats, and losses?

They never said that they had lost, they always carried the day. For instance, they said that in Ba Gia battle, the GVN had lost many battalions. When I came here, some people on the GVN side told me that there were 800 VC who had been killed. This made me think of the time I was still in the hamlet when they told me they could seize the district before people could finish up a cigarette, and up to now

I have not seen them do anything. Besides, they said that in battle they had destroyed a few tanks of the ARVN and now there are certainly at most in Quang Ngai, three or five left. However, more recently, when I came here, I saw more than 30 tanks riding by. More exactly the VC had also their forces and weapons, but in rural areas when they spread propaganda, people only listened to them blindly. When People came here, they observed many things and then they could make a difference.

63. Do you have any close friends serving in Front military units? (Stressed that we are not interested in names ?)

All of my close friends sided with the GVN. Some people who were just my acquaintances because we lived in the same hamlet have joined the VC, but I never considered those people as my friends.

64. Are any members of your family or relatives serving in the ARVN or with the GVN ?

No.

65. Are any members of your family or relatives serving with the Front ?

No.

66. Has any fighting taken place near or in your hamlet ?

At 7 AM, on June [redacted], 1965, the VC came to my hamlet and opened fire, but nobody resisted them because all SDC cadres had disappeared already. The villagers evacuated. My family also left for [redacted] village for five days. On June [redacted] all people and my family went back to the hamlet. Later when I fled again I followed the second wave of refugees because many people had escaped before my family and there were many others who were still left in my hamlet.

67. Has your hamlet bombarded by artillery or aircraft ?

Since the VC have occupied the hamlet, we were bombarded by both artillery and aircraft many times. There are five or seven houses burned already.

68. What did you and the villagers do ?

We were bombarded twice by both artillery and aircraft,

and we took cover in trenches all day.

69. What damage was inflicted ? Did your family suffer any damage ?

My family didn't suffer anything. Before my escape, other people's houses were burned and or pulled down, but nobody was killed.

70. How did you feel about those attacks ?

I was waiting impatiently for the moment they came to an end so that I could find a way to escape. At that time I felt that would certainly die.

71. What did other villagers say about it ?

They were also frightenend of those attacks and some of them cried.

72. What did the Front people say about it ?

They said if we dug trenches, GVN aircraft and artillery wouldn't be able to do anything to us. I was tired of this kind of argument often used under the Resistance. I thought they had many ways to struggle against the GVN, but if they only knew how to dig trenches, it seemed their tactics were no different from those under the Resistance. I have noticed that nowadays, the war is not like the Resistance in the past. At that time the French people carried out not many attacks, but now the GVN is fighting very fiercely with its aircraft, artillery, tanks, and so on. I strongly believed that if I followed the VC, all of my family members would certainly die. It was certainly a good fortune for my family to be able to get here.

73. What kinds of attacks frightened you and the other villagers most ?

When aircraft attacked, we might probably take cover in trenches. But when the GVN did sweeps, if we took cover in trenches, we might as well be dead. As a matter of fact, we endured a hundred thousand hardships. The VC compelled people to stay in the hamlet to die with them because they were also afraid of those attacks. They took cover in trenches and never resisted the ARVN.

74. Did any persons in your hamlet join the Front because they resented those attacks ?

Even those who had their houses burned by bombs or shells

came here to live on the GVN side. They were indignant only because they wondered whether the houses of the cadres in charge of Autonomous weren't hit like theirs.

75. Did any villagers move to Front-controlled areas after those attacks ?

Nobody in my hamlet yet.

76. How did you feel about those attacks ?

When I was still in my village, I sort of blamed the GVN. But once I was here, each time I saw GVN aircraft being bound for Nghia Hanh district I rejoiced inwardly. I thought that even if my house could be burnt to the ground I would be pleased, provided my wife and children were here, and the GVN could expel the Communists in order that I would be able to go back to my hamlet to start a living anew. For example, when I was still in my village, I was afraid of tanks. When I was here, recently I was very pleased to see them. I only hope the GVN will eliminate the Communists soon.

77. Did the GVN warn your hamlet that it would be attacked ?

No, because if they did, the enemy would flee.

78. How did you and the villagers get news about what was going on ?

When the VC still hadn't occupied my hamlet, we listened to broadcasts or attended meetings of the Village Information Service, or we listened to our personal radios. When they occupied the hamlet, we did nothing but listen to what they said.

79. What had you heard about conditions in GVN-controlled areas before you left ?

They (theVC) said that the price of rice was very high, and foodstuffs, very expensive. Also people didn't have a place to sleep. When I came here the real conditions were completely different.

80. Were you told what the GVN would do for you and your family ?

I had heard that the GVN set up refugee centers and distributes rice to people.

81. What did you expect the GVN to do for you ?

The government would give me a job so that I would have some money to raise my children. Generally speaking all of the people hoped that the government would carry the day in order that they would earn a living peacefully.

82. What did you fear most when you were considering leaving your village ?

We were afraid of death. We came to the GVN side because as a matter of fact we wanted to be alive.

83. Did you hear broadcast from aircraft or read leaflets telling you to leave ?

Yes, I have heard broadcasts from helicopters and sometimes they dropped some leaflets which my children picked up and brought to me. I read them and learnt that the GVN called upon the villagers to be back with the GVN side.

84. Could you hear clearly what the broadcasts from aircraft said ?

The broadcasts were clear enough.

85. When did you hear them best ?

They didn't broadcasts at night.

86. What did you think of what they said ?

I thought that I had been with the GVN side for nine years. Now if I wanted to bring a happy life to my children I must try to go back to the GVN side.

87. Did you expect to leave your hamlet for a long or a short time ?

I guessed that the GVN would liberate the village at any rate. The fact that I'll come back to my hamlet sooner or later only depends on the GVN. The sooner the government brings security to my village, the sooner I'll go back to my hamlet.

88. Why did you decide to come to this place ?

I surrendered at the district office. Therefore the district chief sent me here to benefit from the Chieu Hoi program.

89. What property did you or your family bring with you ?

I only brought with me my clothes and my barber tool kit.

I only worried about ways to send my family here and I didn't think of my belongings.

90. Are you worried about the property you left behind ?

No, I don't think of it. If my property would be still there after the GVN forces had mopped up the area, so much the better, - otherwise, I pass. (Interviewer's Note: The subject used a special term inpoker: "I pass"; in Vietnamese, "pha"

91. Is there anyone in your village who will look after your property ?

Now they are all gone already.

92. What else would you have liked to have taken with you if you had been able to do so ?

Rice or pork. I give up, for the household goods.

93. What did the Front people in your hamlet say or do when you and the other villagers decided to leave ?

They said, if you're stupid enough to go to the district, don't complain if you will be killed when we will attack the district.

94. Did they try to stop you ? How did you avoid being stopped by them ?

They warned the guerrilla elements to stop the villagers. The latter could run away because in day time there were only a few guerrillas who stood guard casually. The Front troops had already withdrawn.

95. Has the Front threatened to punish you or other villagers for leaving the hamlet or for settling in a GVN-controlled area ?

They didn't threaten anybody. They said that towards those who had escaped and who came back to the hamlet the Revolution would be forgiving. This only concerned the villagers. As for the GVN cadres, if they could lay hands on them, they would certainly kill them immediately. Also they said that in regard to the SDC, if they could capture they would never kill them because they considered the SDC men as "nothing."

96. How many families left the village at about the time you did ?

The elderly people risked their lives and stayed there with their belongings. The youths who were left in the village joined the VC. They were not numerous--in my hamlet there were only about twenty.

97. Did your entire family come with you or did some members stay behind ?

My entire family came with me.

98. What do you think might happen to you if you went back to your hamlet?

I don't dare go now. Even if they forgive me and won't kill me, I'll certainly be sent in the mountains to be re-educated. I'll go back to my hamlet only when the GVN pacifies the area.

99. How long do you think the war will go on ?

Certainly for a long time. This is because there are VC forces everywhere now. If the GVN wanted to destroy them, they should spend at least a few months more. If the war will go on longer, my family endure many hardships and difficulties because we don't have any means of living.

100. Do you blame anyone for causing you to leave your village ?

The Communists, because the situation today originated with them. If there were no Communists, all of my family members would live together in our sweet home.

101. What do the other refugees say ?

They think of it in the same way I did.

102. What help did the GVN authorities give you and your family after you left your hamlet ?

My family has received from the district almost 20 kgs of rice.

103. Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the help you received ?

Such help is still not enough. However I understand the problem of the government which has to attend to so many people, I don't dare complain about it.

104. What did the GVN authorities tell you they will do for and your family ?

The district has promised that they would give us more rice and some butter. I think so far if we haven't received anything, it was only because the circumstances didn't allow them to keep their word yet.

105. Have any of the villagers who left with you moved back to your hamlet ?

I don't think they dare go back to the hamlet. But since I'm here (in the Chieu Hoi center), I don't know whether or not they've left the refugee centers for the hamlet.

106. What do you think the Americans are doing in Vietnam ?

They represent a friendly country which helps Vietnam in everything. I don't know exactly their aims.

107. Have you seen people from countries other than America (Koreans, Filippinos, etc.) who are helping the Vietnamese ?

Through newspapers and magazines, I learned there were more than twenty countries which are helping the Vietnamese, but I can't recall the name of each. The Communists spread propaganda that the Americans exploit the Vietnamese people, but I myself only saw that the Americans were helping the Vietnamese people in everything.

106. Here is a picture of a ladder. The bottom rung is numbered ten, and the top rung is numbered one. Now, let's say that the top rung represents the best life you can imagine, and the bottom rung represents the worst life you can imagine. Where on this ladder would you say that your life was before you left your village ?

On the 9th rung.

109. How about one year ago ?

On the 6th rung.

110. And how about five years from now. About where on the ladder do you think your life will be then ?

On the 4th rung, if the government will give me a hand, otherwise I will certainly drop back to the 9th rung.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

The subject was very cooperative and honest. This is an interesting case, but unfortunately we didn't have time to complete our interview. The writer suggests interviewing him again, if possible.

NO. AGR 22

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

1. Name of interviewer [redacted]
2. Name of subject [redacted]
3. Time and date of interview :
   From 8:00 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. on August [redacted] 1965
   From _____ to _____ on _____ 19 ___
   From _____ to _____ on _____ 19 ___
4. Place of interview :
   CHIEU HOI QUANG NGAI
5. Sex of subject : Male (x) Female ( )
6. Age of subject : 42 (1923)
7. Ethnic background : Vietnamese
8. Place of birth :
   hamlet [redacted]
   village
   district Nghia-Hanh
   province Quang-Ngai
9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :
   hamlet [redacted]
   village
   district Nghia-Hanh
   province Quang-Ngai
10. (a) Length of residence in last location : 42 years
    (b) Who controlled the place of residence :
    GVN ( ) VC (x) Contested ( ) How long? Since June [redacted] 1965

NO. AGR 22

11. Number of brothers ( ) and sisters (2)

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : _____

13. Marital status : Married (Two wives)

14. Number of children : Nine

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age : one

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject (1) *
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject( ) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject ( ) or not with subject (2) *
Children with subject(1) or not with subject (8) *

17. Religion : Buddhism

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : Barber and Chief of a Hamlet unit (GVN), which was in charge of the maintenance of order in the Hamlet.

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation Bourgeois.
(b) Landowner? No

20. Education :
illiterate ( )
literate (x) Elementary
schooling completed : _____

21. Any relatives in VC : No

22. Any relatives in GVN : No

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by :
(a) French
(b) GVN
(c) VC

24. When became a refugee : June [redacted] 1965 (Nghia-Hanh district)
July [redacted] 1965 (Chieu Hoi) Quang Ngai

* Nghia-Hanh district

AGR

INTERVIEW

23

THE RAND CORPORATION
[redacted]

STUDIES OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT
OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR- 23

Date of Interview : August [redacted] 1965

Subject's Category : Refugee - June [redacted] 1965

Area of Residence : [redacted] village
Tu Nghia district
Quang Ngai province

COMMENTS : Subject, a Catholic rich farmer, has been in turn pro-French, pro-Diem, and now pro-GVN. Understandably, he was been violently anti-Viet Minh and anti-VC. Of some interest are his comments on the government aid he and other refugees are receiving (Q. 98-101 and 110-111).

1. How long have you been here?

   Two months and three days.

2. Where did you come from?

   I came from [redacted] hamlet, [redacted] village, Tu-Nghia district in Quang-Ngai province.

3. How did you get here?

   I came here to get away from the Communists. When the Communists come they kill people and make our lives miserable. (How did you get here on foot, by vehicles, or what?) We came here by trucks. The trucks took us from Vi river to this center.

4. What are your plans and prospects now?

   I wish the Government would drive the Communists out so that I could go back to my village and continue to work on the land and support my family. (What do you want to do while waiting for the Government to bring back security to your village?) I have no plan at the present time. All I'm waiting for is the Government to get the Communists out so that we could work in peace and be able to support our families.

5. How big is your family?

   There are 15 members in my family.

6. Did all the members of your family live together before you came here, or were some living apart?

   We all lived together.

7. How big was your village? How many hamlets did it include?

   There were [redacted] hamlets in my village. (How many families were there in that village?) Over 2000 families. (How many families were there in your hamlet?) About 600 families lived in my hamlet.

8. How many families in your hamlet have left the village for the GVN-controlled areas?

   About 350 families from my village have left for the GVN-controlled area. (How many of these came from your hamlet?) From [redacted] hamlet alone, about 30 families have left the village.

9. Why did these families leave their village?

The people knew that when the Communists come they will oppress the people and make the people's lives miserable. For nine years while the people lived with the Communists, they knew how terrible the Communists were. Therefore, the people fled when they heard the Communists were coming. They would rather leave their homes and all they had and come out here, than to stay there with the Communists.

10. Did these families come out here together or did they come out here one by one?

They came out here together. When they heard the Communists were coming they left their village.

11. You said that you came out here by trucks, did all these families come out here by trucks, too?

When they heard the Communists were coming, the people ran here and there, creating much confusion. Some of them were able to get into the Government trucks; others had to go on foot.

12. How did you get the Government trucks to take you and others out here?

Because a priest here had informed us in advance of the coming of the Communists and he also sent the trucks to Vi river to get us out. He was afraid for the Catholics because he knew the Communists and the Catholics could not live under the same sky. He was afraid that when the Communists came they would kill the Catholics. So he sent the trucks to get us out.

13. How many Catholic families were there in your hamlet?

39 families.

14. What religions did other families belong to?

Some were Buddhists or Cao-Daists; others didn't belong to any religion.

15. Have all the Catholics left their village?

Yes, except one or two persons. These people had to stay behind because they were too sick or something. That was why they had to remain there.

16. Why did other families remain behind in their village?

Some didn't come out here probably because they had too much to loose. They didn't want to leave their homes and property; others because they sympathized with the Communists.

17. What was the proportion of the people in your village who sympathized with the Communists?

Many people in my village sympathized with the Communists.

18. In your opinion, why did these families want to see the Communists take over their village?

Either because they belonged to the poor-farmer class or because some members of their families had regrouped in the North.

19. What did most of the people in the village you just left do to earn a living?

Farming was their main occupation. They did other things too, such as trading.

20. How did the people in your village live?

They were mixed. Some were very poor, others had just enough to live on, a few were rich. The rich were very scarce. (How did the very poor live?) Generally speaking, during the nine years we lived under the Communists, the latter had impoverished us all. Under the Nationalists, although some people were poor, they didn't lack anything; they still had enough to eat, nor did they have to lead a very miserable life.

21. What did you do to earn a living?

I was a farmer. While the village was under GVN control, I was first the hamlet chief, then a member of the Village Council. I was an official for five or six years, then I retired.

22. Were there any changes in your or your family's economic conditions in the past years?

If the Communists hadn't taken over the village, we would have had enough to feed the family. Although my family is big I'm sure I can manage to feed them pretty well. We didn't lack anything.

23. Were you elected a member of the Village Council, or were you designated by Government decree?

Partly by popular vote and partly by Government appointment.

24. Was your hamlet a strategic hamlet?

Yes, the whole village was a strategic hamlet. (When was it organized?) In 1962. (Would you describe your strategic

hamlet?) The strategic hamlet was built with the help of the entire village. The villagers chipped in with such things as bamboo spikes, so the village could be surrounded with bamboo spikes; then, later, the Government contributed barbed wire. (Has anyone been moved from the outside to the strategic hamlet?) No. I have seen in other places that many families who had been living in far-away areas were moved into the strategic hamlets. In my village, although there were one or two families who didn't live in the hamlet, the Government didn't force them to come into the strategic hamlet. (Was your strategic hamlet destroyed by the Front?) I haven't been to my village so I couldn't see it with my own eyes. But according to others who came out here after we had left, the Communists had destroyed this and that; they had dug trenches big and small all around to protect themselves against the GVN soldiers. The bamboo had all been cut in small parts and planted around. (When did the VC first come to your village?) On [redacted] June 1965. That was the first time the VC came to the village. (How many of them came that time -- do you remember?) I don't know. I heard much commotion, screams, and cries. I suppose there must have been a great number of them. On the other hand, it could also be that the VC per se were not many. The villagers, however, those who sympathized with the VC, these later joined in when the VC came to the village. They came to the village headquarters and took over control of it.

25. Before the VC came, did you know who in your village sympathized with the VC?

I didn't know. I suspected some. I suspected some because they made mistakes, and those who were arrested informed us. They told us that, of those who had " gone to the mountains," some were dead and others had joined the VC when the latter took over the village. (How did you know who in your village sympathized with the VC?) I only suspected some of them, because it isn't easy to understand people. I suspected some families who either had members regrouped in the North or had " gone to the mountains ".

26. How did living in a strategic hamlet affect your life and earning?

I think the Government was following a good policy by organizing the strategic hamlet. The Communists were using guerrilla warfare and the strategic hamlet was an effective way to stop the guerrillas from setting up ambushes to attack the GVN soldiers. (Did living in the strategic hamlet impede your work?) I didn't not find

any trouble living in the strategic hamlet. Those who were for the GVN were for the strategic hamlet, but those who were for the VC were against the strategic hamlet because they wanted to go in and out at odd hours, to leave and to come back without anybody knowing. As for the GVN people, they wanted to stop the Communists from coming.

27. What did you like about the strategic hamlet?

What I liked about it was that it helped us to stop the Communists' infiltration, sabotage, and terroristic acts against innocent people.

28. What did you dislike about the strategic hamlet?

Nothing.

29. Did your strategic hamlet have armed forces to defend it?

Under Mr. Diem's regime, our strategic hamlet was well guarded day and night; there was complete security. But after the revolution that broke out on November 11th, 1965, the security there has been relaxed. When there was the flood, the damages were not well repaired, and the security was lax. (Did your strategic hamlet have armed forces to defend it?) Yes. There were Combat Youths, SDC, and so on. (How many of them were there?) When the strategic hamlet was first organized, the Combat Youths and the SDC or (in one word) the entire population joined in to build it. Each family was given a certain amount of work they were required to do.

30. In your opinion, why would people in your village rather work for the Communists?

I don't know how the Communists made use of propaganda and got the people to support them. On the other hand, there are those in the village right now who wanted to come out here but were stuck.

31. Did the GVN carry out any programs in your hamlet or village to help the villagers?

When the strategic hamlet was first organized, the Government helped us with rice. (Did the Government do anything to help the villagers a year ago?) During the flood, the Government helped us somewhat.

32. How many schools were there in your village?

One. There was an elementary school in the village.

33. How did the GVN village and hamlet authorities behave?

They were nice to the people. But only the GVN people thought these officials were nice; those who sympathized with the Communists thought otherwise. They thought these officials were oppressing them. They didn't like us when we told them the truth. The GVN people agreed with us, while the Communist people resented us.

34. Who controlled your hamlet a year ago?

It was completely under the control of the GVN. No Communists could come in and out of that village a year ago. (How many hamlets in your village are now controlled by the VC?) The entire village is under the control of the Communists.

35. Before the Communists took over the control of your village, did they carry out any terroristic acts in your village or kill any of the people?

When they came, they took over the control of the village headquarters, and then they looked for the GVN cadres, but they had left. They killed two persons : one was a militia and the other was a guard. (You are talking about the VC's activities on June the [redacted] right?) Yes. (Did the VC carry out any terroristic acts before that date?) No.

36. You mentioned earlier that you knew how it was to be living under the Communists. Would you tell me how your life really was under them?

I lived with the Communists for nine years whether I liked it or not. When the country was divided in two and the South was returned to the GVN, my village came also under the control of the GVN. (How did you find your life under the Communists?) I found life miserable. Whatever we produced, we had to pay to the Communists under the disguise of taxes, while we had to starve -- to eat bad food. All the rice we got from our land we had to carry to the Communists; we also had to sell our land so we could have enough to pay taxes.

37. Did all the people in your village live under the communists during the nine years you just mentioned?

Yes. (If they knew how the Communists treated people, why do they still prefer the Communists to the GVN?) While we were under the control of the Communists, some of the villagers worked for them or joined their armed forces. These are the people who wanted the Communists to come to the village.

38. Would you say that during the nine years under the VC, the Communist people had more privileges than the population as a whole?

Yes, the VC gave their cadres all types of privileges. These cadres got help from the VC while we were oppressed. It also happened that we belonged to the better class than they.

39. Is your village a combat hamlet now?

According to what we heard, my village has already become a combat village. They dug trenches and planted booby traps.

40. How many people in your village have left to enlist in the GVN armed forces?

There were too many of them and I cannot remember their number.

41. How many people in your village have left to join the VC?

About 45 persons have " gone to the mountains". (What was their age group?) They were from 20 upward.

42. Did the VC come to your village and force the people to join them?

No.

43. In your opinion, why did these young men join the VC?

Because these young men have either brothers or relatives regrouped in the North. They wanted to follow the same steps.

44. Did the VC come to your village to make propaganda?

They showed up secretly during 1963 and 1964 in the village.

45. Were you or any members of your family taken by the Front for "re-education"?

No.

46. What do you know about the VC?

In my opinion and according to what I have heard, the VC are the Communists; they live for their Party, take away the property of the rich to put in the common fund of their Party; there is no private ownership; everything is under the control of the Party.

47. Who told you about the VC?

I lived nine years under the Communists, and I knew how they treated people. They wanted to impoverish the entire population, to lower the standard of living of the few, to confiscate all land and property for the benefit of their Party.

48. To whom did you pay taxes during the past three years?

To the GVN. (How much?) We paid 40 or 50 piasters per year on the land we owned. (Did the VC ever come to your village for collection?) No. (How did you and your family feel about the taxes you paid to the GVN?) It was nothing compared to what we had to pay to the Communists during the nine years we lived under their control. We had to pay them so much rice that what was left after taxes wasn't enough to feed my family. We worked hard then, but the fruits of our labors were to feed the Communists.

49. Did the Communists carry out land reform during the nine years you lived with them?

They hadn't had time to confiscate our land and distribute it to the poor farmer. However, we had to rent the land to the poor farmer and reduce the rent payment to the minimum. After the rent reduction the landowner got very little. (Did you have to rent the land to the poor farmer?) Yes. I had to rent only two or three " sao " of land to the poor farmers. Because the members of my family could work on the land, the Communists didn't force us to rent the land out. (Did your family get any assistance from the Communists then?) Nothing at all. We had to pay taxes to them. They didn't help us because we belonged to the well-to-do category. They helped only the poor farmers.

50. How long had the VC been in your village before you left for this center?

As soon as they came, I left the village.

51. Did your family work on the land or rent it to others?

We worked on the land ourselves.

52. How much rent did the landlord get from his tenant farmers?

After the harvest, the rice was divided into three parts. The landowner took one part, the tenant farmer the second part, and the third part was to pay for the expenses : such as if the farmer had to hire people to irrigate the land, and so on. The landlord took his part and the rest

was in charge of the tenant farmer. When we were in our village we had a good life. We didn't lack rice or food. Since we came out here we've had to do without many things. My children had to work as hired laborers or whatever work they could find so that we can buy more rice to feed the family. Our lives have become more difficult, but these difficulties we're now facing can't be compared to the ones we would have to live with if we'd stayed behind in our village. We are fortunate to be able to come out here. Furthermore, it gives us hope to know that the Government is trying to help us. We were given rice; although the rice we got was not adequate, we did get some. The Government also found this place to shelter us. Also we got some vegetables. I also heard that the Government was making a list of all the refugees' names and that we would get our rice and money everyday. Although our lives are harder, we're happy to get away from the Communists. With the help of the Government, our lives will become easier afterwards.

53. Did the district or province chief often come to visit your village?

The province chief has never come to our village.

54. How often did the ARVN come to your village?

They often came last year because there was security in our village then. (What did they do when they came to your village?) They came down to patrol or to search the village. My village also had the Combat Youths and the SDC.

55. What did the people in your village think when they heard that Diem had been overthrown?

After the Revolution, the former GVN cadres were demoted and oppressed. Also the Communists incited the villagers to beat or kill these GVN cadres. This kind of treatment has lowered the morale of those staunch anti-Communists. The Communists took that opportunity to infiltrate their own people into the GVN ranks, such as the Combat Youths and the SDC so that when the chance came they could take over the village. Since the Revolution, the security relaxed.

56. What did the Front tell the villagers about Diem?

I don't know, because at that time the communists didn't dare to come to the village. They did come to [redacted] and [redacted] villages which were close to ours. (What did the people think about Diem?) The people knew that Diem was anti-communist to the utmost.

57. What have you heard about the present government and its policies?

It is hard to know what the people are thinking. They may say one thing but inwardly think differently. (What do you, yourself, think about this government?) It's hard to judge the Government, because we are at war.

58. How much help did the people in your village get from the Government during the flood?

We got rice and flour. (How much did each family get?) It depended. A family whose house has been destroyed by the flood got 120 piasters. Rice and flour were for the poor. (How many people in your village were killed during the flood?) None. (How many houses were destroyed by the flood?) I don't know the number of houses damaged by the flood because I was a simple citizen then.

59. How many men were there in the Combat Youths and the SDC in your village?

There were 46 persons in the Combat Youths and 36 in the SDC. (Did the SDC come from your village?) They come from different villages. They took men from this village to other villages and vice versa.

60. How did the Combat youths and the SDC behave toward the villagers?

Militarily speaking, the SDC were nice to those who were on the right path and were strict to those who took the wrong path. (Did they ever come to the people's houses and steal chickens and ducks or pick up the fruit without the owner's permission?) That never happened.

61. How did the people feel about the SDC and the Combat Youths?

If these people were on the GVN side they would treat the SDC nicely, but if they were for the Communists they complained a lot about the SDC.

62. What did you hear about life in Front military units?

According to what I've heard from the people, the VC lead a very miserable life; they sleep in the open, rain or shine; they live in the jungle; they don't have enough food to eat; they have scant clothing -- a pair of shorts and a shirt (Where did you hear that?) From the people. They've seen with their own eyes that when a VC was killed he had only a pair of shorts and a shirt on, and some of them had only a pair of shorts on.

63. What have you heard about Front successes, defeats, and losses?

I have not seen with my own eyes, but I've heard other people talking. In my own opinion, the VC have encountered

many defeats. The reason I say that, is the Communists are considered a poisonous snake by the people. When the people see a poisonous snake they will try to kill it. Therefore, the Communists will be defeated at the end. If it's an inoffensive snake, the people will just take a look and then go their way. The Communists are very cruel, for during the nine years the people lived under them, they'd made the people all miserable.

64. Are any members of your family or relatives serving with the Front?

No. None of my friends or the members of my family work for the VC.

65. You said you had two brothers working for the GVN, what kind of work do they do?

One of them is a teacher, and the other is a member of the District Council. (Did any of your brothers often come to visit you?) They came often, but since 3 June they've stayed out here too.

66. Has your hamlet been attacked?

The GVN soldiers have conducted two mopping-up operations in my village. (Do you remember the dates of these operations?) The first was [redacted] June. The second on [redacted] June. (Did the VC take over the control of the other villages in the vicinity of your area?) They came, overran the headquarters, and then left.

67. Has any fighting taken place near your village?

Yes. Every now and then there was fighting in those villages. There was one exception : [redacted] village; they came and took over the control of the village. The GVN came to disloge them. They left when the GVN was there, but when the GVN left they came back again. (How far is it from [redacted] to your village?) The two villages were separated by a river. (When did the VC take over the control of [redacted] village?) In March 1963.

68. Was your hamlet or village bombed by aircraft?

Not yet.

69. How were you informed that the VC were coming to your village that day?

The Government didn't inform us, but the Catholics knew about the coming of the Communists because they were informed by their priest. We were told to leave the village at once before the Communists came. The Catholics are the enemy of the Communists; therefore they had to leave.

70. How did the people in your village get news about what was going on? Were there any radios in your hamlet or village?

Some had radios and they listened to them. Others got the news by word-of-mouth from others.

71. Have you and your family been to refugee centers other than this one?

No.

72. What did you expect the Government to do for you when you came out here?

First the Government gave each person three kilos of rice. But afterwards each of us got one kilo.

73. Were you told what the GVN would do for you and for your family?

We knew nothing about the Government's assistance when we left our village. We just picked up our things and fled from the Communists. We didn't foresee what would happen to us once we came out here. We're very grateful to receive whatever help the Government gives us, such as rice and vegetables. Personally, I thought to myself that we'd get help from the Government, because once we fled the Communists to come out here, this fact alone shows that we're on the Government's side.

74. When did you or your family decide to leave your hamlet to come here?

We decided to leave on [redacted] June, 1965. We had made up our mind to leave our village even before the Communists came, but we were too attached to the place where we were born. In addition to that, the situation of the village then was not black; the village was still under the control of the GVN. Furthermore, we wanted to sell our property, but there was no buyer. (Why did you decide to leave your village even before the Communists came to your village?) I had decided to leave before the Communists came because I saw that the Communists were about to take over [redacted] and [redacted] villages. Our village falling into their hands was only a matter of time. We also knew we couldn't live with the Communists. Therefore we should leave before they came, for fear when they came we wouldn't be able to get out.

75. How long before the Communists actually came to your village, were you informed about their coming?

We were informed on [redacted] June. (Were you told what day the Communists would come?) No. We were told by our priest that we should leave the village that same day. (How did the priest inform you of the VC's coming?) The news was given to the local Catholic officials who, in turn, spread it around to

other Catholic families in their hamlets. (Were people of other religions informed about the coming of the Communists?) Some people of other religions trusted us, and they also came out here. Generally speaking, the Catholics left their village on 2 June.

76. Why did you tell me you came out here on the 3rd?

I also left the village on the [redacted] But the communists actually took over the control of the village on the [redacted]

77. What preparations did you and your family make when you decided to leave the village?

We made no preparations.

78. What did you fear most when you were considering leaving your village?

When I left the village I thought to myself it wouldn't be long before we'd be back to the village. We didn't have time to gather our possessions. We left with whatever we had on us, hoping that somehow we could manage to feed the family until the day when the village was pacified and we could come back and continue to work on the land.

79. Did you hear broadcasts from aircraft or read leaflets telling you to leave?

No.

80. Have you heard of the Chieu-Hoi program?

I was a citizen... (I only want to know if you have heard of the program.) No.

81. Did you expect to leave your village for a long or short time?

I thought then that we'd be away for not more than ten days. Although the Communists burst in violently, they'd have to run away when the GVN soldiers came for the mopping-up operations. That was why we didn't bring out anything with us. We just fled for our lives.

82. Why did you decide to come to this place?

When we arrived here, there was a Committee who took us in hand and showed us this place to stay. We've been staying here since [redacted] June.

83. What property did you or your family bring with you?

When we left we were able to bring with us two cows for ploughing, and whatever we had on ourselves. We left home

all our other possessions such as clothes, food, rice, sauce, squash, and so on. We left them all at home when we came out here. All we brought here was a pair of cows.

84. Are you worried about the property you left behind?

My property is the result of my sweat and tears. We worked hard for it and I do regret it, but I'm not overcame by the thought of missing it. I know that they (the VC) have taken over my house; they've moved everything out of the house -- rice, sauce, food -- in one word they have stolen everything. According to the villagers who came out here after we'd left, there was nothing left in our houses. As for our houses, they used them to keep their prisoners. The houses have become more like cattle sheds. (Note: this entire answer is based on supposition and hearsay.)

85. What did they tell you about the lives of the people who remained in the village?

Their lives have become extremely difficult. During the day they went out to work, but at night they were required to dig trenches for VC or to attend meetings. Each person was required to dig nine or ten meters of trenches. Now the people are starting to feel the yoke of the VC.

86. Do you know of anyone in your village who wants to come out here now?

In my opinion, if anyone wants to come out here he should have left the village a long time ago. Those who still remain there will not come out. (Do you mean these people don't want to come out here or that they can't?) In my opinion, it's not difficult to leave the village even now. I don't know why they don't get away.

87. What else would you have liked to have taken with you if you had been able to do so?

Had I known that the VC would stay this long, I would have brought rice and fish sauce out here with me, so that we could have had food to feed the family. But even if we were able to go back now, there's nothing left to salvage. They've cleared our houses out of everything.

88. Did the VC threaten to punish you or other villagers for leaving the hamlet or village or for settling in a GVN-controlled area?

I haven't heard the Communists' threat, but in my opinion those who have left the village and then go back will be given much trouble by the VC. The VC will arrest them for ten or fifteen days and may even kill them.

89. How many families came out at the same time with you?

39 families from the entire village came out at the same time with me.

90. Were there any young men remaining in the village when you left?

The number of young men remaining in the village was quite large. Very few of them left for this center. (Why did these young men want to remain in the village?) In my opinion, some of these young men have relatives regrouped in the North; others have relatives who have "gone to the mountains". They therefore preferred to stay in the village. (Do you know how many of them stayed in the village?) I can't know.

91. Did your entire family come with you, or did some members stay behind?

We all came out here.

92. Did any of your relatives stay in the village?

About five families still remained in the village.

93. What do you think might happen to you if you went back to your hamlet?

I think I would be penalized by the VC -- there's no denial of that. I had been a hamlet chief and then a member of the Village Council while the village was under the control of the GVN. I would be considered by the VC as a former GVN cadre and they would not let me live in peace before they'd settled the account with me.

94. Before the VC took over control of your village, had you met a VC or talked to one?

No.

95. How long do you think the war will go on?

I am not in a position to answer that question. I'm only a simple citizen and my level of understanding doesn't permit me to discuss political events deeply.

96. Which side do you think is winning?

I believe the GVN, which represents the just cause, will eventually defeat the Communists. (But at the present moment, which side do you think is winning?) The GVN soldiers are armed with modern weapons, so they must win in the end. (The Communists have taken over your village, don't you think that it is one of their successes?) It's only a temporary success, for the GVN soldiers will come any time to drive them away.

97. Do you blame anyone for causing you to leave your village?

I blame the Communists for breaking up my family, for bringing poverty to my family and my children. When we were in our village, although we weren't rich, we had a good life. We didn't have to starve. I blame the Communists for all this.

98. Whom do you think the other refugees blame?

I think those who are in my situation agree. Many of them came out here empty-handed and now live on the help they get from the Government. They earn their living, piaster by piaster. Many of them are really destitute because they were unable to bring anything with them when they came out.

99. What help did the authorities give you and your family after you left your hamlet?

200 kilos of rice. (Money?) No money, but we got a bucket-and-a-half of cooking oil and vegetables. (Subject meant to say 200 grams of rice.)

100. Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the help you received?

I see that the Government is trying to help us, but the assistance we get from them is not enough. My family gets a kilo of rice once every seven or ten days; this isn't enough to feed my family. In addition to that, we get no money and no fish sauce. We still lack many things. If the Government could give each of us 500 grams of rice per day, then we would have enough to eat. As it stands now, we have to buy more rice to feed the family because the rice we receive from the Government isn't adequate. (How much does one kilo of rice cost here?) Eight and one-half piasters.

101. What did the GVN authorities tell you they would do for you your family?

So far, we've received rice, and that is all. But two days ago there was a Committee who came here and told us we should make up a list of names of all those who lived here so that we could receive rice and other food daily. (How much did they say you would get?) They haven't told us that. They only told us to list the names.

102. Do all these people come from the same village?

No, they come from different villages. Some come from Tuy An, Tuy-Hoa, and Mo-Duc villages.

103. What did you plan to do when you left your village?

since you came here?) The people from the medical team came every now and then, but their medicine wasn't effective. (Were they Vietnamese or Americans?) Every now and then the Americans came, but the Vietnamese came more often. They didn't come yesterday or to-day.
(What is the most frequent illness you have here?) Diarrhea.

111. What is the most urgent need on your part and on the part of your family?

All those who left their homes to come out here wish for only one thing -- that is, the Government will destroy the Communists so they can go back to their village to work. They need the security they believe should be given to them by the Government. Then comes rice and other food which we haven't received enough of from the Government. The refugees lack everything, and they hope the Government will help them.

112. While you were in your village, did you meet with your friends frequently?

I did meet my friends for a chat or for a few moments of relaxation. Those who were my friends were also on the GVN side; they were of the same mind as I. I couldn't possibly associate with the communists. (Were most of your friends Catholics?) Some were non-Catholics but they were nice. As for the Catholics in my hamlet, we met togetner often.

113. Could you talk to your friends freely about all matters, or were there any subjects you shied from discussing?

To tell the truth, I didn't have many friends, because I was a farmer. If I didn't do this or that, I'd be showing my children how to work. So I didn't have much spare time to go around visiting friends.(What subjects did you discuss when you met your friends?) We were farmers, so when we talked to one another we used to mention our work, etc. We didn't discuss national events because we were considered the former GVN cadres (under Diem's regime). When the Revolution broke out, the people became suspicious of us. They accused us of this and that. So when we met with other, we talked only about our work.

114. Was there any danger that if you criticized the VC, it would be reported to the VC?

We didn't dare say anything, because we lived in fear. (Why?) Because after the Revolution, the Catholics were accused of killing off people and stuffing them in bags and throwing them in the river. These stories were told in order to incite hatred for us. (Who said that?) The people, the

I had no plan. My sole purpose when I left the village was to get away from the VC.

104. Do you want to stay here, go back to your hamlet or move elsewhere.

My only wish is that the Government will pacify my village so that I can take my family back and continue to work on the land. We will live on the land -- on farming and whatever else we grow.

105. Have you heard about or from the people who stayed behind in your hamlet or village?

I heard that the young men joined their (VC) armed forces, the women guarded the village, and the farmers worked on digging the trenches and planting bamboo traps.

106. Did anyone try to persuade you or the other refugees to go back to your hamlet or village since you came here?

No.

107. Did you tell members of your family or friends who stayed behi to come out and join you?

It is up to the individual to decide to come out here or to stay there. If they wanted to come out here, they should have been here already. If they are not here by now, no amount of persuasion will make them come out.

108. Have any of the villagers who left with you moved back to your hamlet or village?

No.

109. Have you seen any Americans?

I've seen them coming here often. (What do they do when they come here?) They come to visit us. (What have you heard about them?) I heard people say that the Americans were here to help Vietnam fight the Communists. They are here to help us. The Communists have taken over North Vietnam and they're about to swallow the South. That's why the Americans come here to help us fight the Communists. (Who told you that?) I heard that from the educated people. They told us about that. I also heard it from the simple people. (What did the Front say about the Americans?) I don't know because I haven't met any of them.

110. Have you seen any foreigners other than Americans?

No. I have a child who is very sick. He has diarrhea. He has a bowel movement frequently. Will you please ask to the Americans who came here with you to give us some medicine. He is very sick.(Haven't you gotten any medical treatment

villagers who sympathize with the Communists. They accused the Catholics of those crimes so they could divide us and take over the control.

115. After the fall of the Diem government, how were the Catholics in your village treated?

The Catholics in my village hadn't been badly treated yet, but in the village next to ours, five or six Catholics had been killed. (Who killed them?) The VC. (What did these Catholics do before they were killed?) They were either SDC, policemen, or members of the Village council.

116. Were you afraid the people in your village might report you to the VC if you criticized them?

I knew how I felt toward the VC. I hated them, but I didn't make a case out of my hatred for them, because they might have underground agents living in the village. At night they might come into the village and kill me.

117. Could you talk freely to all members of your family?

I always told my children and other members of my family that we could never live with the Communists. They had known how it was to live with the Communists during the nine years under their rule. The Communists had broken up my family, thrown away our wealth, and made our lives miserable.

118. Were there any other families that you could completely trust?

I could trust Mr. [redacted] (What did he do?) He was a policeman under Mr. Diem. Then there were Mr. [redacted] and Mr. [redacted] (Why did you trust these persons?) Because they were 100 o/o for the GVN; they were anti-Communists. They could lay down their lives to fight the Communists. So I trusted them.

119. Did other families or individuals help you or your family when you were in trouble?

My family has never been in great trouble yet, so we didn't get much help. During the flood, my family escaped the damages. The Government only helped those who were in need. We weren't in need or starving. (What I mean is, if a family in your village had gotten into trouble, would other families in the village come to help that family?) Yes, other families would have come to help. Take, for example, during the flood when a home was swept away. The young men in the village would come to help that family in rebuilding the home, and the Government gave such a family 120 piasters. Generally speaking, there was side-taking among the people. The GVN people would only help those on their side, and the families with members regrouped in the North would stand aside -- though they wouldn't say anything -- because they were enemies.

120. Who would you say was the most important person in your village, after the village chief?

In my opinion, the underground agents were the most important persons, because they knew the ins and outs in the village. They could take the Communists into the village at night to arrest people. So I think the underground agents were the most important persons.

121. Who would you say was the most energetic person in your village as far as getting things done?

As I saw it, Mr. [redacted] was the most energetic person in the village. (Who was he?) He was the village chief, and when the Communists took over the village, he came out here too.

122. Who was the person most respected in your village?

The GVN people respected those who were for the GVN, but the Communist people didn't. The communists were not of the same mind with us, and they didn't like those on the GVN side. Mr. [redacted] was straight anti-Communist. He was well-respected by those who were on his side, but the Communists hated him, and if they could have, they would have killed him.

123. Who do you think the Communists in your village respected most?

I didn't know their thoughts. I couldn't know who they respected most in the village. When something had to be done in the village the Communists would cooperate with us, they wouldn't stand idly by. The order came from the province to the district, and then from the district to the village level. The Communists wouldn't balk at these orders. They'd carry out these orders as required of them.

124. Who do you think were the best-informed people in your village (hamlet) about what was going on locally?

The village chief. He was the best-informed of what was going on in the village. He knew the people. (What kind of news was he well-informed about?) I don't know what type of news he was informed about but, in my opinion, he was the village chief. Therefore, he must know what was going on in the village.

125. When you lived in the village how did you usually learn about what was going on?

I didn't have a radio, so I couldn't listen to the news. (Suppose something happened in the village, how did you know about it?) When the Communists came, I heard them and fled. (How did you learn about the fall of Mr. Diem?) The

hign Government echelons sent cadres to our village to inform us about it.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS :

Subject was cooperative but somewhat reserved. The reason for his reticence was because the interview was conducted in full view of many other village officials with whom he had associated in the past. Periodically, the subject would turn to one of the others and ask him to verify the facts, or an outsider standing nearby would volunteer subject's statements.

Subject was sincere. There was no bitterness in his voice or attitude, only weariness, although the conditions in which he and his family was living left much to be desired. He was obviously relieved that he had been able to escape the Communists and he expected little help from the Government.

Subject fled from his village the day before the VC took over. He was therefore uninformed about the present contitions of his village and its remaining people. Whatever statements he made on this was from hearsay..

NO. ACR 23

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

1. Name of interviewer [redacted]

2. Name of subject [redacted]

3. Time and date of interview :
   From 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. on August [redacted] 1965
   From _____ to _____ on _____ 19 ___
   From _____ to _____ on _____ 19___

4. Place of interview :
   Refugee Camp in Quang Ngai

5. Sex of subject : Male (X) Female ( )

6. Age of subject : 43

7. Ethnic background : Vietnamese

8. Place of birth :
   hamlet [redacted]
   village [redacted]
   district Tu Nghia
   province Quang Ngãi

9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :
   hamlet [redacted]
   village [redacted]
   district Tu Nghia
   province Quang Ngai

10. (a) Length of residence in last location : _____
    (b) Who controlled the place of residence :
    GVN ( ) VC (X) Contested ( ) How long? June [redacted]

NO. AGR 23

11. Number of brothers (2) and sisters (1)

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : 2

13. Marital status : married

14. Number of children : 8

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age : 3

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject( ) or not with subject (X)
Wife with subject (X) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject(X) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion : Catholic

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : Hire man

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation Rich farmer class (during Resistance)
(b) Landowner? 3 " mau "

20. Education :
illiterate ( )
literate ( )
schooling completed : 1st year in High School

21. Any relatives in VC : No

22. Any relatives in GVN : 2 brothers

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by :
(a) French no
(b) GVN no
(c) VC no

24. When became a refugee : June [redacted]

AGR

INTERVIEW

24

THE RAND CORPORATION
[redacted]

STUDIES OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR-24

Date of Interview	:	August [redacted] 1965
Subject's Category	:	Refugee - May [redacted] 1965
Area of Residence	:	[redacted] village, Tu Nghia district, Quang Ngai province

1. How long have you been here?

I have been here over two months.

2. Where did you come from?

I came from [redacted] village.

3. How did you get here?

I took the Lambretta to come out here.

4. Did you get into much trouble trying to get out here?

There was no trouble at all because my hamlet had not been taken over by the VC and the SDC were still stationed there when I came out. I left the village when the VC attacked [redacted] and [redacted] hamlets which also belonged to [redacted] village. These hamlets were situated on the other side of the rail tracks and we lived on this side of the rail tracks. I took the Lambretta to come out here.

5. How far was it from your hamlet to the hamlets where the VC attacked?

About two kilometers.

6. What are your plans and prospects now?

When I heard the VC were coming to those hamlets I left the village immediately. Right now, I do not know what I will do. I do not have any money with me. I think I will stay here hoping the Government will help us and later I will find a place to live. I do not dare to go back to the village now, I will wait until the Government has pacified the area and there will be complete security before I go back to the village. After the partition, when the GVN took over, I helped with the reconstruction of the village and became a village official for three years and later I retired. Furthermore, under the Viet Minh many of our religious followers had been martyred by the Viet Minh. I am afraid this time when they come back they may not let us live in peace, they may take their revenge on us. This thought made me decide to take my wife and children to come out here. We will stay here in this Holy Land. If they (VC) came here and killed us,

we would much prefer to be killed in this Holy Land. We will not flee to another place.

7. How large was your family?

There were eight members in my family. My parents, my wife, four children and myself.

8. What did you do when you were a village official?

First I was a hamlet chief and then a policeman, a security agent.

9. How long did you stay in these positions?

Three years.

10. What happened that your brother was killed by the Viet Minh?

We are a martyred family. My younger brother was killed by the VC because he was a Caodaist. Furthermore, I had worked for the Government after the GVN took control of the South.

11. When was your brother killed?

In 1943, right after the Revolution broke out.

12. How old was he then?

He was 18.

13. Why was he killed by the Viet Minh?

After the Japanese coup, my brother helped to rebuild our religion and to repair the Holy Temples. He was then a religious official, he went out with others to carry out the job of strengthening the Church. The Viet Minh arrested him at [redacted] and then killed him.

14. How many Caodaists were killed by the Viet Minh?

Many of them were killed by the Viet Minh. I think over five thousand.

15. How many Caodaists in your village were killed by the Viet Minh?

Over thirty Caodaists were killed in my hamlet.

16. Were most of those who were killed young men?

They were young men, older men, and farmers.

17. Why did the Viet Minh kill those people?

Only the Viet Minh knew the reasons for this killing. As for us, we were more concerned about carrying out the teachings of our Church. Our Church did not meddle with politics so we do not know why many of our religious followers were killed. That is beyond our understanding.

18. Did all the members of your family live together before you came here or were some living apart?

We lived together and when we left we fled together.

19. How big was your village? How many hamlets did it include ?

There were [redacted] hamlets in my village but at this moment two of these hamlets have been combined with others and the village is now left with [redacted] hamlets.

How many families were there in your village?

When I was a village official there were 7000 constituents in the village -- 7000 persons 18 years old and over -- about over 2000 families.

How many families lived in your hamlet?

There were over 1000 constituents in my hamlet.

20. How many persons or families in your village have left that area to come out here?

There were four "xom" in my hamlet. All the people in my "xom" have left for the GVN-controlled area. You can say that in my "xom" the gardens are now unattended and the houses empty.

How about the other "xom"?

People in those "xom" left to come out here too but I do not know how many have left and how many remained behind.

Did all the people in your "xom" belong to the same religion as you?

Three-fourths of the people in my "xom" are Caodaists and the rest are lay men. The Holy Temple in our "xom" was part of this Holy Temple. Therefore, when we fled the village we came straight here. In the old days, when we needed advice or we wanted something we always came out here.

21. Why did these families leave their "xom" or hamlet?

The people were afraid of the cannon. They were afraid if there was fighting they would be hit by stray bullets. Others fled because they wanted to get away from the VC, they did not want to be arrested by the VC.

22. What was the main occupation of the people in your village?

Their main occupation was making bricks and tiles.

23. Was the village prosporous or poor?

There were many poor people and they belonged to the laborer class.

How did these poor people live?

The contractors or owners of the brick and tile ovens hired these laborers to work for them. Their wages could only carry them through the day, if they had to leave their village they would starve.

24. How much did these laborers get per day?

This depended on the laborer. Some got 50 piasters a day, others 30 or 20 piasters a day. Their wages corresponded with the work they did and their talents. Therefore, in order to live they had to continue to work.

25. How much land did you own?

We had some land which we inherited from our ancestors. Our family also lived on making bricks and tiles.

What economic class were you and your family classified?

Middle class.

26. Were there any changes in you or your family's economic condition in the past years?

As far as I know, if it had not been for the VC we would have had a peaceful life in our village. The laborers as well as their employers would have had a good life.

Did you see any chance of expanding your enterprise?

Of course, we could have expanded it had the VC not come and caused troubles.

If you wanted to expand your enterprise, how would you do it?

To tell you the truth I cannot work like the laborers, all I have is my knowledge and the capital which I have borrowed from my friends and relatives. My enterprise was not big and when I fled the village I could not take it with me. The capital I poured in it lies there. I am still in debt to my friends and my relatives.

How many laborers did you employ in your enterprise?

Seven.

Did the members of your family work in your enterprise too?

No, I had to hire the laborers to do the work for me. My children were still young and they were not capable of handling heavy work.

How much profit did your family get out of this enterprise?

Not much. Each day we made about 100 piasters for profit. It was just enough to feed the family. We had a big family.

27. Did your children go to school?

Yes. They attended [redacted] school. Two of my sons were in the first year of Junior College and the

third one is now 14 years old and he is in the third year of Junior High School. Since we came out here, our lives have become more difficult so I have to take the two older boys out of school so that they could help the family out and leave the younger one in school hoping that he will finish his High School next year. We own no land, we can not hope the land will feed us. We had lived with the VC for nine years and we know how it was to live with them.

28. What did the Communists do to your village during the nine years your family lived with them?

I was not in politics at the time. I spent my time as a herb doctor and did not get involved with politics. Later, when the herb doctors' association was formed, I joined and became an active member. In order to understand their policy I should have entered politics, but I did not, therefore, I did not know what they were doing.

29. How much damage was inflicted on your family during the Resistance?

All our houses were destroyed, nothing was left. Our houses were bombed twice. One time, three bombs exploded over our houses while another one fell on the garden and did not explode. The area on which our houses stood looked like a big pond after the bombing.

30. Did you rebuild your houses afterward?

After the GVN took over control of the South, we began to repair our houses with the savings I had put aside when I worked as a herb doctor. We had to repair the houses, otherwise we would not have a place for shelter.

31. Did the French often come to your area?

No.

Was there any fighting near your village?

No.

32. What do you think is the difference between the French then and the Americans now?

They are the same, they are tall and white.

What I mean is whether you see any difference in their aims in the South?

The French came here with the intention of colonizing Vietnam. The Americans come here with a different intention; they do not want to take over Vietnam, they want to help Vietnam. The Americans come here because the VC and Red China want to Communize Vietnam and to impoverish everyone. The Americans are not the invaders but the French were, they wanted to control Vietnam.

33. What did the people in your village think about the Americans?

I do not know how the people think. We do not know the depth of the ocean or the height of the mountains, how can we know the depth of human mind. Outwardly they may say one thing but we do not know how they think inside. I can only tell you about my feelings; I cannot tell you how others feel. If I tell you that such and such a person is good and he turns out to be nothing, I will regret all my life. Therefore, I can know only myself and can answer for myself alone.

34. Was your hamlet a strategic hamlet?

Yes.

Was the entire village enclosed in the strategic hamlet or just part of it?

The entire village.

When was it organized?

In 1956 when the term Viet Cong was not even heard of.

Were there any families that had to be moved into the strategic hamlet?

Every one had to move into the strategic hamlet.

Was your family orginally in the strategic hamlet or did you have to move in?

I was in the strategic hamlet. If we had lived outside of it we would have been willing to move in.

How many families had to move into the strategic hamlet?

There were quite a few of them and they were willing to move in.

35. How did living in the strategic hamlet affect your life and earnings?

We owe the Government for establishing the strategic hamlet because it shielded us from the Communists. We could live in freedom, we could move freely. It was not like living under the Communists years ago. Our lives then were truly miserable.

How did living in the strategic hamlet affect the lives of others?

I can only tell you about my life, I cannot tell you how others were affected by the new conditions of living into which they were thrown. Since the time the GVN took over the South, my life was secure and full, I was free although I still had to struggle to earn a living for myself and for my family.

Would you say your life had become harder because of living in the strategic hamlet?

I cannot say whether my life had been harder or not but since I am still alive, you can say that my life has been all right. During the nine years living under the Viet Minh we had lost everything and everything had to be rebuilt from the start. Our houses had been destroyed, our property and possessions gone, we had become destitute. We are poor because of the nine years living under the Communists. Had it not been for the Communists we would have fared much better now. As for the people who lived in the strategic hamlet, they knew that the Government organized it in order to prevent Communist infiltration and to assure them of a certain measure of security so that they could continue working their land or whatever job they had.

How did the people who had to move from the outside into the strategic hamlet feel?

They did not complain. The Government did not force them to move in. They saw the danger of living outside and moved in of their own will.

36. Were there any military or self-defense forces stationed in your strategic hamlet?

In the hamlets not under the VC control, the Self-Defense corps is still stationed there.

How many of them were there?

That I cannot know but I know there are quite a few of them stationed there.

37. How did these armed forces people behave toward the people?

They guard and protect the people, they did not show any bad attitude toward the people. As for saying that these armed forces people oppressed the villagers, it was not true. Only their enemies could say that because these armed forces people always carry out the orders from above.

38. Who controlled your hamlet a year ago?

The GVN. The VC did not show up until this year.

39. Who controlled your hamlet when you left it for here?

The GVN is still in control of my hamlet. The Village Council is still operating there.

How many hamlets in your village are now controlled by the Front?

Two of the hamlets are now under the control of the VC while the other four are under the control of the GVN.

How far is it from the hamlets which the VC controlled to the hamlet where you lived?

Very far, over two kilometers.

40. When did the VC take over the control of these two hamlets?

On May [redacted] 1965.

41. Did the Front carry out any terroristic acts in your village or kill any of the people?

On May [redacted] the VC took over the two hamlets as I have mentioned earlier. On the [redacted] of the next month they went to [redacted] hamlet with the intention of destroying the bridge there but the GVN got wind of their plan. A combination of ARVN, SDC, and militia set up an ambush for the VC. When they came, there was fierce fighting. Later the fighting broke off and the VC withdrew, they left behind 16 dead. According to the people, the VC carried with them at least 30 more wounded and dead. Later they returned to the hamlet and arrested six young men.

42. How did you hear about this?

I was not in the village when the fighting occurred. I heard about this through other people. My village is not far from here and the people go back and forth often; they bring out the news about the new developments in the village. I also asked for the news from them. I asked whether the militia were still alive.

43. Did the VC ever carry out any terroristic acts while you were still living in the village?

No. I had been out here for a week before they came to destroy the bridge.

44. When the VC came, what did the people in those hamlets do?

They fled also.

Did you hear what the VC did in those hamlets?

I did not hear about that.

45. How many young men were left in your village?

All the young men in my "xom" are still living in their "xom". They stay during the day to work and to earn a living but at night they all come out here.

How many of them are there?

About 50 or 60.

What is their age group?

They are between 18 and 35.

Why did they not enlist in the GVN armed forces?

Many of them did. In my "xom" alone, 15 or 16 young men have volunteered to serve in the GVN armed forces.

46. How many people in your hamlet or village left to join the VC last year?

I have no knowledge about the entire village but in my "xom" alone I can assure you that there is no one who has left to join the VC. There is no family in my "xom" that has members regrouped in the North nor any members who "have gone to the mountain". There is no Communist Party member in my "xom". The reason is the people in that "xom" belong to the CaoDai religion.

47. How many young men in your "xom" have left to join the GVN?

Just recently about ten or fifteen have joined the GVN armed forces.

Were they drafted or did they enlist in the armed forces?

They enlisted.

What was the reason they enlisted into the GVN armed forces?

They were told if they did not join the GVN they would be arrested by the VC anyway. The VC would arrest them eventually. They have seen the VC arrest the six young men whom I mentioned earlier, the VC later released them. The young men in my "xom" got scared so they told themselves they would rather join the GVN and sacrifice their lives for the good cause than to let the VC arrest them and force them to live in the jungle and mountains.

Did these six men arrested by the VC say why they were arrested?

They were guarding the gate to the hamlet and the VC thought they were the militia so they arrested them. They came into that hamlet and took them by surprise, otherwise they would not have been able to arrest them.

Did they say how they were treated by the VC?

When they were released they reported themselves to the Village Council. They said when they were arrested, the VC tied their arms behind their backs and took them to the jungle. They were fed with very bad food. Each day,

each one of them was given a ration of rice and three piasters. They lived miserably. The VC took them for a week and then released them.

Did they say why the VC released them?

They reported all their experiences to the Village Council, I am not a member of the Village Council so I do not know the details. I saw they were back and that is all I know.

48. How did the VC recruit people in your village for military duty?

I have not been back to the village, I do not dare to return. I could go back for a few moments, then leave again but I would rather not. Therefore, I do not know what the VC are doing in my village.

49. How did the VC recruit people to work for them in other villages?

I do not know. I was more worried about how to get out.

50. Were you or any members of your family taken by the Front for reeducation?

No.

51. Do you know of any person taken by the Front for reeducation?

No.

52. When did the VC first come to your hamlet?

They have never been to my hamlet. My hamlet is entirely controlled by the GVN. I am told that the Communists go around at night looking for people; they walk the streets.

For whom are they looking?

They walked the streets, they did not enter people's houses. I am told that they have been doing this since the time they took over the other two hamlets in the village. Before that time, the village was completely secure; the SDC went on patrol every night till midnight and they went home to sleep without any worry. My hamlet is still secure but the VC may come in at night.

53. When you were still living in your village, did you hear about the GVN-American bombings in the North?

I read the newspapers daily and I listened to the radio. I knew about these attacks.

What do you think about these attacks?

I do not understand the Government's politics but according to what I have read in the newspapers and heard of other people's opinions, the reason the Government sent airplanes to bomb the North was because the North sent personnel into the South to create trouble for the Government. The North denied having sent their people into the South but if the North did not send their people into the South, then who were these VC. The Government had to bomb the North to force the North to accept their responsibility for sending their people into the South and creating trouble for the Government in the South.

54. To whom did you pay taxes during the past three years?

To the GVN.

How much did you have to pay per year?

600 piasters per year. Those with larger capital have to pay more, 1000 piasters or more.

55. Do you think paying 600 piasters per year is too heavy?

It is money all right, but I do not think the taxes were heavy.

56. Did the VC ever come to your village for collections?

No.

57. During the nine years you lived under the Viet Minh, did they carry out a Land Reform program?

I was not informed about their politics, I do not know what they did.

58. What do you think about the present Government?

In my opinion, a person is born and someday he will die but as long as he lives, he wants to live in freedom as befits a human being in this universe. If he is debased, his life is not worth more than that of an animal. Now we are to make a choice between the GVN and the VC. Personally I would prefer to live in peace, but a peace in which I am still able to retain my human character. This is the first point. The second point is I wish with all my heart and mind that the Government would do everything to eradicate the Communists in this country and to rebuild a strong and peaceful Vietnam in general and the South in particular so that people could live and work in peace. I know this will demand much sacrifice from us and from the Government but what must be done should be done to achieve peace. As for us who have come out here, we got away from the unhappiness to find happiness; we fled from danger to find security.

59. Did the province and district chiefs often come to your village?

The province chief has never come to my village but the district chief came every now and then. He came to the village but he had little contact with the population. He relied much on the report the Village Officials gave to him.

On what level did the people in your village transact their business?

Although the province and the district level had little contact with the population, this lack of human touch did not affect the lives of the villagers because they would rather do their business with other officials on the village or hamlet level. When they needed necessary papers, they more often than not went to the hamlet chief.

60. How did the village and hamlet authorities behave?

They have not done anything to deserve complaints from the population.

61. When Mr. Diem was overthrown, were you informed about it?

I heard that Mr. Diem was overthrown because he was accused of using his family to rule the country and because he oppressed religious people. That was what I heard, I myself could not form any concrete reason about his downfall.

62. What did the people in the village think about that?

The people said the same thing, that Mr. Diem was a dictator, he ruled the country through his family. That was why the military had to stand up against him and bring about his downfall.

63. Do you know who heads up the present government?

Mr. Nguyen-Van-Thieu and Nguyen-Cao-Ky. I am not well versed on the matter of politics. What I know is from hearsay rather than as an eyewitness. My only wish is that the Government would hurry and solve the problem of security for us.

64. Did the GVN carry out any programs in your hamlet to help the villagers?

The Government built schools and first-aid stations to give medicine to the villagers and extended credits to those who needed capital to enlarge their enterprises.

65. Did your family benefit from these programs?

Yes, we got to borrow some money from the Government and paid it in installments.

Who were the people who could borrow money from the Government?

They did not have to be poor or rich to be able to borrow money from the Government. The decision as to who could borrow the money was with the members of the Village Council. They would choose those who were known to have good character , who were reliable and trust worthy.

66. Did the ARVN often come to your village?

Very seldom. My village was a secure area, therefore, there were very few military activities going on there. Furthermore, the village itself had the militia and the SDC who were in charge of keeping the village secure. The Civil Guards and the Special Forces did not come to my village, they only come when the security of a village has broken down.

67. How were the SDC in your village armed?

They were armed with adequate weapons.

What types of weapons did they have?

They had all types of weapons.

68. How did the ARVN behave when they came into your village?

They were all right. They did not do anything to hinder the relationship between the civilians and the military forces.

69. What have you heard about the aims of the Front?

They took over the village because they needed the support of the people, without the people they could not do anything much. Furthermore, their aim is to create trouble for the Government and later to take over the Government and to establish their own. I read this in the newspapers and I gathered that the Liberation Front wanted to overthrow our Government. They called themselves "Liberation Front" but actually they were the VC -- no more, no less.

70. What have you heard about life in Front military units?

I have not heard about that. However, I have seen the Front soldiers after they died; they were clad in a pair of pants and a shirt, nothing else.

71. What have you heard about Front successes, defeats, and losses?

That I did not hear and they did not tell us.

72. Are any friends of yours serving with the Front?

No.

73. Has any fighting taken place near or in your hamlet or village?

It happened only once when the VC came down to [redacted] with the intention of destroying the bridge. They were intercepted by the GVN forces and suffered heavy losses. That was the only time there was fighting in my village.

74. Were the villagers warned by the Front or the GVN about this attack?

No.

75. What else did you hear about this fighting from the people?

They said the VC came down to that hamlet about 8:00 p.m. The GVN sent in three truckloads of soldiers. These soldiers combined their forces with those of the militia and the SDC. As soon as they reached the fighting area, the sound of gunfire was heard. The next day the people found 16 dead VC living around and they also said the VC had carried away over 30 more when they withdrew.

76. What did they say they thought about that fighting?

They hoped the Government would score more successes so that their village would be secure. They truly wished the Government would drive out the Communists so that they could work in peace.

77. How did these people know of what happened in your village?

They came out here at the same time as I but they went back and forth to the hamlet because their hamlet is still under the control of the GVN.

78. What kinds of attacks would frighten you and the other villagers most?

They were afraid the VC might attack their hamlet and then arrest them and make their lives miserable. They were also afraid that during the fighting between the VC and the GVN, they would be hit by stray bullets.

What kinds of weapons did they say they were most afraid of?

They didn't say but I gathered they would be afraid of all type of weapons. One more thing, the CaoDaist believers cannot live with the VC, they have to get out by all means. In my 'xom', three-fourths of the population were Caodaist believers but when the people saw us leaving our homes to come out here they got scared and they fled with us.

79. After the fighting which you just mentioned earlier, did any other families leave the village to come here?

Yes, some left the village to come out here after that fighting but the bulk of people had left before the fighting. We had been here for a while before that fighting occurred.

80. Was there anyone from your village who left the village for the VC-controlled area instead of the GVN-controlled area?

No. My hamlet is still relatively secure, the people go back and forth to it. During the day they go back to the hamlet to make a living and at night they come out here lest the VC may come in at night.

81. How did you and the villagers get news about what was going on?

We listened to the radio.

Did you have a radio?

I did not but the neighbors owned one and when they heard anything new they would let us know.

82. Did the Government establish an information center in your village?

Yes. Every now and then there would be a meeting of all the villagers and we would be told about the new developments in the Government.

83. Have you taken refuge in a GVN-controlled area before?

Yes.

84. What have you heard about conditions in GVN-controlled areas before you left?

Whatever life in the GVN-controlled area would be like, I would come here anyway. We came here to get away from the Communists. There is no life with the Communists. To get away from the Communists was our goal and we did not care what would happen to us.

85. Were you told what the GVN would do for you and your family?

I have been here over two months and the Government has helped us somewhat to keep alive. Outside of that, we have not received anything else.

What have you received from the Government?

Rice. This center is not considered a refugee center because, you see, my hamlet is still a secure area, the Village Council is still in action. However, the Church here is able to get some rice from the Government to distribute to us and help us out for the present. When we were still in the village, we did not know if the Government would help us if we came out because our hamlet is still a secure area.

86. When did you and your family decide to leave your hamlet to come out here?

We had not made any plans because our area was still secure. This is the Holy Land so we came out here to live, we will not go elsewhere.

87. Did anyone induce you to move?

No, I urged others to leave the village.

88. Did you hear any rumors of a possible attack on your hamlet?

No, I did not but when I heard they had arrived at Bac My hamlet, I got scared.

89. What preparations did you or your family make when you left?

We gathered our clothes and some of our possessions and left. We left suddenly when we heard that the VC had taken over the other two hamlets. We just took off. All we wanted was to live in the GVN-controlled area.

90. What did you fear most when you were considering leaving your village?

Nothing. Before I left the village, I had come to see the members of the Village Council and told them about the

situation and asked them whether the Village Council would advise the people to leave the village or whether the Village Council had other intentions in mind. They told me that the village was still secure, they had not thought of leaving the village. If I wanted to leave the village, I had to do it on my own.

How many members were there in the Village Council?

Five or six persons.

Were these members elected by the people?

They were elected by the people.

Did they get a salary?

No.

What did the Village Council do?

They were in charge of the security, the economy, the culture, and the politics in their village.

91. Did you hear broadcasts from aircraft or read leaflets telling people to leave?

Yes, these broadcasts were for the area under the control of the VC and urged the people to leave the VC and return to the GVN.

92. Have you heard about the Chieu Hoi program?

No.

93. What property did you or your family bring with you?

My wife and I carried our possessions and our children to come here. All the money we had saved, we had invested in the ovens for making bricks and tiles. Our capital is tied up there. We came here with very little. Had I been a farmer, we would have had some rice to feed the family now but I made bricks and tiles and we could not eat them nor carry them out here. I can go back to the hamlet because it is still secure but there is nothing left there to carry out.

94. Is there anyone in your village who will look after your property?

Our houses are now inhabited by other refugees who came from [redacted]

Is [redacted] under the control of the VC?

Yes, as soon as the VC came these people left their homes and came down to our hamlet. I have someone to look after our houses.

95. While you were still living in your village, did you know of anyone from your village who sympathized with the VC?

I do not know. I only know of my own family, I did not pay attention to others to find out what they did.

96. Did the refugees who came from [redacted] tell you how they got out of their village?

I do not know the policy of the VC but those who came out of the VC-controlled areas said that the VC forbade them to leave their village and they had to escape.

Why did the VC want to keep the people in their village?

They needed the people and the people's support. They told the people to remain in the village to work. They lived at the expense of the people, if the people left, with whom would they live?

97. Did they tell you how their lives were under the VC?

They were all farmers. They said they left their village because they were afraid for their lives.

98. What sort of work do you plan to do?

I have no plan.

99. Has the VC threatened to punish you or other villagers for leaving the hamlet or for settling in a GVN-controlled area?

The VC said they gave the refugees a month to return to their village. If, after one month, these refugees did not report themselves to the VC, all their land and property would be distributed to others.

100. Did most of the people leave their village because they were afraid of the VC or because they were afraid of stray bullets?

Most of them were afraid of stray bullets when there was fighting between the GVN and the VC.

101. Whom did these people blame for causing them to leave their village?

They blamed the VC.

Why?

It was because of the VC that their village became a fighting area. If it had not been for the VC, the GVN would not have attacked their village and they could have lived in peace.

102. Which side do you think is winning?

I do not think the Americans and the GVN will be defeated at the hand of the VC.

103. How long do you think the war will go on?

That I cannot know. I wish that the war will end soon so that we can leave and work in peace.

104. What did the GVN authorities tell you they will do for you and your family?

I have been here over two months and people from the district level have come to visit us and asked us how we are living. They have sent us some help. They told us that houses would be built to shelter the refugees.

Have they started to make good on their promises?

They said they would start to build soon but it has been over two months now and nothing has been done yet.

105. What is the most pressing need for you and your family and for other refugees?

There are two points. First, we all wish that the Government would do something to drive the Communists out so that peace will return to this land in the South Vietnam. We want to live and to work in security. Secondly, there is the economic aspect of our lives. Some of us, when leaving our homes, were able to take out something, others came here empty handed. Those who came out here with the little that they had saved will soon become destitude if they get no assistance from the Government. But the most important point in this matter is the first point. We would like to see The South secure and peaceful. Even if it takes more sacrifices and hardships to achieve this goal, we will be happy.

106. When you left your home, how long did you think you would be away?

I thought to myself that it was only a raid, the VC would not take over the hamlets and stay there permanently. I thought sooner or later the GVN soldiers would come in and clear the VC out therefore, I believed I would be away for five or ten days or at the most, one month. It has been two months already, our savings are almost gone because ours is a big family, there are too many people to feed. We could endure starvation and hardships and our prayer is that the Government will pacify the South as soon as possible so that we can go back to our hamlet.

107. Did anyone try to persuade you or the other refugees to go back to your hamlet since you came here?

No. I would not go back if the VC were still around. I will go back when the VC have left. I would rather die in this Holy Land than go back and live with the VC.

108. Have any of the villagers who left with you moved back to your hamlet?

During the day they went back to the hamlet to work and at night they returned to this center.

109. Have you seen any Americans?

Not often. Today is the first time I meet the Americans.

Have you seen people from countries other than America?

No.

What have you heard about the Americans?

They are here to help the Government of the South. They are trying to pacify the South.

110. When you were still living in your hamlet, what topics did you discuss with your friends?

I do not know about others, I myself am not a conversationalist. I spent my time in the factory I owned, supervising the employees and the sales, in the evening I went home. That was my day.

111. Have you ever criticized the VC in front of others and was there any danger that your criticisms might be reported to the VC?

Not at all. I always say that the VC will be defeated by the GVN and the Americans.

112. Did other families or individuals help you or your family when you were in trouble?

Yes, there was mutual aid among the villagers. If a family wanted to build a house for instance, others in the village would give a hand.

113. How much damage was caused by the flood in your village?

No one was killed by the flood but many houses were damaged by it.

Did the people receive any assistance from the Government?

Yes, the people received something from the Government.

114. Who was the person the people respected the most in your village?

It is hard to answer that question because people have changed so much in terms of morality. Anyone who is in

power is feared but I do not think he is repected in the proper sense of the work. On the other hand, those who know how to follow the trend and have the power of persuasion are the ones who have prestige with the people.

115. You said the morality has changed, will you tell me in what way it has changed and how?

Before the Revolution (August 1945) a family was blessed with first the grandparents and then the parents, morality and religion were sacred. When the Communists came they turned people backward, banishing morality and religion and whatever humane remained in a person. People lost their faith. You see, the Communists do not believe in family, in God "Heaven and Earth". During these nine years with the VC, the poor class was indebted to the VC and thus were more easily swayed by the VC.

116. Who do you think are the best-informed people in your village about what is going on in the village?

I do not know. I was so busy with my work I did not pay attention to what was going around me. I had to work hard to feed my family so I did not get involved with politics or with other people in the village.

117. How did you know if something happened in your village?

The Village Council would inform us.

How would the Village Council inform you?

They would inform us by loudspeakers.

118. Were you informed about what happened in Saigon?

Yes, but I did not pay much attention to that news.

119. Did you have any frustrations about your life when you were still living in the village?

No. My only complaint is that the VC have taken away our peace, they have created much trouble for us and we cannot work in peace.

120. What kind of life do you hope your sons will have?

They are still young and they are still in school. I hope when they are older they can use their knowledge to find a job to support themselves. Furthermore, they are citizens so they will have to do their military duty.

121. How do the people in this center live?

They are having a hard life but there is nothing they can do about it. The people in my "xom" worked as laborers for others, they were not farmers, therefore, if they do not work one day, they will not have anything to feed themselves and their families that day. Had they been farmers they could have some rice left from the harvest but in our occupation, you cannot move your tools with you when you leave.

122. Do they have any complaints?

They have one complaint and that is: why does the Government not try to drive the VC out so that they can go back to their hamlet to work; why does the Government let the VC thrive without doing anything to curb them? I think this is the wish of the entire population, rich or poor; they all want to see the Communists go.

123. What did you think when your younger brother was killed by the Viet Minh?

The past is past, I do not keep any grudge against them although I consider it a debt they owe me and one they will have to pay back.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

The subject was cooperative. He talked very slowly and his speech was full of Chinese quotes which he painstakingly explained to the interviewer. His accent was difficult to understand.
He was sincere but he was not well informed because he left his home while his hamlet was still controlled by the GVN. He did not seem to mind much the situation in which he and his family were in and he cast little blame on the GVN for failing to help him and his family.

NO. AGR 24

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

1. Name of interviewer [redacted]

2. Name of subject [redacted]

3. Time and date of interview :

   From 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 on August [redacted] 1965

   From _____ to _____ on _____ 19 ___

   From _____ to _____ on _____ 19 ___

4. Place of interview :

   Quang Ngai

5. Sex of subject : Male (X) Female ( )

6. Age of subject : 52

7. Ethnic background : Vietnamese

8. Place of birth :

   hamlet _____

   village [redacted]

   district Tu Nghia

   province Quang Ngai

9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :

   hamlet _____

   village [redacted]

   district Tu Nghia

   province Quang Ngai

10. (a) Length of residence in last location : 52 years

    (b) Who controlled the place of residence :

    GVN (X) VC ( ) Contested ( ) How long: _____

NO. AGR 24

11. Number of brothers (2) and sisters (1)

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : 2

13. Marital status : Married

14. Number of children : 4

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age : 2

16. Parents with subject (X) or not with subject ( )
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject( ) or not with subject (X)
Wife with subject (X) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject(X) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion : Cao Dai

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : Potter

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation : Middle class
(b) Landowner? _____

20. Education :
illiterate ( )
literate ( )
schooling completed : Finished elementary school

21. Any relatives in VC : No

22. Any relatives in GVN : 1

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by :
(a) French No
(b) GVN No
(c) VC One younger brother

24. When became a refugee : May [redacted] 1965

AGR

INTERVIEW

25

THE RAND CORPORATION

[redacted]

STUDIES OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT
OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR. 25

Date of Interview : August [redacted] 1965

Subject's Category : Refugee

Area : Son Tinh district, Quang-Ngai province

COMMENTS : Subject made interesting remarks concerning the VC take-over and control of his village (Q.51-54, 61-65, 99-100), VC propaganda (Q.74) and suppression of the Cao Dai (Q.117-119), his own attitudes toward the GVN and its forces (Q.86-97), and his opinion of Government aid to refugees (Q.19-20, 116, 126).

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

1. How long have you been here?

   I have been here for six months.

2. Where did you come from?

   I came from [redacted] village.

3. How long did you stay in [redacted] village?

   I stayed there for one month.

4. What did you do in [redacted] village?

   I was a refugee there. I did not do anything else.

5. How far is it from [redacted] village to your own?

   About [redacted]

6. Was [redacted] village a refugee center?

   At that time [redacted] village was a secure area, so the refugees went there to be with the GVN.

7. Why did you not stay in that village? Why did you come out here?

   That village is now under the control of the VC.

8. When did the VC begin to control [redacted]

   About four months ago.

9. Is your family here with you?

   My family is at [redacted] resettlement area.

10. How did you get here?

    First we left our village to go to [redacted] on foot.

11. How many people left your village at the same time as you did?

    About 60 or 70 persons came out at the same time as I did.

12. Were they mostly young people?

    Some were young. They belonged to all classifications : some were men, some were women. There were older people and children.

13. What did you plan to do when you came out here?

    I came out here to get away from the Communists.

14. What are your plans and prospects now?

    I am trying to find a way to earn a living but have not found any.

15. What was your former occupation before you came out here?

I was a farmer.

16. How large was your family?

I have six brothers and sisters and a mother.

17. Did all the members of your family live together before you come here or were some living apart?

We lived together before we left the village. My brothers and sisters are at [redacted] resettlement area. I am the only one here now. (What are they doing at [redacted]?) They stay in the resettlement area. They do nothing.

18. How big is the [redacted] resettlement area?

Over [redacted] persons live there now. (Do you know when [redacted] resettlement area was organized?) It was organized last May.

19. What did the Government do for the people in that area?

The assistance the people there get from the Government is not enough. The people have to support themselves too.

20. What do the people down there do to support themselves?

They are using up their savings they carried with them when they left their village. Their savings will see them through the day. Also they work as laborers for others so they can have something to feed themselves and their families.

21. How big was your village? How many hamlets did it include?

There were [redacted] hamlets in my village. (How many families were there in your village?) About [redacted] families lived in the village. (How many families were there in your hamlet?) There were about [redacted] families in my hamlet.

22. How many families have left the village to come out here?

About 50 families have left to come out here. (From your village or hamlet?) From my hamlet.

23. Why did other families in your hamlet remain behind?

Because they had their homes and their gardens there. Also, they did not want to leave the place where they were born. Only those who knew they could not possibly live with the Communists left their homes to come out here.

24. How many young men were left in your village when you came out here?

Few young men were left in the village. The ones who remained behind were old men and women and children. (Where did the young men go?) They either enlisted in the armed forces or they sought out places which were still under the control of the GVN to live.

25. How many young men in your village have left to join the GVN armed forces?

The number of men enlisted in all the GVN armed forces units is about 200.

26. How many young men in your village have left to join the VC armed forces?

All those young men who remained behind are now forced to work for the Communists. (Do you know their number?) I do not know because I have been away for so long and I am not informed about it.

27. While you were living in your village, did you know if there was anyone in your village working for the VC?

No; no one worked for the Communists then, because my village had not been taken over by them.

28. Did the VC not come to your village to recruit people through propaganda?

They had not done that yet when I left.

29. Where did the people in your village go when they left their village?

They went to the resettlement areas, to the GVN areas or to their relatives living in the GVN areas to stay.

30. Have any of the villagers who left with you moved back to their village?

No. Those who left their village left it for good. They did not dare to return for they knew the Communists would punish them.

31. Have you heard about or from the people who stayed behind in your hamlet or village?

No, I have not met them recently. The VC forbade the people to leave. (Why?) Because the VC were afraid that if they let the people come out, the people would report what they had seen in their village to the GVN authorities and the latter would sent its armed forces to attack them. Furthermore, since they wanted to keep people in the areas under their control, they would not let them leave.

32. What was the main occupation of the people in your village?

Farming was their main occupation. (Did most of the villagers own land or did they have to rent land from others?) Some owned land, others worked like tenant farmers for the landowners. (Were most people rich, medium, or poor?) In my village, 70 o/o of the population could be classified as the poor class. (What do you mean when you say a person is poor?) When he does not have enough to eat all year around. (What did they do when they do not have enough to eat?) They had to find other work to do in order to make ends meet : they gathered firewood and bought and sold things at the market to make profit.

33. How much rent did the tenant farmers have to pay to the landowner?

After the harvest, the rice was divided into two equal parts -- the landowner took one-half and the tenant farmer the other half. (Did the tenant farmers think that the rent was too high?) I also think the rent was too high, but that was the standard rate and has been with us a long time. It was not easy to change. People followed the same rate year after year. (What happened when the harvest was not good?) The landowner made some reduction in the payment. (How much rice does each " mau " produce per year?) About 200 bushels. (If you had to borrow money, what was the rate of interest?) The rate was 40 o/o, which means that if you borrow 1,000 piasters you have to pay 1,400 piasters a year later. There were few rich people in the village.

34. What category were you and your family assigned?

Middle-class farmer. (How much land do you have to have in order to be classified as rich farmer?) You have to have 10 or more "mau" of land. About 15 families in my hamlet fell in that category.

35. Beside farming, did you do anything else?

I did nothing else. (Didn't you say you were a hamlet chief?) Yes, I was a hamlet chief. (For how long?) For one year. (Were you elected by the people or were you appointed by the Government?) I was elected by the people. (Did you get any salary as hamlet chief?) I was a hamlet chief for a while and my salary was 300 piasters per month. (What were your functions as a hamlet chief?) The hamlet chief's first function was to serve the people in the hamlet, to be in charge of social works, security and other local operations.

36. What did you do to keep your hamlet a secure area?

Security: I prepared the people to fight against the Communists.
Social works : repairing the roads and the dike.

37. What did the people in your village think about the village and hamlet officials?

They did not cooperate very much with these cadres. (Why?) Because the people found that these cadres did not answer the needs of the people; therefore, the people prefered to stand by, rather than work with those cadres. (What do you mean when you say that those village and hamlet officials did not answer the needs of the people?) Because they abused their power and their position. They used their positions to oppress the people. That was why the people did not respect them. (How many cadres were there in your village?) There were seven of them and they were the members of the Village Council. (Were these members of the Village Council elected by the people or appointed from high above?) They were appointed from high above. (How long did these members stay in power?) They stayed in power until the Revolution in November 1963. After that, the members of the Village Council were elected by the people, rather than appointed by the Government. (Did the new Village Council behave much better than their predecessor?) They were much better because they were elected by the people.

38. Did you resign after working one year as a hamlet chief?

Yes. I did not agree with the policy of the Village Council, but since I was in a lesser position there was nothing I could do to right their mistakes. They abused their power and took advantages of their position. The help the Government sent to the people fell into their pockets, while the people got nothing. People complained so much about them.

39. You said you owned five " mau " of land?

Yes. (Did your family work on this land or did you rent it or part of it to other tenant farmers?) We put all our effort in that land. We did not rent any of it to others. (Was the income from the land adequate or more than enough for your family?) It was just adequate to support my family; there was nothing left after the year was over.

39. Are your children attending school here?

No. (Did you send them to school while you were living in your village?) When they reached their school age, the village was taken over by the VC and we had to leave the village. Now we are living in the resettlement area, where the conditions and our situation do not permit them to attend school. (Did your village have a school?) Yes, it had an elementary school with five classrooms.

40. What was the proportion of people in your village who were illiterate?

About 50 o/o of the population were illiterate. (What age group did those illiterate people belong to?) They were older farmers -- men and women. (How about children?) The children were sent to school and knew to read and write.

41. Did your village have a first-aid station?

The village had a first-aid station, and each hamlet had its own first-aid station.

42. How far was it from one hamlet to another?

The distance from one hamlet to another was about 3 km; in between were rice fields.

43. Was your hamlet a strategic hamlet?

The entire village was a strategic hamlet. (When was it organized?) In 1962. (Would you describe your strategic hamlet.) Surrounding the strategic hamlet were bamboo spikes and barbed wire. Inside the strategic hamlet lived all the families that had been moved there. (Did many families have to leave their former homes to move into the strategic hamlet?) In our area, all the families had to move inside the strategic hamlet. They were not permitted to live outside of it. (Did your family have to move inside?) Fortunately, no. (What did the families who had to move inside the strategic hamlet think about their living in there?) They moved in because they needed security. If it had not been for their security they would have stayed where they were. Living in the strategic hamlet was not ideal because of the restricted movement and because the land where they had to work every day was far away. (Were these people forced by the Government to move into the strategic hamlet?) Yes. (Did the people receive any help from the Government while their strategic hamlet was built?) The Government's help came in the form of rice given to the people every now and then. After digging trenches and putting up a fence, five or six families got a kilogramme of rice. (Did the families who had to move into the strategic hamlet get any help from the Government?) They got some help, depending on their economic status. If a family was rich, they would get 1500 piasters from the Government. The middle-class family got 1200, and the poor family got 800 piasters. The Government gave more to the rich families because they stood to lose more. They had to leave their brick houses, while a poor family only left its mud house.

44. Was your strategic hamlet destroyed by the Front?

When they came, they destroyed the entire strategic hamlet. They torn down the fence and the houses and scattered the people, telling them to go back to their old homes to live. (When did the Front destroy your strategic hamlet?) They came

to destroy our strategic hamlet at the beginning of 1965. The other strategic hamlets in the village had been destroyed two years ago. Our was the last one to go. First they came to [redacted] hamlet, next to [redacted] hamlet, then to [redacted] and last to ours -- [redacted] hamlet.

45. Were people happy when the Front people tore down the strategic hamlets?

One or two out of every ten people were happy because the Communists tore down the strategic hamlet. The rest hated the VC and did not like what the VC did to their hamlet. The VC had to go from house to house to get people to help them to tear down the fence and the houses.

46. Why did some of these people like the VC?

Because they had family members working for the Communists. That was why they preferred them. Some of those who had been moved into the strategic hamlet were happy to go back to their former homes because they would be near their rice fields. Others would prefer to stay in the strategic hamlet because their lives were secure.

47. How did living in a strategic hamlet affect your life and earnings?

There was one disadvantage : the strategic hamlet was not in a convenient spot for us farmers to go to work. But there were other advantages: we could work together, the people helped one another with their labor and their cows and water buffaloes.

48. What did you like about living in the strategic hamlet?

The strategic hamlet helped us to prevent VC infiltration among the people. It stopped them from causing troubles to the people. That was the thing I liked best about the strategic hamlet. (What did you dislike about it?) I disliked seeing people having to leave their former homes. Furthermore, the strategic hamlet hampered people's work because they could not come in and out at will.

49. Did you find that people were happier in the strategic hamlet or outside of it?

I found that their living standard had gone up since they came into the strategic hamlet.

50. Who controlled your hamlet a year ago?

The GVN. (Who controlled your hamlet when you left it for here?) The VC control my hamlet at the present time. (How many hamlets in your village are now controlled by the Front?) The entire four hamlets in my village are now under the control of the Communists.

51. When did the VC first come to your village?

The VC have been coming to other hamlets since 1963. (When did they first come to your hamlet?) They came to my hamlet at the beginning of 1965. (Before 1965, did the VC come to your hamlet for anything?) Before 1965, they used to come to the outside of our hamlet, but they could not penetrate inside. This year, after they had torn down the fence, they came in. (Why could they not come in before? How could they enter in 1965?) They could not come in before, because the other hamlets near ours were secure. But after these hamlets had fallen into their hands, our position became dangerous. Furthermore, the GVN forces in my hamlet were not strong. (Did they ever come to your hamlet?) They came to my hamlet in 1965. That night the GVN forces happened to conduct their patrol outside of the hamlet, and the Communists took this opportunity to enter the hamlet. (What did they do when they were outside your hamlet?) They threw rocks at our houses and they beat at the fence to make noise. The GVN forces inside the hamlet fired at them. Then they decided to take over the hamlet to achieve their goal. That night they brought in bigger forces, and it happened that the GVN was not in the hamlet that night. The Communists were able to come into the hamlet.

52. Do you remember the date when your hamlet was taken over by the VC?

It was taken by the VC in February 1965.

53. Could you describe how the VC took over your hamlet?

That night when two GVN platoons went outside of the hamlet to patrol, the VC appeared. (How many of them were there?) They had one battalion or three companies. They came in, took over the strategic points in the hamlet and began to dig their foxholes. The next day when the GVN soldiers came back, there was fighting.

54. Where were you when the VC came?

As soon as the Communists appeared, I ran out of the hamlet and went into hiding. (What happened when the fighting broke out between the GVN soldiers and the VC?) Three GVN

soldiers were killed, two wounded, and a few civilians were wounded. On the VC side, some of them were killed, but I do not know exactly.

55. How did the people feel after that fighting?

They blamed the Communists (Why?) Because the VC had made their hamlet an insecure area.

56. Did you return to your hamlet afterward?

No, I did not. I left my hamlet then. (How did you get your wife and children to come out with you?) Later, I sent word to my wife to come out and join me, and they were able to leave the village. (How could other people in your hamlet leave their homes?) The Communists came into the hamlet, but for a while they did not stay there. The people took that opportunity to flee their hamlet.

57. Did you hear if your hamlet had become a combat hamlet?

Yes, according to what I heard, my hamlet had become a combat hamlet. (When did you hear that news?) About four months ago. (From whom did you hear that?) From the people in my hamlet. (Did these people came out after you?) Yes. (Why did they leave their hamlet?) They said their lives had become so miserable they could not bear it any more, and they had to escape.

58. Did they say how the people were living in that hamlet?

They said the people could not live in their homes, they had to build their homes in the rice fields, in the area with bushes around because of the attacks. (Did they say how many times your hamlet have been attacked by the GVN?) Yes, they said twice. (Did they say how much damage was caused by these attacks?) One or two civilians were killed, some cattle were killed, and about ten or twenty homes were burned down. The people now lived in the fields. They might return to their homes at night if everything was quiet, but if they heard the sound of gunfire or airplanes they stayed in the fields all night. (Did they say if the people prefer to stay there or to come out here?) The people wanted to come out here, but the Communists would not let them go.

59. Did the VC threaten to punish you or other villagers for leaving the hamlet or for settling in the GVN-controlled area?

The VC said the people could not get away from them. They told the people to remain in place and to continue working. They said if anyone left the hamlet to go to another area --

which they called the enemy's area -- this person would be caught and surely be killed. They would not be lenient with him.

60. What do you think would happen to you if you returned to your village?

I think they would put me through a re-education course for at least six months and, after that, they would keep constant watch over me to find out if I had any reactionary thoughts. They would cause plenty of trouble to me.

61. Did the Front carry out any terroristic acts in your village or kill any of the people?

In 1962, two people in my hamlet were arrested and killed. Also they arrested about nine or ten people in the village. The other villagers knew nothing about it, though, because they took those people to the mountains and killed them there.

62. Why did the VC arrest them?

Because they reported on the VC: they were anti-Communist. One or two of these people were accused by the VC of owing the people a blood debt. (Note: this means the people had committed crimes that could be atoned only by their deaths.)

63. Did the villagers think the killing was justified or not?

Most of these people had the respect of the people. A few villagers did not like them, but they were in the minority. (Why did the people respect those persons?) Because they had not done anything harmful to the people.

64. Have you heard how the people in your hamlet feel about the Front now?

They blamed the Communists for making their lives more miserable. Except for a few persons who like the Communists, the majority of the population wanted to come out here. They did not/the opportunity to get away, however.
have

65. What did the VC do to make their lives more miserable?

They had to pay many taxes and contributions to the Communists, such as troop-support tax and defense tax. Also, they had to work night and day for the Communists carrying rice and ammunition supplies from one place to another, digging trenches to build the combat hamlet and planting booby traps and spike traps. The people did not have time to work on their land or to earn a living. All this made the people very unhappy.

66. How many young men in your hamlet remained behind?

There were 60 young men in my hamlet Over 30 of them have come out here, while the rest remained behind with their families. (What did you hear about them?) They are working for the Communists; they are in the Communist armed forces.(Didn't these young men want to come out here, or did they want to but hadn't found the opportunity to do so?) Some of them did prefer to remain behind, but others simply didn't have the means to escape. They are now living in the VC-controlled area. Whether they like it or not, they have to work for the Communists. (Why did some of them prefer to remain behind?) Because they sympathised with the Communists. They have members of their families working for the Communists.

67. Did any persons in your village join the VC because they were mistreated by the GVN village officials?

I have heard of a few cases like that. The majority of them join because of the VC propaganda. The VC came and urged them to join, and if their families sympathize with the Communists, they would readily join.

68. How many young men in your hamlet have joined the GVN armed forces?

About 35. Some were drafted, others enlisted in the ARVN, and some served in the militia.

70. How did the Front recruit people in your village for military duty?

If they wanted to recruit people to work for them, they made use of propaganda. They told people about the policy of the Liberation Front. Some were taken in by the propaganda and volunteered to join the VC. Those who did not freely join them, would be forced to join them eventually. (What did the VC say in their propaganda?) They said the Liberation Front would liberate the people and bring about land reform and happiness to people.

71. What in the VC's propaganda appealed most to people?

The people were put in a position where they had to listen to their propaganda. If they had not been forced, they would not have attended those propaganda sessions. The people knew that the VC lied when they said they would bring happiness to people.

72. Are any members of your family or relatives serving with the Front?

No.

73. Were you or any members of your family taken by the Front for " re-education"?

No, because my entire family has left for the GVN-controlled area.

74. Have you heard that the Front held meetings with the villagers in your hamlet?

When I was still living in my hamlet, I heard that the Front held meetings with the villagers in the hamlets they had taken over. In these meetings they told the people about their policy and made propaganda. They talked about the situation, about their strength. They said the Front was getting stronger and the GVN and the American imperialists were getting weaker, and very soon they would be able to liberate the South. (Did they say when they would be able to liberate the South?) They said the South would be liberated within this year. (What did they say about their plans for this rainy season?) They said the towns would be surrounded, while they attacked the districts and villages. (What did they say about the assistance they received from the North?) They said the Front was being helped by Russia and Red China; Red China had sent an Ambassador, and Russia was sending weapons to the Front.

75. While you were still living in your village, how was it organized?

The people were organized into a Farmer's Association, a Youth Association, and a Women's Association. Each person in the village could belong to an organization of he so chose. These associations were organized so that the Government could hold onto the people and keep close watch on them.

76. Were there many families in your hamlet who had members regrouped in the North?

Not from my hamlet, but there were some in other hamlets.

77. When you were a hamlet chief, could you tell if a person or family sympathized with the VC or not?

Yes, we could find out if a person was sympathetic to the VC or not. (What then did you do?) We would put them through a re-education course. For those who had committed some offense, we would send them to the police station for re-education, after which they would all be released.

78. How did you re-educate them?

I would send someone to talk to these people about the policy of the GVN, to urge them not to work for the Communists, because they would bring suffering to other people.

79. How many people in your hamlet did you suspect of sympathizing with the VC?

About four or five persons. (Did these people have members of their families regrouped in the North?) Yes, they had members of their families regrouped in the North. (How did these people live in the village?) They lived poorly, just like any other people in the hamlet.

80. To whom did you pay taxes during the past three years?

To the GVN. (How much did you pay per year?) About 60 piasters. (Did you have to pay contributions to the VC?) The VC have taken over our land and distributed it to others to work on. Those who remained behind had to pay taxes to the VC. We have never paid them any taxes because we left as soon as they appeared. I heard, however, that right after they took over the hamlet they began to collect taxes for guerrilla support. Each family had to contribute 30 piasters and three days of rice ration for a guerrilla. The VC had taken away the land of those who left the village for the GVN-controlled area and distributed the land to the farmers. They also took away land from the rich and gave it to the poor tenants. (How did the people feel about this?) The people did not like it much, except for the poor tenants. The poor tenants did not have to pay as much rent to the landowner as they had been doing before. For every 100 bushels of rice they now pay to the landowner only four or five bushels, and the rest they keep for themselves.

81. How was your village during the Resistance?

There was no fighting in or near my village during the Resistance, because my village was situated near the mountains.

82. What is your opinion about the French and the Americans?

The French wanted to take over Vietnam and brought much suffering to the Vietnamese people, while the Americans came here to help us. (What have the Americans done for the people?) They have helped us much. They are helping us repair roads and bridges. They help the refugees and

the poor. (Did the people in your hamlet receive any American help while you were still living in your hamlet?) Yes, they provided seeds for the farmers and rice for those near starvation. (Have you seen any Americans?) I saw them when I came out here. They did not come to my hamlet.

83. Did the province or district chiefs often come to your village while you were living there?

The province cadres came to our hamlet every now and then. (What did they do in your hamlet?) They brought us the decisions from the province level.

84. How did you hear about the fall of Mr. Diem's regime?

I heard it from the radio. (What did you think about his downfall?) The announcer said Mr. Diem had been overthown, that the revolution would restore the rights to the people. I was excited also because I believed that with Mr. Diem gone, things must be brighter and we could look forward to a better life.

85. What did the people in your village think about his downfall?

Mr. Diem personally had not done anything harmful to the people, but there were some things in his policy that made the people unhappy. (Which part of his policy went against the people's interests?) His policy forced people to move from one place to another or forced people to leave their former homes to move into the strategic hamlet.

86. Do you know who heads up the present Government?

Mr. Nguyen-van-Thieu.

87. What have you heard about the present government and its policies?

The people are not satisfied with this Government. They wonder what the government is doing. Why does the government let the VC take over more and more of its territory and push them into misery? From the point of view of a citizen, the government has not done much to satisfy the needs of the people.

88. What do the people want the government to do for them?

They wish the government would drive the Communists away and give them security.

89. What is the most pressing need of the refugees right now?

The most pressing need of the refugees at the present time is security. Security is uppermost in their mind. They wish to have security so that the Communists would not come to

bother them and so they could work in peace.

90. Do the people think that the VC are stronger than the GVN?

They see that the VC has taken over much of the GVN territory. The GVN-controlled area is smaller and smaller, while the VC are expanding. They see that the VC are stronger than the GVN. (Do the people believe that the VC will win at the end?) The educated people do not believe that the VC will win, but those who live in the VC-controlled area are influenced by the VC's propaganda and they believe the VC will win. (Which side do the refugees believe will win?) About 40 or 50 o/o of the refugees doubt whether the GVN could keep them safe from the Communists. The rest do not think anything, because they have come to the GVN-controlled area and believe that the area is safe and that they are protected.

91. Who are those that doubt the GVN strength?

They are simple citizens. (If they think the VC may come, have they done anything to protect themselves against the VC?) They have not done anything yet, but if the VC overrun their area, they will go back to their village to live. They will go back to their hamlets and villages to live with the Communists.

92. What do you think would happen to them if they went back to live with the VC?

Those the VC accuse of owing them a "blood debt", will surely be arrested and punished, but others will be left alone.

93. Did the GVN carry out any programs in your hamlet or village to help the villagers?

Not much. The Government extended credit to the people, but the program was not effective because few benifited from the program.

94. How much damage was done to your hamlet by the recent flood?

Five or six persons were killed, some houses were washed out, and many properties were damaged. (How much help did the people in your hamlet receive from the Government?) I heard that the Government would help the flood victims, but I have not seen these promises fulfilled yet. We have not received anything from the Government on that account. (What did the people think about that?) They believed that the government did help them, but that this aid did not come down to them because they had gone into the pockets of the GVN cadres.

95. Were there any military or self-defense forces stationed in your hamlet before the VC took over?

There were two platoons of militia. (Were they well armed?) They seemed to have adequate weapons. (Did the militia men come from your hamlet?) They were from the hamlet and the district. (How did they behave toward the people?) They had to carry out their orders to protect the hamlet, but some of the people in the hamlet did not like them because they encroached upon their personal interests. (What did they do?) When the VC sniped at them from a certain area, they would come to that area and burn everything down, such as sugar cane. Or they would fire into the area, and the stray bullets might hit the innocent villagers. Some of the villagers were hit by these stray bullets.

96. Did the ARVN often come to your village?

From the time the VC took over our hamlet till now, the ARVN passed that area only once. (When was it?) When there was fighting at the Ba-Gia post. When the hamlet was still secure, the ARVN came in the secure hamlets every now and then after they had conducted their operations in VC-controlled hamlets.

97. How long would the ARVN stay in your hamlet?

They stayed for one day and one night and then they were gone. (How did they behave toward the people?) They did not do anything to make people complain about them. They stayed there, they ate their own food, and then they left. (What did the people think about the ARVN?) They hoped the soldiers would behave according to their military tradition, so that people would not complain about them.

98. Did you hear what military forces are in your hamlet now?

The guerrillas were stationed there. (How many of them were there?) About twenty. (Were they from that hamlet?) They were from that hamlet. They joined the guerrilla unit to guard their hamlet. (Have you heard how the guerrillas behave toward the people?) They had to force the people to carry out the orders of the Front, such as requiring the people to do labor or to attend meetings.

99. What have you heard about the aims of the Front?

According to what I heard from the people who had attended meetings organized by the VC, the aims of the Front were to liberate the South and to fight and drive the Americans out. They also said the South would be liberated within

this year. (What do you think about the aims of the Front?) I think they will not achieve anything. All they are doing is making people's lives more miserable. (Why do you think they will not achieve anything?) Because the GVN forces are much stronger than theirs.

100. Were the families who were given land by the Front happy to get the land?

Some were happy to get more land. But others did not feel so happy because when the Front distributed land to the farmers they were expected to work for them, to pay more taxes.

101. What have you heard about life in a Front military unit?

They have to live in the mountains and in the jungles; their lives are miserable; they haven't enough food to eat. (From whom did you hear this?) From the ralliers.

102. What have you heard about Front successes, defeats, and losses?

I did not hear anything about that.

103. Are any members of your family or relatives serving in the ARVN or with the GVN?

I have some relatives working for the GVN. One is the Chairman of the Village Pacification Committee, and the other is the hamlet chief.

104. Has any fighting taken place near or in your hamlet or village?

Before the Communists took over my hamlet, there had been fighting every now and then. But since the time they controlled my hamlet there has never been any fighting. (How much damage was caused by these fights?) Some civilians were wounded and killed, the GVN forces suffered some casualties, and VC were killed. (Which side did the people blame for these fight?) First, they blamed the VC for making their lives so miserable. Second, they blamed the GVN for fighting with the VC and for burning down their houses and causing damage to their property.

105. Was your hamlet or village bombarded by artillery or aircraft?

My hamlet was not attacked by either, but other hamlets in my village had been shelled by artillery every now and then. (What did the people do then?) They went down to

their trenches or ran to the field and stayed there. (What did the people think about those shellings?) They knew that if it had not been for the VC the GVN would not have shelled their hamlets. (What did the Front tell them?) They tried to stir up people's hatred for the GVN.

106. Did any persons in your hamlet or village join the Front because they resented the attacks?

This did not happen in my hamlet, but in other hamlets some people joined the Communists because they were dissatisfied with the GVN. (What kind of dissatisfaction made them decide to join the VC?) Such as forcing them to do labor or forcing them to leave their homes.

107. Did any villagers move to the GVN-controlled areas after the attacks?

In [redacted] and [redacted] where the attacks occurred, one-third of the villagers left for the GVN-controlled areas. (Did any villagers move to Front-controlled areas after the attacks?) Yes, those who believed in the Communists moved to the areas under their control.

108. Did the Front or GVN warn the people to take cover or to leave the area before the fights?

There were times when the GVN dropped leaflets to warn the people of the coming attack, but usually the people were not informed. (What did the villagers do?) They prepared to leave the village, but the Communists also found these leaflets and they forbade the people to leave.

109. How did you and the villagers get news about what was going on?

I listened to the radio and, if the news was important, the higher cadres would be sent down to inform the people. (Were any newspapers read in the village?) We received them every now and then. We could not buy the newspaper daily because we lived too far from the town. (Was there an Information Service in your hamlet? Yes. (What did they do?) They received newspapers, but they rarely distributed them to the people. Instead, they put them up on the board at their office and let the people come and read the news themselves.

110. When did you and your family decide to leave your hamlet to come here?

The day the Communists took over my hamlet. As soon as they came, I left.

111. Have you taken refuge in a GVN-controlled area before?

Yes. (Would you describe what happened.) First we went to [redacted] village. There were about 2,000 refugees when we arrived. They came from the surrounding villages that had been taken over by the Communists. They stayed there with other villagers. They were not entirely welcome, because they hindered the villagers' work. They could not go back to the VC-controlled areas, because the GVN would not permit them to do so. And those who wanted to go to the GVN areas from the VC-controlled areas could not escape because of the VC. We had been there for a while -- about one month -- when the Communists used a bigger force to take control of [redacted] village. I left that village before the VC came.

112. How big was [redacted] village?

Over [redacted] people lived in that village, not including the refugees. There were two hamlets in that village. (What was the main occupation of the villagers?) Farming. (What did the refugees do to live?) They used up their savings. They gathered firewood and made charcoal to earn a living. (What did the refugees do when the VC took over that village?) Some of them were able to escape to other GVN-controlled areas. Others were forced by the VC to go back to their former villages. (How about the villagers?) Some of them escaped to Binh-Son District or [redacted] and the rest remained behind.

113. How long in advance did you leave the village before the VC came?

About ten days. (How did you know that the VC would come?) Because the Communists had taken over other villages surrounding [redacted] village. Also, I heard rumors that the Communists would soon attack that village. [redacted] village was surrounded on all three sides, so the Communists would sooner or later attack this village. (Where did you hear these rumors?) From the people. (How did the people know?) They got the information through the VC's propaganda. The VC told them that they would take over the village.

114. Did the refugees in [redacted] village get any assistance from the GVN?

Nothing at all.

115. What have you heard about conditions in GVN-controlled areas before you left?

When I compare the life in the GVN-controlled areas with that in the VC-controlled areas that I have heard about, I find that life here is much better. We are not starving nor are we required to do labor.

116. Were you told what the GVN would do for you and your family?

We have not gotten any help from the Government. At [redacted] there were more refugees than shelters. The refugees had to build their own shelters. Every ten or fifteen days, each person got one kilogram of rice. The GVN cadres came and told us that we would be given rice, but as of now we have very little rice. As for shelter, the Government has not done anything to help us.

117. Why did you leave your village to come out here?

Because I do not like the Communists' regime. (What do you know about the Communists' regime?) It is a dictatorship -- it makes people's lives miserable. My father was killed by the Communists. (When was your father killed by the Communists?) In 1945. (Why was he killed?) Because he was a Cao-Daist. (How many people in your family were killed by the Communists?) Five. My father, two of his younger brothers, and two of his older brothers. They were killed because they were Cao-Daists. (What were their positions in the Cao-Dai church?) They were the church officials. The Front accused the Cao-Dai church of being anti-revolutionary, but the truth was, if the church was strong, they would not be able to build their Communist regime.

118. Did you come here because, as a Cao Daist, you were afraid of the VC?

Partly because of my faith, partly because I do not agree with the VC. (Would you have come out here if you were not a Cao-Daist?) Yes, I would still come out here because I could not live with the Communists. I could not lead a miserable life.

119. How many Cao-Daists were there in your hamlet?

About 40 or 50 persons. (Have they all come out here?) Yes, except one or two. These people did not leave because they were too poor. They had no means to come out here. Also they were afraid if they came to the GVN-controlled area they would starve.

120. When you were still living in your hamlet, did you hear rumors that the VC would come to your hamlet?

The VC had told people in other hamlets that sooner or later they would come to attack our hamlet.

121. How long did you think you would be away from your hamlet when you left?

I told myself I would come back when the GVN retook it from the hands of the Communists and guaranteed our security. I believed I would be away for one year, because the GVN cadres had told us that if our villages were taken over by the Communists, the GVN would retake these areas in a year, and we could all go back to our former homes.

122. What did you bring with you when you came out here?

We left our hamlet with our clothes and a few thousand piasters.

123. Is there anyone in your village who will look after your property?

Whatever we left behind, the Communists took: rice, food, and tools. For those families who have been absent for a while, the VC will either take their possessions or distribute them to others. For those who have been away a short time, their property will be sealed and left there for the owners when they come back.

124. How long do you think the war will go on?

I think it will go on for two or three more years. (Why?) Because the people hate war and also because the Government has said that the war will have to be resolved. It can not last much longer.

125. Do you blame anyone for causing you to leave your village?

I blame the Communists. It was because of them that I had to leave my village. (What do the other refugees say?) They agree.

126. Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the help you received from the Government?

Up till now, my family has received a few kilograms of rice. It was not enough, but we are very grateful for any help the Government gives us. My only wish is to

get away from the Communists. A few days ago I signed a paper in which I was promised 2,000 piasters for a shelter for my family to live in. (Have you received that money?) Not yet. Probably in five or ten more days. As for other refugees, they hope that the Government will help them better, because if the Government does not help them, they may have to go back to their villages.

127. Have any refugees who lived in [redacted] resettlement area moved back to their hamlet?

No.

128. What did you plan to do when you left your village?

I thought of looking for some way to earn a living, such as by working for the Government. I have had some experience in Government work on the village and hamlet level. If I cannot find employment with the Government, then I will have to work for others as a hired hand. I have applied for a position in the Mobile Administrative team, but I have not gotten an answer yet.

129. Did anyone try to persuade you or the other refugees to go back to your hamlet since you came here?

No. But other refugees have been persuaded to come back by their relatives who remained behind in their villages. (Why?) These relatives lived in the VC-controlled areas and they were influenced by the VC's propaganda. The VC told them that they were very strong and they had liberated districts and towns. The VC urged those relatives to appeal to other refugees to come back. They also appealed to those who had escaped to the GVN-controlled areas after they had attended the VC-instigated demonstrations. (Did these relatives tell the refugees how life was in the VC-controlled areas?) They said life in the VC-controlled areas was no better than in the GVN-controlled area, but that they were afraid the VC might attack these refugee camps. So they urged the refugees to leave before the VC came. They were taken in by the VC's propaganda.

130. Have you seen people from other countries besides the Americans?

I have seen the Australians and the Filipinos. (What do you think about them?) I think of them as members of the Free World who came here to help us to protect our freedom. (Did you hear what others thought about them?) They said these foreigners came here to help Vietnam. (What kind of help have you seen them doing for Vietnam?) The Americans have brought many of their products here. The strategic

hamlets were built with the help of Australians -- the barbed wire was sent to Vietnam from Australia.

131. What did you talk to your friends about when you met together?

We talked about our work and about the situation. We discussed the politics of the Free World and that of the Communists. (Which side did you think would win?) We wished other countries in the Free World would help us defeat the Communists. (Did you dare to criticize the VC?) Yes. (Were you afraid your criticisms might be reported back to the VC?) No. When we said something, we were willing to take the consequence.

132. Were there any families in the village that you could trust?

I can say at least 60 o/o of the population in the village were on my side. (What about the rest?) Because we did not have the same ideals. I was for the GVN and they were for the VC. About 30 o/o of the people in the village were for the Communists. These people either had some members of their families working for the Communists or they were poor and were taken in by the VC's propaganda, which promised them land after they took over the village.

133. Who would you say was the most repected person in your village?

Mr ..... (What did he do?) He was the village chief. (What made the people respect him?) He was elected village chief after the other village chiefs had caused a lot of dissatisfaction among the villagers. He was nice to the people, so they respected him. He was not concerned about his personal interests. Rather, he tried to meet the people's needs and to satisfy them. In one word, those who were on the side of the people -- who worked for the people -- these were the ones the people respected.

134. Who do you think are the best-informed people in your village on what is happening in the village?

The village chief. (Who do you think are the best informed in your village about what is happening among the VC?) Mr. ..... He is now working for the VC. (What did he do before?) He worked for the Communists for a while, and then he rallied. He lived with the GVN for a time, then came back to his village. When the VC came, he did not leave. He remained behind and now works for the Communists. (When did he join the VC?) In 1962. (When did he rally?) He rallied in 1963. (Do the VC trust him?) Yes.

135. If something happened in your village or hamlet, how did you know about it?

The people would come and tell me about it. (Did the people often come to your house?) Yes, they often came during the day and at night. (What did they tell you when they came to your house?) They told me about their needs, such as when some members of their families were arrested wrongly by the GVN because the latter suspected them of working for the Communists. (What would you do then?) I would make my own investigation among the people in the village. I asked them about their opinions as to whether or not these people worked for the VC. I told them if they believed these people did not work for the VC, then I would do my best to help them. (Did the people inform you about the VC's movements?) Yes, when they saw the VC appear out-side, they came to tell me. Weren't they afraid the VC might know they had reported to you?) Yes, they were afraid, and they asked me not to tell. (How many people in your hamlet could you rely on to get information about the VC?) About 50 or 60. (How did you get their cooperation?) I got to know them and, talked to them; and when I found I could trust them, I said what I expected from them. and they agreed to cooperate with me. (What were their occupations?) They were farmers and small merchants. That night before the VC attacked [redacted] hamlet, the people from [redacted] sent a secret warning to us. It was because of this information that I got out of the hamlet in time.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

Subject was cooperative and seemed sincere. His knowledge about his hamlet was extensive because he was a former hamlet chief. Having left as soon as the VC came in, he did not know much about recent life in his hamlet.

NO. AGR 25

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

1. Name of interviewer [redacted]

2. Name of subject [redacted]

3. Time and date of interview :
   From 5:00 to 5:30 on August [redacted] 1965
   From _____ to _____ on _____ 19___
   From _____ to _____ on _____ 19___

4. Place of interview :
   Quang Ngai

5. Sex of subject : Male (X) Female ( )

6. Age of subject : 35

7. Ethnic background : Vietnamese

8. Place of birth :
   hamlet [redacted]
   village [redacted]
   district Son Tinh
   province Quang Ngai

9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :
   hamlet [redacted]
   village [redacted]
   district Son Tinh
   province Quang Ngai

10. (a) Length of residence in last location : _____
    (b) Who controlled the place of residence :
    GVN ( ) VC (X) Contested ( ) How long? 8 months

NO. AGR 25

11. Number of brothers (3) and sisters (3)

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : 3

13. Marital status : Married

14. Number of children : 2

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age : none

16. Parents with subject (X) or not with subject ( )
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject( ) or not with subject (X)
Wife with subject ( ) or not with subject (X)
Children with subject( ) or not with subject (X)

17. Religion : Cao Dai

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : Hamlet chief

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation Middle-class farmer
(b) Landowner? 5 " mâu "

20. Education :
illiterate ( )
literate ( )
schooling completed : Completed elementary school

21. Any relatives in VC : No

22. Any relatives in GVN : 2

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by :
(a) French none
(b) GVN none
(c) VC 5

24. When became a refugee : January, 1965

AGR

INTERVIEW

26

[redacted]

THE RAND CORPORATION

[redacted]

STUDIES OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT
OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR-26

Date if Interview ; August [redacted] 1965
Subject's Category : Refugee - April [redacted] 1965
Area of Residence : [redacted] village
Mo Duc district
Quang Ngai province

1. How long have you been here ?

   Two months and twenty days .

2. Where did you come from ?

   From [redacted] village .

3. How did you get here ?

   I got here by trucks which the district had sent down to get us out.

4. Would you tell me about your trip from your village to this center ?

   They brought us here to rally. There were many of us, we filled three trucks. (How many of you were there ?) Fifty eight persons in all. (Were they all young men like you or were there any old men and women and children ?) There were old people and children also.

5. Before you came out here, did you receive any leaflets urging you to leave your village ?

   We heard the appeals from the Government for us to rally. First we were taken to the resettlement camp then I was brought here as a rallier instead of a refugee.

6. Which resettlement were you taken to ?

   [redacted]

7. How big was your village ?

   About 4000 constituents. (How many hamlets did it include ?) [redacted] hamlets. (How many families were there in each hamlet ?) Seven or eight hundred persons lived in each hamlet.

8. How many persons are left in your village?

   I do not know about my village but in my hamlet there were just a few families left--five or six families were left.

9. Why did these families not want to come out ?

   They could not come out. They were watched constantly, [redacted], they could not get away. We were able to get out because we took the advantage of the GVN mopping-up operation in my village to come out here.

10. In your opinion, why do the VC want to keep the people in their villages ?

Because they live off the people. If the people leave the villages, the VC have no one to live with. Therefore, they have to keep the people with them.

11. How many young men were left in your village ?

I do not know about my village because I did not go around the village. I am sure there are some young men left in the village but I do not know the number.

12. What was your occupation before the VC took over your village ?

I was a teacher of the village school.

13. How was your life then ? Did you make enough to support yourself and your family ?

I had been a private teacher and I made over one thousand piasters a month. But later, because of my health, I asked to teach at the village school; my salary there was 600 piasters a month. Now, I am not able to do anything. Each day I get 20 piasters from this center for food but my family is living at Mo-Duc and they do not get anything.

14. How much land did you own while you were living in the village ?

The land I now own I inherited from my parents. My parents had been classifed as rich landowners. When the VC came, my parents divided the land between their children to reduce the taxes. Since we are a big family, each one of us got one "mau".

15. Are your parents still living ?

My father has passed away but my mother is still living and she lives with us. She is blind.

16. When were your parents classified as rich landowners ?

When we were living under the Viet Minh.

17. Do you recall your life under the Viet Minh ?

They made us pay taxes to them and when we did not have enough money we had to sell part of our land. When I was 16 years old, I was required to do labor work for them. My health was very bad, I could not stand the rigors of labor

and I had to hire other people to go in my place.

18. Have you had news from your two brothers whom you said had been regrouped in the North ?

I got no news from them. (Do you know if they have been back?) I have not heard from them.

19. When did your brothers go North ?

In 1954 after the cease-fire. (Were they married when they left ?) Yes. (Where are their families now ?) They are all at the resettlement camp.

20. What did your other brother do ?

When the village was still under the control of the GVN, he worked for the GVN. (What is he doing now ?) He and his family are at the resettlement camp.

21. What are your plans and prospects now ?

I am living here as a rallier while my wife and children stay in the resettlement camp. I have a wife, two children and a mother. My children are still young. My mother cannot see. In her own village and her own home, she could help herself somewhat. Now, living in strange surroundings she is confused. Life has become very hard for them all. A year ago we were living in our village, we had land and at every harvest there was rice. Also, I was a teacher and every month I brought in the money for the family. Since we came out here, we have received three kilogrammes of rice and 90 piasters. The rice was not adequate to feed my family. Also 90 piasters is not enough for even firewood.

22. What do you think you can do to help the financial situation of your family ?

I hope I can go back to teaching to support my family.

23. How big is your family ?

My family is composed of my mother, my wife, my two children and myself.

24. What do you think about leaving your village to come out here ?

I knew that if I came out here, our land would be confiscated, but I could not live with the Communists or under the Communist regime.

25. Were there many families in your village who had members regrouped in the North ?

I was not a village official therefore, I was not informed about those things, I am sure there must be families with members regrouped in the North.

26. Do you not think that families with members regrouped in the North were well nonsidered by the VC ?

If it is true, then why is it that the younger brother of a regroupee was killed by the VC. This is an example I give to you to answer your question.

27. Have any members of your family been killed by the VC ?

One of my brothers was arrested by the VC in 1962 and we have not seen or heard from him since. The rumors were that "the grass has grown green upon him", that means he has been dead a long time. (How old was your brother when he was arrested ?) He was 36. (Did he have a family ?) Yes, he had a wife and two children.

28. What was his occupation when he was arrested by the VC ?

He was the inter-family group chief. (What did he do for the VC to arrest him ?) The VC suspected him of spying for the GVN. He was the inter-family group chief, at night he used to stay in different places because he was afraid the VC might come and get him at night.

29. What do you think about the fact that your two brothers were regrouped in the North while your other brother was arrested by the VC ?

My opinion is that one can mind only one's own business. If my regrouped brothers are still living in the North, what good would it do me ? If they have returned to the South, I do not think they are still alive, the war is intensive and you hear of people dying by the hundreds everyday. The Communists do not treat the regroupees' families differently from others. My opinion is that I should mind my own business.

30. Have you ever been approached by the VC to work for them ?

When they took over the village, they forced me to work for them. There was nothing I could do about that. (Before they took over your village, did they persuade you to work for them ?) No.

31. Did the VC often come to your village prior to their taking over the control of the village ?

My hamlet was far from the mountains, the VC did not come there. They went to those hamlets that were located near the mountains or the jungles.

32. How many families or persons have left your village or hamlet to come to the GVN-controlled areas ?

Over 3000 people have left the village to come out here. They all stay at [redacted] resettlement area. When you have time, go there and see for yourself.

33. Did they come out here together ?

Most of them came out here in groups, but some of them had to escape and they came out here one by one.

34. Why did these people leave their village ?

They left their village for freedom. They knew if they lived in the GVN-controlled areas they would have freedom, they would not have to worry about the bombs and the bullets. If they lived with the VC their lives would be miserable, they might get killed anytime.

35. What made life in the VC-controlled areas so miserable for these people ?

They urged people to make contribution after contribution to them. They forced the young men and young women to work for them. As for the population, they conscripted them into working for them, digging trenches, making bamboo spikes.

36. Suppose your village and hamlet were not bombed or shelled, would you think the people would have stayed in their village?

They left when the GVN soldiers came to their village, the village had not been attacked at all. They went right out after the soldiers.

37. When did the GVN soldiers come to your village ?

On April [redacted] 1965.

38. When the GVN soldiers came to your village, did they fire upon the village ?

They burned down the houses the VC had hid in.

39. Were any civilians killed in that attack ?

I do not know about other villages, but in [redacted] village no one was killed.

40. What did the people feel after this attack in which their houses were burned down ?

They hoped the Government would take care of them.

41. Which side did these people blame for causing damage to their houses ?

In this war situation, people did not care about their houses. They came out here and hoped the government would give them assistance, materially and morally. In my opinion, when the country is peaceful again we can go back to our village and rebuild what has been destroyed.(What is the use of having houses if we could not live in them ?) We had to let the Communists make use of them. We all hope one day the GVN soldiers will liberate our village so we can return to it.

42. What was the main occupation of the people in your village ?

They were all farmers. (How did they live ?) [redacted] village was the richest village in [redacted] district. After the harvest, everyone in the village had plenty of rice. No one has ever had to go begging or be unemployed. (Were most people rich, medium, or poor?) Many families in that village were classified as rich.

43. Was your hamlet a strategic hamlet ?

Yes, it was a strategic hamlet. (When was it organized ?) In 1962. (Did the people have to move into the strategic hamlets ?) The isolated families had to be moved into the strategic hamlet for the sake of security. (Could you say that the majority of the people who lived in the strategic hamlet had their former homes outside ?) When the strategic hamlet was organized, it was intended to enclose all the families in that area inside of the barbed wire. A few families who lived in the strategic hamlet had been moved from their former homes,

44. Did these people get any assistance from the government ?

Each family got 2000 piasters from the government.

45. Did the government help the people with the building of the strategic hamlet ?

The government did not help us. When we were building the strategic hamlet, each family in the hamlet had to contribute something such as bamboo to construct it. If a family did not have bamboo, they would have to pay for it from their own pocket.

46. How did living in the strategic hamlet affect your life and earning ?

In my opinion, the people were better off living in the strategic hamlet because they were able to sleep peacefully at night. If they stayed in their former homes, they would have to be afraid of the GVN and the VC. (Why should they be afraid of the GVN ?) Because the GVN would accuse them of working clandestinely for the VC since their homes were located in an isolated area or near the mountains. (Why should they be afraid of the VC ?) They should be afraid because the VC might come and force them to work for them, to labor for them.

47. What did you dislike about the strategic hamlet ?

I cannot find anything in the strategic hamlet that I disliked. (How about the restriction of movement ?) For our security, these movements should be restricted.

48. What did you like about it ?

In my opinion, if it had not been for the Communists we would not have to live in the strategic hamlet. I would rather live freely than be bound by rules and restrictions.

49. Were the GVN village and hamlet authorities elected by the people or were they appointed by the government ?

They were elected by the people. (How did they behave toward the people ?) They were bad under Mr. Diem's regime, they were dictatorial and they abused their positions. After the Revolution in November 1963, the officials were elected by the people. Since then, they served people more and were nice to people.

50. Was there anyone in your village or hamlet who joined the VC because they were dissatisfied with the way the village was run ?

Although my village was located at the foot of the mountain, no one had "gone to the mountain". Through the VC's persuasion and urging, some persons in the village had agreed to work for them in this and that capacity. A few of these persons have come out here but many of them still remain in the village because they are afraid of the VC.

51. Who controlled your village a year ago ?

The GVN. The village was entirely under the control of the GVN.

52. Did the Front carry out any terroristic acts in your village or kill any of the people ?

Our village was situated near the mountains and we were suspected of being more sympathetic to the VC.

53. How did the VC behave toward the people from the time they took over your village ?

They did not trust families that had members working for the GVN in such capacity as Self Defense Corps. They suspected these families. (What did the VC do to these families ?) They have not done anything yet. However, they restricted their movement, they would not let them move about.

54. Has the Front/~~anyone~~ killed in your village ?

I have not seen it with my own eyes, but I heard that in 1962 the VC killed many people in the village. (Did they kill anyone after they had taken over the village ?) They killed one person. (What did that person do ?) He was the inter-family group chief. (Did the villagers think the killing was justified or not ?) He was an old man. He might give himself away with his talk, but he was not a bad man.

55. How did the VC recruit young men into their armed forces ?

Those young men who remained behind had to work for the VC because they lived in the area under their control. (Do you know how many young men have been recruited into their armed forces ?) These young men worked for them as guerrillas and their duties were to guard and protect the village. (How many guerrillas were there in your village when you left ?) There were four or five guerrillas in my hamlet. These young men joined the guerrillas because they were in a position where they could not possible refuse to cooperate with the VC. When the GVN soldiers came they too left for the GVN-controlled area in order to serve the right cause. Only a few of them remained behind.

56. How did the villagers feel about Front control ?

The villagers did not trust the Front, they did not believe in the Front. They knew that the Front was/talk, nothing all would come from Front promises.

57. How did the people in your village feel about the Front before the Front controlled your village ?

I do not know how they felt.

58. Is your village a combat village ?

The village is full of foxholes and trenches. It is now controlled by the Communists. They planted booby traps and mines. I do not know where they planted them because I was not a member of the guerrilla group. (Did the Communists force the people to build the combat hamlet ?) Wherever they went the Communists made use of the people's labor for their own ends.

59. How did life in a Front Combat Hamlet differ from life in a GVN strategic hamlet ?

Life in the strategic hamlet was much happier but the people were forced to live in a position from which there was no escape, they had to resign themselves to their fate. The people knew they could not live with the Communists and the Communists would be defeated soon. However, the people kept their own counsel, they did not dare to tell their thoughts to the Communists.

60. Why did the people think that the Communists would be defeated ?

Because the GVN soldiers were very strong. Wherever the GVN soldiers went they were accompanied by tanks, armored cars. The people had seen these when the GVN soldiers conducted the mopping-up operation in their village. Wherever the GVN soldiers went they had the infantry and airplanes, while the Communists had nothing; they had some weapons, but how could they stand against the GVN soldiers ? When the GVN soldiers came, the Communists ran away leaving the villagers to themselves, and yet they said they would protect the villagers. What could they do really ? They only brought more misery to the people.

61. How many people in your village have left to work for the GVN ?

Many. Some have left to enlist in the GVN armed forces, others joined the militia or became members of the village council. Many people in my village worked for the GVN in this and that capacity.

62. How many people in your village left to work for the VC last year ?

No one in my hamlet left to work for the VC last year.

When I left the village there were about seven or eight young men left in the village. These young men were forced to work for the VC. The VC did not use persuasion with them. They had a list of all the young men in the hamlet, when they came they read the list out loud and those who still remained behind automatically became guerrillas. (Why did these young men remain behind ?) They kept their own counsel.

63. Did you say that your brother-in-law and sister-in-law were killed by the VC ?

Yes. (When were they killed ?) Last year. (What did they do prior to being killed by the VC?) Under the GVN, my brother-in-law was a hamlet chief. He stayed in his home during the day but at night he had to stay in other places. His village was a contested area, the GVN controlled it during the day and at night the VC roamed the village. One night the VC caught him, they took him to the mountain and killed him. (Why did they kill his wife too ?) They suspected her of spying for the GVN and they killed her. (Did they have any children of their own ?) They had four, they were all young. (With whom are they living ?) They are living with their grandmother and relatives.

64. Were you or any members of your family taken by the Front for reeducation ?

Of course. I was sent to the mountain for reeducation. (How long did you spend in your reeducation-course ?) The lecture lasted for only one day but they made us stay in the mountain for 13 or 14 days. They suspected me for working for the GVN or at least sympathizing with the GVN.

65. How many people in your village attended this reeducation course with you ?

All those they suspected in the village were required to attend this course. (Do you know the number ?) No, I do not. (Were there any women ?) There were men and women.

66. What did you learn in that reeducation course ?

They (VC) said they were strong, they were fighting to liberate the people, to drive out the imperialists, to bring happiness to the people and land to the farmers. They said these were their aims.

67. Did they say when the war would be over ?

They said we had to prepare for long-term resistance.

68. Did they say what they plan to do in 1965 ?

The war in 1965 would be more intensive, they would stage big attacks on the GVN.

69. Did they say what they planned to do during this rainy season ?

I attended this course last year. It would be too far-fetched to talk about their plan for this year's rainy season. (When did you attend that course ?) In November 1964.

70. You said you stayed in the mountain for 13 or 14 days and you attended a lecture for only one day, what did you do the rest of the time ?

We just sat there. They required us to carry rice from one place to another. (Where did you carry the rice to ?) We walked and walked, we just followed where they led us. I did not know the place. (How much rice did each of you have to carry each time ?) Each of us had to carry from six to 12 "ang" of rice. I carried six "ang" each time.

71. Did the Front hold meetings with the villagers in your village ?

Yes. (How often did they hold the meetings ?) I do not remember how many times they had held the meetings, but I know that they wanted the people to dig trenches or plant bamboo spikes every time they summoned people to a meeting. (What did they say at the meeting?) They explained to the people their works, what they were expected to do. They said trenches and mines would protect the villagers from the GVN soldiers.

72. Has any villager refused to attend these meetings ?

No one dared. They said the villagers' duty was to dig trenches and plant booby traps and they (VC) themselves would be in charge of the fighting.

73. Did the Front people say anything about the bombing of North Vietnam ?

Even before the VC took over the control of the village, I had heard of the bombing in the North by the American and Vietnamese Air Force. (Did the Front people later tell you about that ?) Yes. (What did they say ?) They said the airplanes were sent to bomb the North but they were able to shoot the airplanes down. (Did they say how many airplanes they had shot down ?) They said one or two airplanes were shot down every day. (What explanations did they give about

these air attacks ?) They did not say. They mentioned that last August American ships encroached upon their waters and that was why they fired at the ships and created an incident last year.

74. What did the people think about these attacks on the North ?

I do not know.

75. What do you yourself think about these attacks on the North ?

I only know of myself, I let others do what they want to do.

76. Did you belong to any village organization while the Front was in control of your hamlet ?

No. (Did they not force you to do so ?) They told me to join the Youth Association but I told them that I was too old for that.

77. How many VC organizations were there in your village ?

There were Youths'Association, Farmers'Association and Women's Association. (Did the VC require every person in the village to join one of these organizations ?) They went to each family and urged the people to join these organizations.

78. How did the Front control your hamlet ?

They organized an autonomous team for the village and one for each hamlet. (How many members were there in the autonomous team ?) I am not sure, I think there is a chairman, finance-economy cadre, a security cadre, and/propaganda, culture, and indoctrination cadre. The chairman of the village autonomous team was a regroupee; he was captured by the GVN and imprisoned for a while, later the GVN released him and now he works for the VC.

79. To whom did you pay taxes during the past three years ?

The GVN.

80. How much did you have to pay to the GVN?

Very little, 70 piasters a year.

81. Did the VC/come to your village or hamlet for collections of any kind ?

No. They took over the control of our village just recently, therefore, we had not had to pay taxes to them yet.

Besides the harvest season had not come when I left.

82. Did your family or other families in the village pay any contributions to the VC since they took control of your village ?

They came and asked for one or two cans of rice every now and then.

83. Has the VC carried out a land reform program in your village ?

How can they ? The majority of the villagers have left the village already. (Did they not take the land from the rich and give it to the poor ?) The VC took the land from the rich and the landowners who had deserted the village to go to GVN-controlled areas and gave the land to the poor to farm. As for distributing all the land available in the village the VC have not done that.

84. Did the VC tell the villagers what would happen to their land and property if they left their village ?

They said if any villagers left the village to go to GVN-controlled areas, they would confiscate their land and property. They would visit each family and if they found the family missing, they would destroy everything, they would take down the wooden doors and distribute what was left in the house to the poor.

85. Was there much damage done to your village during the Resistance ?

Yes. About a dozen houses were burned down, 15 or 20 persons were killed. (How much damage was done to your family ?) No one in my family was killed during the Resistance but one of our houses had to be torn down because the house next to it was in flames and we were afraid ours might catch fire.

86. What do you think about the French and the Americans ?

The French were colonialists and imperialists, they came here with the intention of taking over Vietnam. The Americans came here to help Vietnam drive out the Communists.

87. How often did the GVN officials visit your village ?

The GVN officials were close to the people in order to know the needs of the people.

88. What do you think about the GVN ?

The government should serve the people and the government cadres should be elected by the people. This way they will

know the needs of the people and can keep close to the people.

89. Did you hear about the downfall of Mr. Diem ?

Yes. (What did the Front tell the villagers ?) They were not there then. (Do you know who heads up the government ?) Mr. Nguyen-Van-Thieu. (What have you heard about the present government and its policies ?) I heard nothing.

90. Did the GVN carry out any programs in your hamlet to help the villagers ?

The government organized first-aid stations, built schools, and lent money to people so they could have some capital to start off with. (Did your family benefit from that program ?) Yes. (Could all the villagers borrow money from the government if they wanted to ?) Yes, anyone could borrow the money. The poor could borrow money but a lesser amount. The amount of money a family could borrow depended on the value of their property.

91. Do you think those programs carried out by the government were effective ?

I am thinking of the present. We have come here as refugees. Few of us carried much of anything with us. Our lives have become very hard, we cannot rely on what we possess but on what we may receive from the government. If the government does not help us, I think the refugees in my camp will face starvation soon. The number of refugees there is large but there are no jobs available for them to do. You cannot live on selling things to make a profit because there are no buyers. The women have to stay home to look after the babies while the men go out to find work that can bring 50 or 30 piasters at the end of the day so they can support their families.

92. Were there any military or self-defense forces stationed in your hamlet ?

There was the Combat Youth. (How many of them were there ?) About 30. There was a platoon of the SDC stationed in the village. Also, the GVN soldiers would come to the village every now and then; sometimes they came in one-battalion strength, other times about one company stationed there for a few days.

93. How did these armed forces behave toward the people ?

They did not do anything worth complaining about. The Combat

Youths and the SDC were the children of the families in that village. (How about the ARVN ?) A few ARVN soldiers behaved foolishly and some villagers complained about them.

94. How did the guerrillas behave toward the people ?

The people have left the village, how can the guerrillas behave in any way toward them. (You did not leave your village until a few months after the VC had taken over, how did the guerrillas treat the people during those months ?) When people came and asked them for permission to leave the village, they ignored the requests. (Did they steal things from the people when the people were not present ?) They usually did not steal but there were some who might take things when they found that the families had left the village.

95. How did the people feel about these guerrillas ?

These guerrillas were also the children of or relatives of the families in the village. The villagers had complaints about them.

96. Did the VC troops often pass through your village or hamlet ?

They came last August (1964) to attack the village. After that they left, then in October of the same year they came in again and that time they stayed.

97. How many times has your village been attacked ?

The VC attacked the village twice; once in February 1962 and the other time in August 1964.

98. Would you describe these attacks ?

In February 1962, the VC intended to fight the GVN soldiers. They came in with a strong force and there was fighting between them and the SDC. At the sound of gunfire, the villagers streamed out of the village carrying on their shoulders their possessions and their children. (Where were they going ?) They were going to other villages where there was no fighting. They waited for the fighting to be over so they could go back to their homes. (How long did the fighting last ?) About half a day. (How strong were the GVN forces then ?) There were one or two SDC platoons. (Did you hear of the casualties ?) Some GVN soldiers were wounded, some were killed. As for the VC, our soldiers said many of them were killed and wounded but they (VC) carried them away.

99. What did the people think about that attack ?

These VC came to the village to create trouble. They wanted to raise their prestige with the people, to make people believe that they were strong. (Did the people believe that ?) No, the people were not duped. (Why did the people not believe that the VC were strong ?) If the VC were strong, why did they not overrun the GVN soldiers and enter the village ? Why did they have to withdraw ?

100. After that attack, did the VC often come to your village at night ?

I do not know because I lived in the hamlet which was located farthest away from the mountain. I do not know about the other hamlets.

101. Would you describe the attack in August 1964 ?

Usually, I left the house at night to sleep in different places. That night the rain was heavy and the wind was strong so I stayed home. They came in that night. When I heard the gunfire, I ran to the trench--each family in that village had a trench. Everybody ran to his trench. A little later I heard their voices, they had come to the hamlet. The people stayed in their trenches, quiet and motionless , all night. The next morning when they got up to get ready to leave the hamlet, they found the VC all over the place. The VC had moved in at night and they were with us all night and we did not know it. The Communists stood guard at the gates of the strategic hamlet. As usual when the Communists came, the people left the village in droves. This time the communists turned them back when the people wanted to pass through the gates. They absolutely forbade anyone to leave the strategic hamlet. They did not go to any houses in the hamlet, they were busy digging foxholes in all four corners of the hamlet. The people were so scared, they were afraid that when the GVN soldiers came there would be fighting, their property might be damaged, and they might get killed. When the GVN soldiers came they were accompanied by tanks and armored cars. The people went back to their houses and went down to their trenches. They sat there waiting. Then they heard the gunfire, the sound was deafening and the people did not know "heaven from earth". Outside there was fighting; in the trenches the people worried because they did not know what was happening. An hour or so later, the sound of gunfire died out and everything seemed quiet, people began to come out of their trenches. Quite a few houses were burned. People began to stream out of the village to go to other places. The trees were cut down and lying all around, the branches and leaves strewn all over the place. The people with their possessions on their

shoulders and their children with them went out of the gate, the streets were swarming with people ready to evacuate. When the people reached the gates they found that the Communists were still there, they were in their foxholes all the time. They turned the people back telling them that alive or dead they should remain in their village. The people cried and begged, but the Communists would not hear of it. The people stood there for a long time and when they saw that the Communists would not let them go, they went back to their houses and went down to their trenches to wait. At about 5 p.m. the GVN soldiers came again and this time they were accompanied by five tanks and the infantry. There was also an airplane--a recon airplane. This time it would be decisive fighting. Old and young stayed in their trenches with their hands over their ears because the noises were so deafening: overhead the airplane was flying very low, on the ground there were the sounds of the tanks advancing, and then the gunfire. All the people could do was to pray to "heaven and earth" so that the fighting would soon be over. About an hour later the tanks were able to penetrate the village, the GVN soldiers came in and told the people to evacuate. Everyone left the village then, they did not care about their homes or anything, they just wanted to get to other villages which had security to spend the night. Some houses were burning but people did not care about them, they just let them burn. The next morning they returned to their homes and went to the trenches and found the bodies of the dead VC lying one on top of another. They had been lying there for two days and the smell was beginning to make one nauseated.

102. Did any civilians get killed ?

A little child was wounded and that was all. (How much damage was done to the people's property ?) Many houses were burned.

103. What did the people think after that attack ?

I do not know what the people thought, but it is my opinion that the VC came to our hamlet, kept it for one day, and fought the GVN for the whole day with a sole purpose in mind--to raise their prestige among the people. After the attack, the people saw with their own eyes that the VC losses were high.

104. During the interval between August and November 1964, did the VC often come to your hamlet ?

After that attack, the GVN soldiers left the village. As for the people, some of them got scared and left their village to stay in the more secure areas. Those were the rich, those who could afford to leave. As for the rest of the

population, they had to stay because they had been farmers all their lives; if they went to town, what could they do there to earn a living ? When the Communists saw that the people had finally returned to their village, they again appeared.

105. Would you describe how they appeared this time ?

They came in and took over everything. They organized the autonomous team, Youths'association, Women's association. (Was there any fighting this time ?) No. (Did they forbid people to leave this time too ?) Yes.

106. What have you heard about the aims of the Front ?

To liberate the people, to bring land to the farmers, and food and clothing to the population. (Who told you about them ?) The Communists. (What do you think about them ?) I had seen enough during the Resistance when we had to live with the Communists. The people were miserable, they had to do work for them, pay taxes to them. When the GVN took over, the people lived more happily. Now, they came and said that they would bring food and clothing to the people, the people would think twice before believing them.

107. What have you heard about life in Front military units ?

They had to fight and they might get killed. They might get killed and their families wouldn't know whether they were alive or dead. They might get killed and their bodies left to decompose, no one to bury them. The Communists said the country would remember the dead. I do not know about the country remembering them but I know that their families will lose a strong hand in the family. In the GVN, when a soldier dies, his family gets assistance from the government; in the VC, the family of the dead VC gets nothing.

108. What have you heard about Front successes, defeats, and losses ?

We knew nothing at all except what they told us. One day they told us they had attacked this place, the next day they told us they had mounted another attack on another place. (Do you remember the name of the attacks they said they had mounted ?) They mentioned an attack at An-Lo where they routed the GVN soldiers to a man. (Do you remember the date of that attack ?) I do not know the date and they did not tell us. They said they fought the GVN soldiers in that village and took over control of that village.

109. Do you have any relatives or close friends serving with the Front ?

No.

110. Suppose you were informed that your two regroupee brothers had come back to the South, would you try to contact them ?

I was not informed about their whereabouts, but if I knew they were in the South, I would write to them and urge them to rally. If the situation permited, I would write to them and get someone to take it to them. (Do you think they will come back ?) I think so. They went to regroupe in the North because living under the Communists regime was too much for them. We did not have enough money to pay taxes or enough food to eat. The GVN cadres knew about their absence and they regretted it very much. They said these two guys were not Communists, they left because they were in a position where they had to obey orders. (Did they volunteer to go North ?) They were forced to go.

111. How many times did the GVN soldiers conduct their mopping up operations in your village ?

Twice. Once in November 1964 and the other time on April 14, 1965.

112. Would you describe the first mopping up operation ?

When the GVN arrived the VC did not fire back. (Where were they ?) They hid somewhere, no one knew. The next time the GVN soldiers came, I left the village to come out here.

113. When the GVN soldiers came the first time, did they urge the people to evacuate ?

Yes. (How many people left their village that time ?) About two thousand. (Why did you not evacuate with them that time ?) The Communists threatened us, they said when the GVN soldiers came they would arrest anyone who stayed in the houses. So when the GVN soldiers came, I ran with others to the hamlets further away. (Were these hamletsunder the GVN control ?) No, under the VC. You see, these people had something to do with guerrillas and they were afraid of the GVN, that was why they ran into hiding. They came back to their hamlet when the GVN soldiers had left. As soon as the GVN soldiers left, they came back in order to stop the people from leaving. Some people were able to leave with the soldiers but others were not able to go.

114. In this operation, did the GVN soldiers fire at or destroy

anything ?

They burned down the houses of people who worked for the Communists. (What do you think about the GVN soldiers burning those houses ?) The Communists had to take the consequences of their actions. Besides the Communists have no family and no country, so what do they care if their homes were burned down ?

115. What did the people do when they could not leave their village ?

They remained there and continued to work, but their possessions were all packed. They were waiting for the next mopping-up operation to leave.

116. Would you describe the second mopping-up operation ?

This time the operation was conducted to mop up the entire village. It included all the hamlets in that village. The last operation was for three hamlets only. The GVN came with 12 or 13 tanks and airplanes. (Was there any fighting ?) No, the VC had all run for cover. (What did the people do ?) They got ready and left with the soldiers. (How many of them left this time ?) About two thousand.

117. Did you hear broadcasts from aircraft or read leaflets telling you to leave ?

Yes. (How many times did you see the leaflets ?) We heard broadcasts from aircraft.

118. Did the Front or the GVN warn the people to take cover or to leave the area before the fight ?

No.

119. What did you hear from the broadcast ?

The broadcast urged the Front people to return to the nationalist just cause so that they could remake their lives and live happily.

120. What did you think of what they said ?

Life is much better off with the GVN, you have freedom. In the VC-controlled areas people are not able to do anything, they do not have salt to eat, there is no supply from anywhere. They have rice because they can grow rice, but they cannot buy other thing. Also, the VC required people to do work for them.

121. Was your hamlet bombarded by artillery or aircraft ?

It was not bombarded by aircraft but it was bombarded by artillery. Usually the shells fell outside the hamlet and thus did not cause any damage in term of human lives. However, in 1963 one shell fell right into a farmer's house situated outside of the strategic hamlet and one person was killed and another wounded. (What did the villagers think about that ?) They said that since there was the strategic hamlet, why didn't these people stay in it, why did they stay outside to get killed ?

122. Did any persons in your hamlet join the Front because they resented the attacks ?

Not from my village. There was no one from my village who had gone to work for the VC before the VC took over the village.

123. Why did they not like to work for the VC ?

They hated the VC. (Why did they hate the VC ?) They had the experience of living with the VC. Besides, the villagers knew that if the VC came down there would be fighting. If it had not been for the VC, the village would not have been shelled by artillery which caused much damage to the people's property.

124. Did the attacks interfere with your work and earning a living ?

While there was fighting, no one in the village dared to do anything; they remained in their trenches to a person. (What effect did the attacks have on your living conditions?) A few years ago when there was fighting, the people left their village to go to other villages for the duration of the attack. Then last year things began to change: when there was fighting the VC refused to let us out. When the GVN soldiers came for the mopping up operations, the people took advantage of that chance to leave the village and their homes.

125. How did you and the villagers get news about what was going on before the VC took over the village ?

The village officials would inform us. The rich families had their radios and they listened to the radios. (How did you and the villagers get news about what was going on after the VC took over your village ?) The VC told us about the news of the attacks they had mounted in the areas in the vicinity. (Did you not listen to the radio ?) I did not have one and the families that had radios had all left.

126. When did your family decide to leave your village ?

When the VC first came to the village, I made up my mind to leave but I did not have the means to carry out my decision. Last August when the VC came, the entire village left to a person, but later they returned because they had to earn a living.

127. How were you treated at the resettlement camp ?

We are living off government assistance. Each month my family gets 12 kilogrammes of rice and 90 piasters. We received no money for the salt and sauce.

128. In your opinion, what are the most pressing needs of the refugees right at this moment ?

The most important single need for the refugees now is security, after security comes food and clothes. (Why do you think security is most important for the refugees ?) Because if there is no security the VC will come to the camp and force the people to go back to their villages. The people will have to live with the VC. Moreover, those who sympathize with the GVN will be made to suffer much by the VC.

129. How is the security at the resettlement camp ?

There is a security force at the camp but about a week ago the VC came down to that camp and they arrested two or three young men. (Why did they arrest them ?) I do not know. (Have they been released ?) I do not know. I got this news from other people from the camp. Then the VC told the people to pack up and move back to their villages. The people did not dare to disobey them. They pretended to carry out the VC order, they packed up their possession they ran in and out, here and there, calling their children. Some of them got so scared they had to run for cover. In the end, the people eluded the VC completely for none of them left the camp for their village. I heard that time the VC attacked a strategic hamlet which was situated right next to the camp. When they had attacked the hamlet, they came to the camp.

130. While you were living with VC did you have to guard the village ?

I did not have to guard the village because I told them I was not healthy enough to do what they required me to do. The Communists agreed, they said I was sick and beside I was also a former teacher. They wanted me to remain a

teacher and continue teaching but the students did not dare to come to school and I had no one to teach. I had to accept their proposition and remained a teacher. I thought to myself that if I guarded the village and the GVN conducted their mopping up operation, what could I do. Besides, I believed that the VC would not win, they could not stay in in our village for long. The students did not dare to come to school because they were afraid of the attacks which might come at any time.

131. When you left your village, how long did you think you would be away ?

I will stay here until the GVN soldiers have liberated the village. If the Communists remain in the village, then I will remain here. I will try to find something to do to earn a living for my family.

132. What property did you or your family bring with you when you left ?

Our clothes. (Were you not able to bring any money with you ?) In the countryside people do not keep money idle, if the country people have money they will acquire either land or cattle, they do not hoard gold or other precious objects. I did bring some money with me when I left .

133. Is there anyone in your village who will look after your property ?

Who will look after my property ? All the people have left.

134. What else would you have taken with you if you had been able to do so ?

If the GVN soldiers conduct another mopping up operation, I may follow them back to my houses to take down some wooden doors and bring them out here for my wife to use as firewood. There is nothing else in my house to take out with me.

135. What do you think will happen to you if you return to your village ?

If they do not kill me they will arrest me and keep me imprisoned for a long time. (Why do you think so ?) They will accuse me of leaving the village and of working for the opposition.

136. What had you heard about conditions in GVN-controlled areas before you left ?

The Communists told us that those who went to the GVN-controlled areas would be arrested and suspected.

137. How long do you think the war will go on ?

In my opinion, if we want the war to end we have to attack the North. If the North is attacked, the South will not get much assistance from the North, that way the war will end sooner. We have to attack both zones.

138. Whom do the refugees blame for causing them to leave their village ?

They blame the Communists. If it had not been for the Communists, they could have stayed in their village and continued their work. It was because of the Communists that they had to leave.

139. Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the help you received ?

We received some rice, cloth, and things for the children. The help we get is not enough.

140. What did you expect the GVN to do for you ?

We were told by the GVN cadres that the GVN would look after us, that we would not have to worry about anything. When I arrived in this center I was given a uniform--this one (black pyjamas).

141. What did you plan to do when you left your village ?

I came out here to attend this reeducation course and when it is over I will go back to my family and try to find a way to support my family.

142. Have you heard about or from the people who stayed behind in your hamlet or village ?

No.

143. Did anyone try to persuade you or other refugees to go back to your hamlet since you have been here ?

No.

144. Have any of the villagers who left with you moved back to your hamlet ?

I heard that a family had moved back to their village. The man was old and he could not stand the heat out here. In his village he had a big house, a small house, and cattle. (Did his children go with him ?) No.

145. Have you seen any Americans ?

Yes. (What do you think they are doing in Vietnam ?) They are helping Vietnam. (What have they done for Vietnam ?) They have done many things.

146. Have you seen people from countries other than American ?

No.

147. While you were living in your village what did you and your friends talk about when you met ?

We talked about our work. (Did you discuss politics ?) No. We were simple citizens, we did not understand much about what was going on.

148. Was there any danger that people would report you if you criticized the VC ?

When the GVN was there, we had security and we were not afraid of the VC, we talked freely about the Communists. When the VC took over, people did not dare discuss the Communists anymore. They were afraid of them. They were afraid the person they were talking to might turn out to be a Communist.

149. Did other families or individuals help you or your family when you were in trouble ?

Yes, the people helped each other. They helped each other with their working facilities.

150. Who was the most respected person in your village ?

The village chief. (Why was he respected ?) He served the people well.

151. Who do you think are the best-informed people in your village about what is going on in the village ?

The members of the Village Council.

152. How did you learn of what was going on ?

We are country people, we live differently from people in the urban areas. If there is anything important the village officials hold a meeting and the people are invited to come. During the day the people have to work, the meetings are usually held at night.

153. What is the latest information you have received about what is going on in the North ?

The GVN are bombing the North. (How did you get that information ?) From the Communists. (Please describe what you have heard about life in North Vietnam ?) People in the North live differently from those in the South. There is no idle person, everyone has to work. They have the co-ops where people all work. Everything has a fixed price and each person can have just so much and no more.

154. What is the lastest information you have received about what is going on in Saigon ?

Nothing.

155. What did you think about the information you got from the VC ?

I did not believe them when they said they were winning this and that battle. The GVN soldiers were equipped with the best weapons, they have tanks and airplanes wherever they go while their (VC) troops have to trudge around with antiquated weapons.

156. What did the people think about the information they got from the VC ?

The Communists dislike the people from my village. (Why ?) The people did not like them, they looked forward to the coming of the GVN soldiers so they could leave the village. When the GVN soldiers came, they all evacuated to the GVN-controlled areas to stay.

157. What did you think about the information you got from the GVN ?

The GVN informed us that this and that country had helped Vietnam with this or that and I always found that it was true.

158. What in the VC propaganda appealed most to the people in the rural areas ?

The majority of the people were forced to work for them. The VC propaganda appealed to just a few persons. (Why did it

appeal to those persons ?) Those people were suspected by the GVN and they liked the Communists.
The resettlement camp is very crowded. A room like this houses five or six families. In this corner, one family is cooking; in another one, a child is crying. The noise in that camp is deafening you cannot hear your own voice because it is drowned by the din of children crying and adults talking. There was a school in my village and the children all went to that school. Here at the camp, there is no school and the children do not know what to do; they run around playing in the dirt. The parents want to send their children to school so that they can keep them out of the way and so that their children may be able to learn something. It is better than letting them run loose all over the camp. There is no school at the camp, no tables or desks, no chairs. There are children of 13 or 14 who have nothing to do. When they were in their village they could help their parents with looking after their younger brothers and sisters or watching the cows and water buffaloes. Here at the camp they do nothing; their mothers, since they do not work themselves, stay home and look after the younger children. There are no cows or buffaloes for the older children to tend and there is no school for them to go, so they run around. I have talked to the village chief and he told me that they could not afford a school right now although he knew it was important to get the children to learn something. He said many people did not have shelters to live in, they still had to live with others or their relatives, so the question of building a school at the present time had to be deferred to later. He also said that the students in Saigon had promised to give the camp a school and a well to draw water from.
The people from my village wish for nothing except that the government guarantee their security so they can live peacefully in their village. They do not need government help when they are in their village, they can support themselves well on the land. In [redacted] village people lived well, they had cars to take them and their products to the market. When the VC took over, the cars could not travel because the VC destroyed the roads. Under the GVN, at night we could enjoy our spare time going to the movies, to the theatre. Under the VC, we had to work for them at night doing this and that; they were great at thinking of new work to be done.
[redacted] village was the richest village in [redacted] district. Before the Communists took control of that village, people had lived happily, everyone had land to work on, each of them had a job. No one has ever been without rice after the harvest. If a family did not own any land then they

could always rent communal land to work on. They planted rice, grew manioc, and corn. There were two important harvests a year but the soil was fertile and in between the two harvests the people could plant other kinds of rice which could be harvested after a month and a half or two months. People had lived very happily before the communists came. My family lived in a big house, a spacious house, and the air was cool. People in [redacted] lived in big and spacious houses, they are not used to the heat. Our most ardent wish is to be able to go back to the village. We will continue to work and then we will not need government assistance because the people in [redacted] can be self-sufficient. I have been to [redacted] village and I saw the crop was bad, the soil must be bad or else they have many worms in their soil. As for me, I want to go back to teaching; I have had much experience with teaching children. But first, we have to settle the question of security and in this matter the people rely on the government to defend them.

The GVN seems to suspect the families which have members [redacted] in the North. But I know that many regroupees'families are the most ardent supporters of the GVN and when the Communists find these families they will treat them accordingly. Many regroupees are now working for the GVN and they work hard.

There is another aspect of [redacted] The people there helped one another most willingly. Before the planting season each year, we had to irrigate water into the rice fields. We did this together. The farmers elected a committee which would supervise this irrigation. This committee would decide which rice fields should be irrigated and when because the rice fields spread beyond your vision. If there had been no coordination it would have been impossible to irrigate all the rice fields. A few persons of means in the village put money together and bought a water pump which they rented out to the farmers under the care of the committee. When the harvest was over, the people paid them with rice.

If it had not been for the Communists we would not have left our village for any other.

Interviewer's comments

The Interview was conducted in a small room and people came in and out every now and then. Every time someone came in the subject stopped talking although what he was saying sounded innocent enough. The subject was tense and uncooperative at first he was more relaxed at the end.

He seemed to know more about the conditions of his village under the VC but he preferred to talk about his village before the VC came.

NO. AGR 26

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

1. Name of interviewer [redacted]

2. Name of subject [redacted]

3. Time and date of interview :

   From 8:00 a.m. to 11:15 a.m. on August [redacted] 1965

   From _____ to _____ on _____ 19 ___

   From _____ to _____ on _____ 19 ___

4. Place of interview :

   [redacted] Center, Quang Ngai

5. Sex of subject : Male (X) Female ( )

6. Age of subject : 32

7. Ethnic background : Vietnamese

8. Place of birth :

   hamlet [redacted]

   village [redacted]

   district Mo Duc

   province Quang Ngai

9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :

   hamlet [redacted]

   village [redacted]

   district Mo Duc

   province Quang Ngai

10. (a) Length of residence in last location : 32 years

    (b) Who controlled the place of residence :

    GVN ( ) VC (X) Contested ( ) How long? 10 years

    October

NO. AGR 25

11. Number of brothers (4) and sisters (2)

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : 4

13. Marital status : Married

14. Number of children : 2

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age : None

16. Parents with subject (X) or not with subject ( )
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject( ) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject (X) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject(X) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion : Buddhist

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : Private Teacher

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation Middle class
(b) Landowner? Yes

20. Education :
illiterate ( )
literate (X)
schooling completed : 2nd years in High School

21. Any relatives in VC : 2 brothers (regroupees)

22. Any relatives in GVN : /

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by :
(a) French None
(b) GVN None
(c) VC A brother and a brother-in-law and sister-in-

24. When became a refugee : April [redacted] 1965

AGR

INTERVIEW

27

THE RAND CORPORATION

[redacted]

STUDIES OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT
OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR-27

Date of Interview : August [redacted] 1965

Subject's Category : Refugee - June [redacted] 1965

Area of Residence : [redacted] village, Mo Duc district
Quang-Ngai province

1. How long have you been here?

   I left my village on the [redacted] day of the fifth lunar month. (June [redacted], 1965. Over one and a half months ago.)

2. From what village did you come ?

   From [redacted] (Mo-duc district, Quang-Ngai province).

3. How did you get here?

   My brother-in-law and his son carried me up to the main road and hired a cab to take me to Quang-ngai hospital.

4. How long did you stay in hospital?

   One month and ten days.

5. Have you received any help since?

   I have not received anything from the Government since my arrival.

6. What are your plans now? What are you doing to live here?

   My wife goes out for firewood every day. We don't do anything else. Two of our sons work for a man in Quang-ngai who makes boxes.

7. What are your prospects at this time?

   We only hope that the Government will fight and chase the liberation troops from our village so that we can go back there and earn our livelihood, because we don't know what to do here.

8. How large was your family?

   The two of us (=he and his wife) and six children --four boys and two girls.

9. Did all of you live altogether before you came out here?

   Yes, we did.

10. Did you came out here altogether?

    My 14 year old son was captured by government boats at the time/was wounded.

I

11. Did you see him captured by government boats?

Yes, I saw him captured. Twenty fishing boats were captured. They (troops aboard GVN boats) saw that I was wounded and allowed me to go back to the shore.

12. How were you wounded?

There were all kinds of things. Airplanes, boats and mortar shells from the shore. A shell exploded on the water and wounded me on the leg. The airplanes were strafing on the land.

13. How many people have left your village during the past few years?

Just after election day (May 30), the VC came into the village and all the villagers left.

14. Did everybody in the village leave?

A great many people left the village, I don't know how many. When the situation was calm again, almost all who had left went back to the village.

15. Out of every ten people in the village, about how many left it?

More than 9 out of ten people left the village.

16. For how long did they leave the village?

Usually 6 or 7 days. Some never returned. As for me, I returned only after 15 days.

17. Where did the villagers go?

Some went to other villages, some came up here, to Quang-ngai city.

18. How far did they go?

The village is about [redacted] from Quang-ngai city. They also went to other villages, about [redacted] kilometers away.

19. How did they move?

They walked, carrying with them not very many things: some clothes and some rice to last 5 days, or 10 days at most.

20. What did most people in your village do to earn a livelihood?

As refugees, most people worked as hired laborers and earned 30-40 piasters to make a temporary living in other villages. They worked moving earth. They also received some aid from people of the villages where they went to live.

21. Back in your village, what did most people do for a living?

Most of the villagers lived on inshore fishing.

22. How were the villagers living?

They had enough to eat. When there was still security, they could move freely on the sea. Now, they have left the village and their houses have been burned.

23. Did your family also live on fishing?

Yes, we did.

24. What economic category did the Front assign to your family?

They called us Ban-nong (poor farmer) because we did not have an inch of land.

25. During the past few years, has your family's economic condition changed?

A couple of years ago, my family was still needy. Recently, my son has been old enough to help in fishing. Each month we were able to make between one and three thousand piasters, whereas the owner of the fishing junk made between 10 and 15 thousand piasters for each period of 1-2 months.

26. How did you feel about this improvement?

I found life more pleasant. It was easier to make a living.

27. How much education did you have?

When my father was still alive, he taught me Chinese calligraphy for two or three years. Now I have forgotten it all.

28. Are you literate in Vietnamese?

I am not literate.

29. Did your children go to school in the village?

When security still prevailed in my village, the third and fourth sons were going to the Second and Fifth grades, respectively (first and fourth years of primary education).

30. How many of your children are literate?

Four of the six are literate.

31. Do you plan to send your children to school here?

How could I send them to school now? I would want to very much, but it would be very difficult. They can only go to work.

32. Was your family living a strategic hamlet?

My hamlet was a strategic hamlet.

33. When was it built?

Very long ago, I don't remember. Possibly 4 or 5 years ago.

34. Was the hamlet disturbed by the VC?

The liberation people came to cut the barbed wire and got into the hamlet once in 1963. The villagers beat alarm-bells and raised a hue and cries against them. They withdrew at dawn.

35. How did you feel living in a strategic hamlet?

The strategic hamlet was less vulnerable.
(Volunteering:) People could go to work easily, they could go anywhere they wanted and nobody stopped them.

36. Were the villagers required to be back in the hamlet before a certain time?

The curfew began at 9 p.m. but the villagers still could move around because there were no liberation troops yet.

37. What did you dislike about the strategic hamlet?

I did not dislike anything. I rather liked it because it discouraged their (VC) attempts.

38. Did living in the strategic hamlet affect your life and earnings?

It did not affect it in any way, because the villagers are normally back home around that time (9 p.m.)

39. How did you find the village council?

They worked as usual. The villagers liked them. They did not delay anything.

40. How did they behave toward the villagers?

They behaved nicely. They were liked by the villagers.

41. Who was in control of your village a year ago?

There was still a GVN village council last year. It was still there last April. It gave me a permit to go to Mui Ne to buy fish sauce.

42. Who controlled your village at the time you were wounded?

The village was under their (VC) control but they were not seen during the day. Before (election day), no hamlet in my village was occupied by them.

43. How long have the VC been in control of your village?

They occupied it by the end of May. I left the village for fifteen days and went back when I found that the situation was calm again. I went fishing on the sea and was wounded two days after I went back to the village.

44. Did the VC carry out any terroristic acts in your village?

No, they didn't. As soon as they arrived the villagers fled. I also left the village and therefore I don't know what the VC were doing in the village.

45. Why did you and the villagers flee?

If we hesitated, we might be caught in the rain of bombs and bullets when the nationalist troops came to fight.

46. Had your village ever experienced attacks before?

No, it never had.

47. How about the time when the VC came in 1963?

There was no engagement at that time. The VC came and stayed for one day and the villagers fled to other villages. The VC withdrew at sunrise the next day.

48. Were the villagers satisfied with the VC administration in the village?

The day after election day, the VC came and the villagers fled. When they saw that everything was quiet again they

went back to continue their work in the village. At night, the VC would come and ask them to go out and dig trenches for them. I also went back but I was wounded only two days later. I was taken out here and I don't know how people felt under the VC. I suspect that life there was hard because the villagers went to work during the day and had to go to work for the VC at night. In addition, they were constantly afraid of possible attacks and bombing by the government.

49. How many young men of 16 years and older were in your village?

When the village was still secure, there were many young men, between 16 and 30 years.

50. How many approximately?

I don't know how many young men my village had.

51. How many were there in your hamlet then?

I don't know that either.

52. How many young men enlisted in the Dan-ve force of your village?

More than 100 men were in the Dan-ve force.

(The interview terminated here as the respondent was reminded by another refugee that he had to find the village chief in order to have his family census sheet endorsed.)

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

This interview was most frustrating, because of the respondent's attitude as well as the interviewing conditions. The respondent is of very low mentality and was insincere. As the conversation began, an agent in the camp scolded the respondent and imparted to him a sense of guilt for staying behind in a VC-controlled village; subsequently, the respondent tried to disclaim any knowledge of VC goings-on in his village.

The interview was conducted in the living quarters of several refugee families and nothing could be done to keep the conversation from being interfered with as it had to be carried on in a loud voice, the respondent being very hard of hearing.

NO. AGR 27

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

1. Name of interviewer [redacted]
2. Name of subject [redacted]
3. Time and date of interview :
   From 3:20 pm to 4:25 pm on August [redacted] 1965
   From _____ to _____ on _____ 19 ___
   From _____ to _____ on _____ 19___
4. Place of interview :
   A refugee center in Quang-ngai city
5. Sex of subject : Male (X) Female ( )
6. Age of subject : 44
7. Ethnic background : Vietnamese
8. Place of birth :
   hamlet _____
   village [redacted]
   district Mo-duc
   province Quang-ngai
9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :
   hamlet _____
   village [redacted]
   district Mo-duc
   province Quang-ngai
10. (a) Length of residence in last location : since birth, 44 yrs
    (b) Who controlled the place of residence :
    GVN ( ) VC (X) Contested ( ) How long? 2 mos

NO. AGR 27

11. Number of brothers (zero) and sisters (three dead

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : zero

13. Marital status : married

14. Number of children : 6

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age : none

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject( ) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject (X) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject(X) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion : Buddhist

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : fisherman

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation Ban nong farmer (poor)
(b) Landowner? no land

20. Education :
illiterate (X)
literate ( )
schooling completed : some Chinese characters

21. Any relatives in VC : son of uncle (cousin) regrouped in the North

22. Any relatives in GVN : nephew (son of sister) aidman in Quang-ngai

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by :
(a) French none
(b) GVN none
(c) VC none

24. When became a refugee : [redacted] of Fifth lunar Month (June [redacted], 1965

AGR

INTERVIEW

28

THE RAND CORPORATION

[redacted]

STUDIES OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT
OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR-28

Date of Interview : August [redacted] 1965

Subject's Category : Refugee - May [redacted] 1965

Area of Residence : [redacted] hamlet, [redacted] village, Nghia Thanh district, Quang Ngai province

1. Where were you born?

I was born in [redacted] hamlet.

2. What village and district does it belong to?

It is in [redacted] village, Nghia Hanh district, Quang Ngai province.

3. Have you always lived in [redacted] village?

Yes, I have always lived there.

4. So, until the time you came here as a refugee, you were in [redacted]

Yes, correct.

5. At that time, was your village controlled by the government or by the VC?

By the government.

6. Since the time the government took over this area in 1954, the village has always been under the government?

Yes, it has always been under the government and we fled from the village on the day the VC arrived. When we heard that they had arrived way up there, we immediately left.

7. Since 1954 and before the day when you left the village, did the VC ever come to disturb your village?

No, they never did.

8. Now that you are quite old yourself, do you still have brothers and sisters?

I have an older brother who is now over 60.

9. How many children did you have?

Four.

10. Is your wife here with you?

Yes, she is.

11. And all other members of your family?

All of us have come here.

12. What occupation did you have back in your village?

I lived on farming.

13. How much land did you own?

My family is very poor. We don't have any land. I expect them to learn trades for their livelihood.

14. According to the VC classification, how would your family be described?

I don't know because my family moved here when the VC came to the village. In 1945, my family was classified as Ban-co-nong (very poor farmer) because, frankly, we had nothing.

15. How much education did you have?

In the old days, I completed primary education and got the Tieu sanh degree.

16. Did you study Chinese calligraphy?

I did, but I have forgotten it all now.

17. Is any relative of yours working for the government?

My cousin, daughter of my paternal uncle, is a nurse working at Nghia Hanh district town.

18. And on the side of the VC, is anyone from your family or among your relatives working for them?

Yes, among the relatives. I don't know what they do with the VC, but they stayed behind.

19. I am not interested in names; but how many of your relatives stayed behind?

I don't know what they were doing. Two of them stayed behind. They are relatives, not members of my family.

20. Did they stay behind in your village when your family moved out here?

Yes, they stayed behind but I don't know what they were doing.

21. During the Resistance, was there anyone in your family or among your relatives who was killed?

(Hastily:) Yes, there was. Me. They (the Viet Minh) tied the hands of 18 of us behind our backs and took us to the execution field when the order came to cancel the execution. Had the order come five minutes later, I would have been executed with the rest.

22. Why were you and the others going to be executed?

It was about Caodaism. The Viet Minh wanted to kill the Caodaists.

23. Was anyone in your family or among your relatives killed by the French?

By the French? No.

24. And more recently, was anyone killed by the government or by the ARVN?

No one.

25. Was there anyone killed by the VC, in their terroristic acts, for instance?

Yes.

26. How many were killed by the VC?

My son was recently arrested by the VC -- just a few days ago.

I don't want to conceal it from you. We have been out here for more than two months. I am very angry, my son is very nice and gentle.

27. How old is he?

He is 29. He is very nice.

28. When did you arrive here?

I arrived on the first of May. I left for [redacted] first and when [redacted] became disturbed I moved to [redacted] When [redacted] became disturbed I came out here.

29. You arrived on the [redacted] of May?

On the first of the [redacted] month of the lunar calendar. (June [redacted] 1965).

30. So, you have been here two months and a week?

Yes.

31. How did you get here?

We left in the daytime.

32. Did you go on foot, by boat or what?

We walked. In the morning we hastily left the village, running.

33. What did you carry with you?

We carried nothing. As we woke up in the morning, we heard that the enemy was coming and everyone ran for his own life. My family gathered in [redacted]

34. For how long did you stay in [redacted]

When we arrived at [redacted] there was nothing there yet (Note: The VC had not come there yet.) A few days after, they arrived in the vicinity of [redacted] and we ran again.

35. What are your plans now that you are here?

I don't know what we shall be doing. We had thought we would be away from home for just a few days. Now we have nothing with us. We are very poor. I don't even have a shirt to change.

36. How do you expect to make a living now?

I don't know what to do. We have been away from home for more than two months. We have nothing with us. My family was very poor already. I am now too old to work on anything. My sons go to work on petty jobs and make a meager living. I am at a loss. It now depends on Heaven.

37. Do you come to this temple and pray sometimes?

I do often, yes. In this way, even if we are hungry, we are still satisfied. I do not blame it on Heaven.

38. How many members of your family are here now?

Twelve persons, including the children. My wife and I, four sons, two daughters-in-law, and four grand children.

39. Does this include the son who was arrested by the VC?

Yes, he came here with us more than two months ago. He was arrested very recently, four or five days ago.

40. Was he arrested because he stayed behind?

No, he went home to bring back here a piece of furniture. The hamlet where my home is was not unsecure, but the VC sneaked in. They caught my son and abducted him.

41. Does that son of yours have his wife and children here?

Yes, his family is here. Poor son! I don't know what to say. Frankly, I was nearly killed in 1945; now I survive to see my son taken away.

42. How many hamlets were there in your village?

43. In what hamlet did you live?

I lived in [redacted] hamlet.

44. How many families were there in your hamlet?

It had maybe 300 families.

45. The entire village must have over 1,000 families, right?

Yes. The village had [redacted] hamlets previously. Later on, two of the hamlets were merged into one.

46. Did any of the villagers leave the village during the past few years?

No, nobody left the village. A couple of men went to the mountains and were later killed by the government. They were not from my hamlet but from an upper hamlet. They were surrounded in the village by the Civil Guards and were killed. Both were from the same hamlet.

47. Did they volunteer to join the VC or were they forced by them to join?

I would not know. I only heard about it.

48. What did you hear about their joining? How did they join?

They went to stay in the mountains with the VC. When they came back to the village, they were surrounded by the Civil Guards and were killed.

49. I just want to know whether they went to the mountains on their own or were asked by the VC to go?

No, the VC did not come to ask them. They had a brawl with their friends and they joined the VC in order to take their revenge. You know the youngsters.

50. Did both men have the same reason for going to the mountains?

They were alike. It was not because the youths wanted to become Communists. They knew nothing about Communism. These two youths were spiteful toward their friends and sought a chance to take their revenge.

51. What was the most prevalent occupation in your village?

People in the village observe "di nong vi ban" (take agriculture as a base). They do farming.

52. Is your village close to the sea?

No, it is close to the mountains.

53. So there were no fishermen in your village?

No, there were no fishermen.

54. How did you find people living in your village? Did they do pretty well?

Frankly, they did not do well enough. The harvest was poor. It was good enough when the nationalist government controlled the village but now houses are burned and destroyed. It was really better when the nationalist government took over.

55. Why was there a difference between living under the control of the government and living under that of the Viet Cong? The villagers always worked the land and harvested the crops, didn't they?

Yes, but when the nationalist government "arrived", it helped the population. For instance, if a family did not have hard cash, the government would issue loans to it. And there were no contributions (taxes); each man in the village would spend one or two days for community work. For everything else, there were the troops who helped out. It was very beneficial because when the villagers needed money they could get loans with very little interest.

56. Within the community, where did your family stand, economically speaking?

My family was very poor, excessively poor, so poor to earn the classification Ban-co. We did not have a lump of earth even.

57. Whose land did you till?

We rented the land.

58. How much land did you till?

We rented and tilled two mau. Two mau to feed 12 mouths in the family.

59. How many an did you harvest a year?

The harvest was very far below our needs. In a good year, we could harvest "a few ten" of ganh.

60. How many ten of ganh -- seventy, eighty?

Twenty ganh. The soil was very poor and produced only one crop per year. And there were so many people to feed.

61. Has your economic condition changed in the past few years?

I think it has improved.

62. Due to what factors has it improved?

It was thanks to the help of the government and also because we have been very thrifty. In addition, we did not have to pay contributions.

63. How many persons in your family were able to work? How old are your children?

The youngest is 17 or 18 years old. The oldest is the one who was captured (by the VC). I am very mad. We have been able to avoid the VC for two months, and then he got caught. He was very nice and gentle. His wife never stops crying. She has a three-year old baby.

64. How many children does she have?

Three.

65. Therefore, when you were in the village, all your sons were able to help you in tilling the land, weren't they?

I am very old. My sons worked harder than I did. We did not have anything to save but we weren't in debt either.

66. What school did you go to?

I went to the village school, way back in the French time.

67. And your sons, where did they go to school?

They also went to school in the village. Before taking refuge, they went to primary school in the village.

68. Do you plan to send your sons to school here?

One of them has gone to [redacted] school here. He is the youngest, 16 years old.

69. What are the other sons doing now?

The other two are carpenters.

70. Do they work as carpenters here?

They are still running around. They move back and forth between [redacted] and Quang Ngai. They haven't found employment or decided where to stay.

71. Have the VC come to [redacted] yet?

No, they haven't. That place they came to is called [redacted]

72. Why did you leave [redacted] to move up here?

They (the VC) hadn't come but people there were apprehensive. Now, hearing that government troops are securing that place, many people here have gone back to [redacted]

73. Did [redacted] village have any strategic hamlets?

There were [redacted] strategic hamlets.

74. Therefore, each regular hamlet contained a strategic hamlet?

Yes, there was a strategic hamlet in each regular hamlet.

75. Did you live in a strategic hamlet?

No.

76. Did you see people living in the strategic hamlets have more difficulties moving around for their daily work?

(Pause) No, they did not have any difficulty, not as during the past years. But recently the gates would be closed whenever there was disquieting news.

77. Therefore, would you say that there was no difference between living inside or outside a strategic hamlet?

There was some impediment. When the gates were closed, the villagers could not go out to work in their fields.

78. What usually happened that required that the gates be closed?

We did not know what happened. It depended on decisions of the district chief or of the village council.

79. How did the officials in the village and hamlets behave toward the villagers?

This question should rather not be discussed.

80. Oh, yes, please. Do speak frankly and impartially. How did they behave toward the villagers?

They did not behave satisfactorily toward the villagers.

81. Do you mean to say they were not nice toward the villagers?

Correct.

82. Could you give some examples?

They never let the population know what they were doing. Next, in financial matters, they were not accountable; they spent the village money as they thought fit. When the population asked where the money had gone, they did not say, I don't care; they could do whatever they pleased for "the villager's neck is short and his voice cannot carry up to the skies."

83. How did the villagers feel about the village and hamlet cadres of the government?

The cadres were well off. Among themselves, the cadres were fully complacent. It was different between cadres and villagers.

84. Yes, but how did the villagers regard the cadres?

The cadres just went their own way. The villagers did not know what the orders from above were, but the cadres may "have received one and handed down ten."

85. Have the VC ever come to disturb your village?

Last year, they came once. Not in my hamlet but in the upper hamlet. (Cf. Question 7)

86. Were they able to get into the strategic hamlet?

Yes, they were. They burned a school.

87. Did they do anything to the villagers?

They burned the school and were repelled by the Dan Ve.

88. Did they come in great strength?

Over one hundred of them.

89. Did an engagement ensue between the VC and the popular force?

No. The popular force came and the VC withdrew.

90. How large was the popular force of your village?

Each hamlet had a platoon.

91. How strong was a platoon in each hamlet?

Thirty men.

92. What did the villagers say about the burning of the school by the VC?

They were very much scared. The village cadres (GVN) were also scared and went into hiding.

93. Did district troops come to the rescue?

When district troops arrived in the hamlet, the VC were already gone.

94. What did the villagers say to one another about the burning?

They regretted the destruction of the school.

95. Was anyone grieved or angered?

No, the villagers knew that they had to bear such things. They were resigned.

96. How many men 16 years old and older were there in each hamlet?

I cannot tell. There were so many.

97. Nobody can tell exactly, but approximately how many were there?

I would think about 500 or 600 in my village.

98. Perhaps you know better about your own hamlet. How many men in your hamlet have joined the ARVN?

I think about 20 or 30 have joined the ARVN.

99. Did more men in the other hamlets join the ARVN?

About the same number.

100. How many men have joined the VC?

No one, except for the two who had gone to the mountains.

101. Did the VC take anyone in your village to reeducation sessions?

No, they never did.

102. Did they come to hold meetings with the villagers in your hamlet?

Not in my hamlet or even in the other hamlets, where they just passed through and did not have time to hold meetings.

The VC themselves were afraid until the first day of the fifth month (June 2) when they were resolute and the villagers took refuge elsewhere.

103. Why did the villagers have to move elsewhere when the VC came?

The villagers were very much scared.

104. What had the VC done to scare the villagers away?

The villagers were afraid the VC might take them away, or that they might be caught in battles and bombarded by aircraft.

105. Maybe the VC wanted to take young people with them but why should older people like you avoid the VC?

They took away young and old people alike. I for one was among the first to run away. I had had something happen in the past -- they already had wanted to kill me in 1945. I had to take care of myself.

106. Why had they wanted to kill you in 1945?

Because I was a Caodaist. They had wanted to kill all Caodaists, don't you know?

107. That was their design in the South, but here...

(Interrupted) Here, they were more violent against the Caodaists than anywhere else. They killed every Caodaist here. I was most fortunate to survive.

108. Did people in your village know about the air attacks on North Vietnam?

No, they did not know about it. I heard about it after I came out here.

109. Nobody in the village knew about the air attacks on North Vietnam?

Some did.

110. How did they know about this?

Those who had a radio listened to the news broadcast and told other people. As for me, my cousin brought a radio with her when she visited me.

111. How many families in your hamlet had a radio?

Not very many: Between 15 and 20 families had radios but there were several hundred families in my hamlet.

112. Would you say that one in ten families had a radio?

We should say one in twenty or thirty. Those who had radios were mostly men who were in the ARVN; they took their radios home.

113. Did your village have electric power?

No, it did not have electricity.

114. Therefore, all the radios ran on batteries?

That's right.

115. What did those who knew about the air attacks say on this subject?

They did not say anything.

116. How did they comment about the news of the attacks?

They simply said that the radio said that aircraft had bombarded the North. That's all.

117. Did they say for what reasons the aircraft went North to attack?

They said that the government wanted to destroy Communism and that it had to do it right from the stem and not on the top only.

118. According to what you saw and heard, would you say that the population was in favor of or against the attacks on North Vietnam?

They were welcomed by the population.

119. Why was the population in favor of attacks on the North?

The population was in favor because they saw that they were going to be poorer, that their houses were damaged and that they were not going to benefit from the crops...

120. I'm not speaking of the recent months. Before the villagers had to take refuge, were they in favor of or against those attacks?

They very much welcomed the attacks.

121. Why?

Because this action would help end the war. The VC would no longer come and go and disturb the people's lives. In this matter, I am sincere with you.

122. In the last few years, to whom did the villagers pay taxes?

I did not have property on which I had to pay taxes. I don't know to whom the others paid their taxes.

123. Did the VC sometimes, at night for instance, come to collect taxes?

No, they never did.

124. Was your landowner living in your village?

I rented communal land.

125. How much rental did you pay yearly for the two acres you rented?

I paid 500 piasters for each sao.

126. How many sao are there in a mau (acre)?

Ten sao make a mau.

127. Did you pay the rentals regularly or was there any year in which you did not have to pay?

The communal land of the village was put for "rent by auction" every three years. But the rentals were paid regularly every year.

128. Did you pay the rentals at the auctioneered rate regardless of good crops or poor crops?

The rentals were not changed during each three year period even if you left your land untilled.

129. How was life in the village during the Resistance?

Life was very hard indeed. We had to work but we did not get the fruit of our toil. We produced rice but we could eat only sweet potatoes and cassava roots because the rice was neededto pay the nong nghiep (agricultural) tax. People were as miserable as dogs.

130. And how was life since the tiep thu (accession of the government) to this area?

Since the tiep thu, people here have become much happier. My family was still very poor, but we have found life happier.

131. Did you often meet the members of the village council?

I did. I know them all.

132. Did they come into the hamlets to visit the villagers?

Yes, they did.

133. When they came, were they amiable or arrogant toward the villagers?

Being arrogant cannot be avoided on their part. They were haughty, they considered themselves above everyone in the village.

134. Had they been in the village administration under the French?

They were young men, 30-35. The older men in the village did not have any hand in the village council.

135. Was the village council elected by the villagers or appointed by the district authorities?

It is very difficult to say. Apparently they were elected by the people, but there was the guiding hand of the district.

136. Did the district chief come often to the village?

Yes, he did come.

137. How often did he come?

Once a week or so. Quite often.

138. And did the province chief come to your village?

Very seldom. He came on certain occasions only.

139. When did he visit your village last?

(Lowered his voice:) He came in May when one person was killed in a Buddhist demonstration. Haven't you heard about it? A girl came back from the pagoda and was killed on her way home. That was on the commemorative day of the Birth of Buddha, the [redacted] of the fourth month (May [redacted] 1965). That night, coming home from the pagoda, she was shot and killed by some popular force men.

140. Did she go home after the curfew hour?

It was true that she went home after the curfew hour but there was still security in the village and people came back from the pagoda on that night in large groups. She was most unlucky to get killed.

141. Why was she shot at?

That I don't know. I don't know whether hatred or revenge were involved. The Buddhists made a protest and the Prime Minister, no, Mr. Nguyen Chanh Thi rather, also came. They kept the body in mercury (sic) for seven days. On that occasion, the province chief came to the village.

142. Was the girl an inhabitant of your village?

Yes, she was and she went to the village pagoda.

143. In connection with this incident, were the villagers angered?

That was a very important incident and officials from Saigon also came.

144. It was a very important incident, I agree. But how did the villagers feel about it?

It wasn't really a big incident, but the Buddhists blew it up.

145. Did the population blame the government for that incident?

No, the population did not blame the government. They were indifferent.

146. What has the government done in your village to help the population?

Yes. It gave the sugar cane planters new sugar cane sprouts. It gave loans to the farmers through Agricultural Credit and through the Cooperatives. When Mr. Ngo Dinh Diem was still there, it gave rice to the population as well.

147. After the recent flood, last year, did your village receive any help?

My village received nothing for flood relief. We heard many appeals, but we did not receive anything.

148. What did the population think of the help of the government?

The population enjoyed more welfare with the help of the government. They were grateful. That's all.

149. Did your family benefit any from the help?

Yes, this year I was able to obtain (imperceptible on the tape recorder) to grow. But it is no use now, it will be overrun by weeds.

150. Did you borrow money from the Agricultural Credit program?

Yes, in the previous years. This year I submitted a request but it was not granted.

151. For what reasons did people in your village think that the Ngo Dinh Diem government was overthrown?

That matter depended on "high quarters". People in the village did not know what was what.

152. How many popular force posts were there in your village?

Each hamlet had a popular force office. There was also an office for the entire village.

153. Were the members of the popular force people from your village?

All of them were men of the village.

154. How did the popular force behave toward the villagers?

They were very nice. They were from that village and they know that they should protect property in the village.

155. How often did ARVN troops come to your village?

They came in occasionally when they had an operation in the area.

156. On the average, how many times did they come in one month?

About once a month.

157. When they came into the village, how did they behave toward the villagers?

They were very kind.

158. Did they ever take anything from the villagers without asking for it?

I have never seen that happen.

159. How about the popular force?

They never did that, either. They were polite toward old people in the village. They never did anything wrong.

160. On the other hand, how did the villagers feel about the ARVN?

I cannot say how they felt. But outwardly, there is nothing worth mentioning.

161. Would you say they disliked or liked ARVN troops?

I don't know how they felt inwardly. Outwardly, they showed no sign of either liking or disliking the ARVN.

162. When you were in your village still, what did you know about the aims of the Liberation Front?

I'll tell you what I heard but really, in my life I can never like that kind of thing. Had I liked it, I would have stayed behind. Their policy was to consider the poor as the rich, and the rich as the poor. They would not leave anyone idle. No one would be allowed to live better than others.

163. Why did they fight against the ARVN, against the government?

They had to clear the way for themselves. But everybody has a desire to be happy, to live well. If today he earns 50 piasters, he wants to spend them as he likes; he would not have that freedom if he follows the Front.

164. From whom did you get this knowledge of the Front's aims?

I got it from nine years of living in this area which was occupied by the Viet Minh.

165. From the time of the Viet Minh's Resistance, what differences do you see between the Resistance and the Front?

That I don't know. I know only about the Resistance time.

166. Would you say that the Resistance and the Front aim at the same regime?

I have suspected so.

167. What have you heard about life in the Front?

I know that life in the Front is very tough.

168. How do you know that it is tough?

How do I know? You can see that even in big houses like this one, we still feel cold. How would it be living in the mountains? Here, we sometimes don't have enough to eat; there, how do they eat without any market around? Where do they get rice and clothes?

169. What did you hear about the Front through the information offices of the government in the village or in the hamlets?

The information offices did not say anything about the Front. Besides, I was already too old, only my sons went to the information offices.

170. Did they tell you what they heard or read the information offices?

No, they didn't.

171. Did you sometimes hear about the activities of the Front, its losses or gains?

Yes, I did.

172. How did you know about them?

Other people listened to the radio and told me.

173. What did you think of the news you heard about Front activities?

(After a long pause:) I have been thinking and wondering why the Front, although it does not have the strength we have, has been able to keep inching forward. We have superior armament, so why do we allow them to "invade" us continually?

174. In your judgement, why can the VC invade us while they have inferior strength?

I think it is because we have lower spirit.

175. I am not interested in knowing names, but I would like to know whether you have relatives or friends now in VC units?

I don't know what was going on among the VC troops. I have been gone from the village so long, for two months and eight days. I haven't even dared to go back to the outskirts of the village, let alone into the hamlet.

176. Have you had friends and relatives who joined the VC at any time before?

No. In my village, there were many regroupees who went North. I know the families of many of them.

177. Have any of them returned to the village?

No, not yet. That is, I don't know whether any have returned.

178. Were the regroupees forced to go North or did they volunteer?

They were forced to go.

179. Were all of them forced to go, or did some go of their own free will?

Some realized their duties (sic) and went. For instance, those who were in the high ranks.

180. Do you have relatives or friends in the ARVN?

Yes, I have one son and two nephews who are in the government troops.

181. How often did they visit you?

My son, the one captured by the VC, had been drafted in the army for eight years. He was released recently and he was thinking of rejoining the army when he was captured. He was released in October last year. He came out here and intended to re-enlist. Now he leaves his wife and children for me to take care of.

182. Has any battle taken place in your village?

No, but recently there were two mopping-up operations in the village, after we had moved out here.

183. When you were still in your village, was it ever under air attack or artillery bombardment?

No, it never was.

184. How did people in your village get news on what was going on?

They listened to the broadcasts at the information offices of the village and the hamlets.

185. Those who had a radio, to what stations did they listen usually?

They listened to Quang Ngai station, to Saigon station, and what else I don't know.

186. Did the villagers have newspapers to read?

Yes, a number came to read newspapers at the information offices.

187. What information did villagers get from the information offices?

They were told about what was going on at various battles, how many weapons our troops captured, where we won, and so on.

188. What other information did they get?

Nothing else, only news on the war.

189. Had you ever thought of moving to an area controlled by the government before you took refuge this time?

The question had never arisen until this time when the VC came to the village.

190. Did you decide to take refuge or did someone induce you to do so?

Nobody induced me. That morning, I just got up, prepared my tea, and was going to drink it when swarms of people ran past my gate, shouting that the enemy was approaching. The VC were about one kilometer away. I also took flight without taking even my fan and tunic. Each one in my family took care of himself and we arrived and assembled in [redacted] in the afternoon.

191. Did the village council tell the population what to do?

They did not say a word.

192. Did they run before the villagers did?

Of course, the cadres had to flee as fast as they could.

193. For how long did you think you were leaving the village?

I thought I was leaving it for good.

194. Why did not you carry anything with you if you were to leave for good?

Time was pressing, and I thought we might come back within four or five days. We were so scared that we ran, carrying nothing with us.

195. What would the VC have done to your family if you had stayed behind?

In all my life, I have always been unharmful to everyone. But the VC do not like the Caodaists, and I am one. I was afraid they might arrest me when they came. I would not care because I am too old anyway but still, I don't want to lose my freedom.

196. Were you able to go back to your village from [redacted]

I stayed there for five days without going back. It was unsafe.

197. Where did you go next?

When we heard the rumor that the VC were closing in, we left [redacted] From [redacted] some villagers could cross the river and sneak back home to recover some rice. My family did the same and retrieved some rice that lasts for nearly two months. If we were not able to secure some rice, we would not be able to live until now. If we left our rice there, only the VC would benefit from it.

198. You were able to sneak back home only when you were in [redacted]?

Yes, only from [redacted] were we able to sneak back home. But only women and children could go back.

199. Were you able to carry back all the rice you had?

No we were not. We had to leave part of our rice behind. There, you see, I had a table which is needed here; my son went back for it and was caught.

200. Did you find things missing in your home?

A few things were lost when my folks went back to carry the rice out of the village. We lost some rice and a few pigs.

201. Did the other villagers or did the VC take them?

I don't know for sure. I cannot say who took them.

202. Did the VC pass through there when your family went back for the rice?

The VC were in the strategic hamlet. My house was outside. That's why we could go back.

203. Are you now worried about what you left behind?

What could I do? Since we are not there, we may as well consider our things as lost.

204. You did not leave anyone behind to take care of your property?

No, everyone in the family left.

205. Had it been possible, what else would you have taken along with you?

I would have taken all the rice and the beds. We have nothing to sleep on here. And I would have dismantled my house and re-assembled it here.

206. How many people left the village at the same time you did?

Very many.

207. Out of ten people in the village, how many would you say left it?

Nine out of ten left the village.

208. Why did the others remain behind? Were they too much concerned about their property or did they think nothing serious was upcoming?

They considered their property more valuable than their lives.

209. What do you think would happen to you if you should go home now?

I would not dare. They would arrest me, claiming that I have followed the Americans.

210. What have you done to be so described?

Oh, anyone coming out here is said to have followed the Americans. The VC condemn that way.

211. In your opinion, what are the Americans doing in Vietnam?

They have come to help the Vietnamese people.

212. Why do they have to help the Vietnamese people when they live so far away from here?

That we cannot understand "at our level". The Americans have seen that our country is poor, they have decided to come and help us out. I have seen so, I say so, but I don't know why they help.

213. For what reasons, for what purposes, do you think the Americans are helping this country?

That's very difficult to know. I can't tell. I don't know politics. I only know that they help us in order for us to have rice to eat and clothes to wear.

214. As you see it, how long do you think this war is going on?

I don't know how long.

215. When the war ends, which side do you think will win? I want to know your frank opinion on this.

I think our government will win. We have more troops, we have more weapons, we have liberties. We are free in every respect.

216. Do you blame anyone for causing you to leave your village?

I do not blame anyone for that. I only hate them (the VC) for causing us to leave our houses, our property, and to live in want here.

217. How about the other refugees? How do they feel?

They are of the same opinion.

218. What help have you received since you arrived here?

Each person receives a kilogram of rice monthly. Imagine, how can we live on that? But it's still better than nothing.

219. Do you receive daily allowances?

There is no money given.

220. Have you heard of how the government is going to help the refugees?

No, I haven't.

221. At the time you left your village, did you think where you would go, what you would do?

We were bewildered and we just left.

222. Have you heard about the villagers who stayed behind?

A number were killed in the recent operations. The young men who stayed behind were required by the VC to fight for them and were killed.

223. How many of them were killed?

All in all, about 30 were killed.

224. From whom did you get this information?

Those who went to see came back and told us.

225. Who could go to see the operations.

Lots of people from [redacted] accompanied the troops.

226. Since you arrived here, has anyone tried to persuade you to go back to your hamlet?

No, Nobody can persuade me.

227. When you were in trouble in your village, did other families or individuals help you?

Yes, of course. I had many relatives in the village. People in the hamlet also came to help us.

228. In what ways did they help you?

In everything. When we were sick, when we needed hands to do petty work in the family, relatives and neighbors would come to help us.

229. Could you talk freely to other families in your hamlet?

Yes, I could talk freely but I talked about our affairs of livelihood and never about politics.

230. Why did you not talk about politics?

We have adopted religious behavior and we must keep away from politics? We are not concerned with politics.

231. Did you have friends to whom you could talk freely about any matter?

Yes, I had close friends, friends who were intimate. Again, with these friends, I only talked about our religion.

232. Suppose you wanted to criticize the VC, would you do so among your friends in the hamlet?

I wouldn't because I was afraid of what people say; "family members are unaware and yet outsiders are already in the know." Sometimes we may not be circumspect and other people may take note of what we say in order to report to their "superiors."

233. Even if they reported what you say to their superiors, what did you have to fear? Wasn't your village in a security area?

They (the VC) could not come into the village yet, but they could record what individuals said and could wait for the day when they would come in.

234. Were you suspecting, then, that sooner or later the VC would come?

They came in all right, but I did not suspect they would. However, I knew that if the VC wanted to do harm to someone they would surely find a way to reach him.

235. In your village, beside the village chief, who would you say was the most important person?

I saw that the village chief was the most important person.

236. Next to him, who was the most important person?

There were a village chief and an assistant village chief.

237. Not counting the village chief and assistant chief, who were the persons who usually were respected and listened to by the villagers?

Those who were respected were listened to.

238. And who were they? I am not interested in names, but what kind of persons were they?

Only those who had official positions were obeyed by the villagers. The village chief and assistant chief were obeyed.

239. How about the elders in the village? Were they respected and obeyed?

The fact of life is that only those who "hold a mission for the Government, who represent the Government" were listened to by the villagers. All others were not trusted.

240. Who did you find was the best informed person in your village?

The notables, elders, and those who had worked for the government were more fluent and spoke a more flowerey language. The younger men had shortcomings in speaking.

241. Who knew more news than anyone else in the village?

Only the village information man knew more news than anyone else. Nobody could "bypass" the information man.

242. Who was the most energetic man in your village? Who could make an appeal to the population to have a bridge built for example?

My village had had many talented people but they had left. Those who remained in the village were indifferent and expected the village council to have things done. Nobody has ever made an appeal to the villagers to get something done.

243. Did the elders, the notables, have any prestige and influence in the village?

Yes they did.

245. Did the young men in the village come to them for advice?

Yes they did. In my village, there was an old man, Mr. K, who was often visited by young men.

246. What was he doing?

He had been a member of the village council. Now, he has an irrigation system of his own for the ricefields in the village.

247. How old was he?

He is as old as I am. (60 years old.)

248. How about the more educated men? Were they listened to by the villagers?

Yes. For example, Mr. [redacted] who had been a school teacher. Now he is retired.

249. So he is both old and educated?

Yes, he is. He had a son working at the province as chief of information. I don't know whether his son is still chief of information.

250. How did you learn about what was going on?

I always learned about what was going on by word-of-mouth.

251. From whom usually did you learn about what was going on?

Other villagers who went to work and knew about things.

252. From whom more frequently did you get information?

Frankly, I listened to my cousin's radio. She is a nurse at the district office. She usually came home with a radio. As for me, I seldom went around.

253. How did you learn about what the VC were doing in Quang- Ngai province?

I learned that from the broadcast at the village information office.

254. Did you have a broadcast in your hamlet?

Yes, each hamlet had a broadcast (public address) system.

255. And how did you learn about ARVN operations in your province?

Also from the loudspeaker.

256. How about information on what the district and province administration was doing?

People would recount what they saw of the activities of the administration in the district or in the province.

257. For example, how did you know if the district decided to distribute rice for the villagers?

The villagers would tell one another about it.

258. Did people in the village go to the district town often?

No. Only the village officials went to the district.

259. How about the merchants?

They did their trade in the village.

260. What was the latest information you got about Saigon?

I don't know anything. I have been gone from my village for a long time.

261. When you were still in the village, what was the latest thing about Saigon that you knew of?

I have been here for more than two months. Things chang every day.

262. What was the latest news you got about Hanoi and the North?

When I came here, I was told that the government attacked the North and destroyed bridges there.

263. What was the last thing you knew about the North before you left your village?

I did not know anything about the North.

264. But you did know about the attacks on the North when you were in the village?

Yes, my cousin told me about them. She was a nurse in the village. Since the evacuation, she works at the district office.

265. If she was in the village as you were, how could she be better informed in order to tell you?

She worked at the village council office. She had a radio and she also could listen to the broadcast at the village office.

266. How often did she visit you?

Once every two or three days.

267. Did you listen to the radio yourself?

Yes, I did sometimes.

268. To what stations did you listen?

I did not listen long enough to know what the radio said. I am old, hard of hearing and am easily tired. I only heard what my cousin told me from the broadcast.

269. Did you read newspapers?

No. My eye-sight is very poor.

270. Did you see "cai-luong" (reformed opera) in the village?

No.

271. Where did those who read newspapers get them?

They read at the hamlet and village offices.

272. What kind of newspapers were they: dailies or news bulletins?

Dailies and magazines. Every hamlet has them.

273. Did those who read newspapers tell other people what they had read?

No, they did not. Other people would listen to the broadcast at the hamlet and village offices.

274. When you were in the village, what kind of information did you wish to have more of?

There was nothing that I wanted to know more about. I was not much interested.

275. Did you find the information you got in your village was accurate?

I was not able to tell whether it was accurate or not. I heard that the North was being "terrorized" very much but I did not know whether it was true or not.

276. The bottom rung on this ladder is numbered ten and the top rung is numbered one. Number one rung represents the best life you can imagine. Going downward, you have at the bottom rung the worst life you can imagine. Where was your life located on this ladder just before you left the village?

I must say that my life was at the bottom of the ladder, number ten. The most miserable life. Not even a lump of earth.

277. Where would you locate your life on the ladder one year ago?

One year ago, I was still more miserable.

278. Now, how would you classify your life at the time you left your village and a year earlier?

I would say ten for my life one year ago and nine for the time I was leaving the village.

279. Looking ahead to five years from now, how do you expect your life to be then?

Five years from now, I would expect to rise to number eight.

280. On what ground do you expect your life to improve in five years?

Despite everything, I have had some schooling. And my children will be grown up. Previously I worked all by myself to feed my children.

281. How would you describe the worst life you can imagine yourself living in your village?

Lack of food, lack of clothes, lack of everything. Illness. Lack of money to build a house, to marry my children.

282. Now, just the opposite of that. Suppose you had a magic wand, how would you make your life in your village?

In the countryside, I should have money to make myself happy.

283. What would you use that money for? How would you spend it?

If you have money, just enjoy life. But since I observe religious conduct, that would not make much difference.

284. What should you have to lead a happy life?

That depends on the government. I think if we could move back to the village and make our living as usual, we would be happy.

285. Back in your village, would you be happy if you could buy land?

Why not? If I had money, if I had 70,000 piasters, 100,000 piasters, I surely could by land. I would bequeath the land to my children and grandchildren.

286. What kind of life would you hope your son to have?

I hope my sons will grow up, that they will have houses, families of their own, that they will be rich and have cars to move around. But that may never come. It's only a wish.

287. What would you like your sons to become?

They can do anything to have money. I wish they would have much land and till all the land they would have. I would want them to have a lot of money. We are not educated. We cannot have our children go to other countries. Common people like us should need money only. If they could, they should go to study and become civil servants and improve their living gradually.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

The respondent was cooperative but was of rather poor mentality and very often did not give pertinent answers. He often claimed to the frank but on various occasions he was obviously insincere in the sense that he wanted to indicate his allegiance to the GVN and, therefore, was probably expressing only a part of his views.

NO. AGR 28

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

1. Name of interviewer [redacted]

2. Name of subject [redacted]

3. Time and date of interview :

From 9:45 a.m to 11:45 a.m on August [redacted] 1965

From 3:10 p.m to 3:45 p.m on August [redacted] 1965

From _____ to _____ on _____ 19____

4. Place of interview :

Refugee camp in Cao Dai Temple of Quang Ngai

5. Sex of subject : Male (X) Female ( )

6. Age of subject : 60

7. Ethnic background : Vietnamese

8. Place of birth :

hamlet [redacted]

village [redacted]

district Nghia Thanh

province Quang Ngai

9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :

hamlet [redacted]

village [redacted]

district Nghia Thanh

province Quang Ngai

10. (a) Length of residence in last location : since birth, 60 years

(b) Who controlled the place of residence :

GVN (X) VC ( ) Contested ( ) How long? since 1954

NO. AGR 28

11. Number of brothers (one) and sisters (None)

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : one

13. Marital status : Married

14. Number of children : 4

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age : 4 (one captured by

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject (X)
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject (X)
Brothers with subject( ) or not with subject (X)
Wife with subject (X) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject(X) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion : Cao-Dai

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : Farmer

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation Don't know (Very poor in 1945 classification)
(b) Landowner: Owns no land

20. Education :
illiterate ( )
literate (X)
schooling completed : Primary education completed (5 years)

21. Any relatives in VC : 2 far-removed relatives remained behind in village

22. Any relatives in GVN : Daughter of uncle (cousin): Nurse in Quang Ngai

23. Any relatives (How many. When.) killed by :
(a) French None
(b) GVN None
(c) VC One son caught by VC when returning home for some furniture

24. When became a refugee : May [redacted] 1965

AGR

INTERVIEW

29

THE RAND CORPORATION

[redacted]

STUDIES OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT
OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR. 29

Date of Interview : August [redacted] 1965

Subject's Category : Refugee

Area : Mo Duc district, Quang Ngai province

COMMENTS: Subject, a young student, has definite opinions concerning the GVN local authorities (Q. 34-36, 119, 121-122), GVN aid to refugees (Q. 169, 196-197) and psywar (Q. 175-178), VC taxes (Q. 89-93), land distribution (Q. 87, 94-100), terrorism (Q. 41-42), and use of population as a shield (Q. 149-150), and the villagers' attitudes toward the VC (Q. 43-46, 134) and Americans (Q. 81-86, 204-206).

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1. How long has the Front been in control of [redacted] village?

   Since last October.

2. Has the VC been in full control of your village since then?

   Yes. Every now and then there was a mopping-up operation (by the ARVN).

3. Are your parents or any members of your family here with you?

   No. I am alone.

4. Are you married?

   No. I am single.

5. How long have you been here?

   I have been here six months.

6. How many months has it been from the time you came to Mo Duc till now?

   Nine months. When I first came out I was drafted into the armed forces but later was exempted because of my family status -- I was the only son. (Were you sent to the Thu-Duc military academy?) No, to the Non-commissioned Officer' camp. I did not then have my degree (Baccalaureate). (Did you go to Quang-Trung?) Yes. (How long did you stay there?) I had been there for two months before they let me off.

7. Did you come here from Mo-Duc?

   Yes. (Where had you been before you came to Mo-Duc?) I was in [redacted] village.

8. How did you get here?

   On bicycle. It was easy to get here.

9. What are your plan and prospects now?

   I do not know what I will do in the future, but now I plan to continue with my studies. I am sure sooner or later I will be drafted, but now I want to continue with my studies. (Now you can enter the Thu-Duc Reserve Officers Academy school.) Yes.

10. How large was your family?

There are only my mother and I.

11. Is your mother here with you?

No, she is at Mo-Duc. (How old is your mother?) 60 years old. (Are you the youngest child?) Yes.

12. Before you came out here did you and your mother live together? Did your sisters live separately?

Yes.

13. How many hamlets were there in [redacted] village?

[redacted] (How many people were there in each hamlet?) This depends. My hamlet was probably the most crowded. According to the statistics it had 4,000 people. The less crowded hamlets had over 3,000 inhabitants and the smallest hamlet, [redacted] over 2,000. (In the whole, how many persons lived in your village?) About 16,000. About 12,000 have left the village to come out here.

14. Where do they stay now?

At Mo-Duc refugee camp.

15. Have any persons left your village in the past years?

Of course. Those were people who worked for the GVN. They were afraid of being assassinated by the VC, so they left the village. They left the village in 1962 and 1963.

16. Was your village under VC harrassment then?

The VC came in and out of the village, but they had not taken over the control yet.

17. Was the Village Council in the village that time?

The Village Council still held meetings.

18. When these people left the village, where did they go and what did they do?

They came out here because they were well-to-do families. They were teachers with the means to support themselves and their families.

18. How many people have left your village in the past years?

About 400 have left the village before the evacuation. Then after the VC came, 800 more left the village. The majority of them were Cao-Daists and Christians. (Did the Buddhists leave the village?) They left in the next wave. I do not know why, but few of them left the village.

19. What was the main occupation of the people in your village?

Farming. (What other occupations did people have besides farming?) If they did not farm, they did nothing. Some of them were storekeepers-small business.

20. In your opinion, was the village prosperous or poor?

Compared to other villages in Mo-Duc district, my village was considered to be a well-off village. There was plenty of land and the population was sparse.

21. Were most people rich, medium, or poor?

Most of them were poor. (But they were better off than people in other villages?) Relatively speaking, they were better-off because each family owned some land. (You said most people in the village were poor. Were they poor or destitute?) They were poor.

22. What did your family do to earn a living?

Farming. (Your mother is now 60 years old; how could she afford to send you to school?) We owned some land and rented it out.

23. How much land did your family own?

My family did not own much land -- about seven acres of land.

24. What category did the Front assign to your family?

Landowner.

25. Was there any change in your family's economic condition in the past years?

During the previous years when we were living under the communists the economic condition of my family was in bad shape. After the GVN took over, it changed for the better. (You mean since 1954 the economic condition of your family has taken a better course?) Yes. (How about the last three

or four years, has there been any change?) It was all right, but because I was in school many expenses came up. (Generally speaking, there was no change in your family's economic condition in the last three or four years?) No.

26. When did you pass your Junior Paccalaureate?

I passed it this year.

27. Did your family live in a strategic hamlet?

Yes. (When was it organized?) Before my hamlet became a strategic hamlet, a combat fence was strung around it. In Quang Ngai the hamlets were strung with combat fences. These fences came into existence before the strategic hamlet program was started and made people so miserable. The strategic hamlet was organized in 1962.

28. What was the difference between the strategic hamlet and a hamlet with combat fences?

There was no difference between the two. Both fenced people in. But the rules in the strategic hamlet were stricter and actually it (the strategic hamlet program) has not accomplished anything.

29. How did living in the strategic hamlet affect your life?

Actually there was no change at all. Outwardly, there were some small changes, such as people were able to listen to the news through loudspeakers. (Did it affect the movement and earnings of people?) People did complain about the restrictions imposed on their movements. People in the rural areas used to come home late from work, but the gates were closed early by the guards; therefore they were not happy with the arrangement. (Did it affect the villagers' earnings?) Not much. But if the strategic hamlet program had been carried out to the letter, it would have affected people. As it was, the effect was minimal.

30. Was it destroyed by the Front?

Yes. (When?) When it was first built. (In 1962, they had already begun to tear it down?) Yes.

31. Has your village been attacked by the VC?

Of course, many times. We exchanged fire with them many times.

32. Did you ever witness those engagements?

I saw them with my own eyes four times.

33. What did you like or dislike about the strategic hamlet?

Theoritically speaking, the strategic hamlet program was a good one. (Personally, what did you like or dislike about the strategic hamlet?) I cannot express my feelings entirely. Actually if all the objectives had been achieved for the strategic hamlet -- such as self-sufficiency, self-improvement, struggle against communism and backwardness -- the program would have been complete. But the cadres did not follow the instructions carefully. (Then, what did you dislike about the strategic hamlet?) It is hard to say whether I disliked something there. (You said that the strategic hamlet program was a good one but its execution left much to be desired. Would you tell me what were the mistakes in the execution of that program?) The cadres still followed the old style in their execution of the program. Even after the strategic hamlet had been built, there was no change in their way of handling the situation. There were some good points, however, such as the election of the Village Administrative Committee, the Hamlet Administrative Committee. That was Democracy. For those who understood it, it was good, but the population in general knew nothing about election or voting. They did not carry them out in a democratic way.

34. How did the GVN village and hamlet authorities behave toward the villagers?

In my opinion, the hamlet cadres' behavior can be divided into stages. Now they are nice and kind to the people, but before they treated the people very harshly. (When did their behavior change?) From the time the communists began to put more pressure on this area, the cadres were afraid that the people might report their behavior to the VC and they might get killed. (Since what year?) Since 1963 or 1964, these cadres have gone out of their way to please the people. (What about the village authorities?) What I just said applies to the village authorities. (How did they behave toward the people?) They treated the people most cruelly. There were many rotten cadres and the security agents tortured people savagely. It is not possible to recall them all.

35. Would you give me some concrete examples of the way the Village Chief and the Village Council members treated the villagers?

I will give you a summary of what happened. (Yes, but you do not have to give me names. Just tell me what happened). One time the village chief told a villager to plough the land for him. The time that man spent to work for the Village Chief would be counted as one day of community labor. Thus the man did not have to do his corvee labor; instead he ploughed the field for the Village Chief and the latter vouched for him. As for bribery cases: a security agent arrested a group of villagers and got a third party who would whisper to the victims to get their money ready. That was a common practice in that district.

36. What did the villagers think about these officials?

I can say that I and the majority of the villagers loathed those authorities. After the revolution that overthrew Mr. Ngo Dinh Diem, the new cadres have been more understanding.

37. Who controlled your village a year ago?

The GVN.

38. Did the communists begin to come to your village at the end of last year?

Yes.

39. Who controlled your hamlet when you left it for here?

The VC.

40. How many hamlets in your village were contested -- or did the VC take control of your village all at one time?

They took over control of the entire village all at one time.

41. Did the Front carry out any terroristic acts in your village?

The VC carried out many terroristic acts in the village, such as forcing people to dig trenches to defend against tanks. They also carried out other outrageous acts. They forced people to stop working in order to dig trenches for them. As for killing people, the VC did that frequently in the hamlets. Those who had some education were killed. The VC killed anyone they thought had some connection with the GVN.

42. Did the villagers think the killings were justified or not?

The people knew that those killings were not justified, but they were afraid to say so. The Communists had their agents mingled with the people, so the people were afraid that if they expressed their feelings among themselves, someone might report them to the VC who would come and kill them. The people were careful in what they said -- especially about the Communists.

43. After the VC had taken over control of the village, how did the villagers feel about it?

The villagers were afraid. They obeyed the orders. I cannot tell how they felt. The majority of the people in my village were for the GVN. They looked forward to a mopping-up operation so they could come out here. They did not dare to leave the village on their own, for fear they would be arrested by the VC and taken to the mountains.

44. Were the people satisfied or dissatisfied with the Front administration and policies in your village?

They were very much dissatisfied. (What were the reasons for their dissatisfaction?) They classified people into categories and classes and gave names to these classifications. The educated and the well-to-do were the ones most dissatisfied with the VC. The VC created conflicts between the classes. Also, they forced people to pay heavy taxes. Therefore people were dissatisfied.

45. Did the people's attitude toward the Front change since the end of last year?

The people's attitude toward the Front has changed quite a lot, but the people were afraid and did not dare to express their feelings. (Which direction have these changes taken?) They would rather live in peace. They kept their feelings to themselves. They were not afraid of the Communists; rather, they were afraid of the GVN. (How had they been before?) They had been strong then, very much anti-Communist. This is a concrete example of what had happened before: when the GVN soldiers retreated after a lost battle, the villagers would protect them and claimed them as their husbands or sons. They would not dare to do the same now.) Before the Communists took over the village, if there had been a big battle and the GVN had lost it, the villagers could do what I just mentioned.

46. Before the evacuation, how did the people's attitude toward the Front change?

They believed more and more in the VC. (Why did the people believe in the VC?) One of the reason they believed in the VC was because the territory under the control of the GVN shrank more and more, day after day; the GVN leadership and control were more restricted as a result of this "territory shrinking."

47. Has your village become a combat village?

They (the VC) changed the village into a combat village, complete with everything: propaganda and organization of meetings, etc.

48. How did you feel about living in a combat village?

In my opinion, life in the combat village is extremely miserable. There is nothing happy to mention. This is why: heavy taxes, corvee labor, digging trenches -- these are the things the villagers had to do.

49. Since you are an educated person, you can express your feelings freely. Would you tell me how life in the Front Combat Hamlet differed from life in the strategic hamlet?

Life in the strategic hamlet was much better, although the cadres did not faithfully carry out the policy they were supposed to pursue. Although we did not have all the conveniences, living in the strategic hamlet was preferable to living in the combat hamlet. People were free, the road was smooth, the way the people clothed and fed themselves and the way they lived was not imposed on them. Life in the combat hamlet was more "restricted". Take, for example, the case of someone who wore decent clothes; he would surely be criticized.

50. How many young men 16 years old or more were left in your hamlet?

In my hamlet alone, about 150 young men 16 years old or more were left. (How many in your village?) Quite a few if you count men from 16 years old up. (How many from 16 years old to 30 were left in your village?) Over one thousand.

51. How many of them joined the ARVN last year?

Many of them joined the ARVN after we had come out here.

(How about when you were still in your hamlet, last year?) None. Those who joined the ARVN had done it before the Communists came; after the Communists took over the village, no one joined the ARVN.

52. How many young men had joined the ARVN before the VC came?

Around 70.

53. How many of them joined the Front armed forces then?

Very few of them did. In the upper hamlet of my village, three or four persons joined the Communists. But some of them have returned.

54. How many young men joined the VC since the latter had come to your village?

Those who joined the Communists were those who had members of their families regrouped in the North. Quite a few of them have joined the Communists -- over thirty of them.

55. How many SDC and Militia were there in your village?

Many people in my village joined the SDC and the Militia. You can say that more people in my village joined these organizations than anywhere else in the district. (How many of them were there?) About 150. (Did they stay in their village or were they sent to other villages as well?) They were stationed in other villages also. The number includes those who joined the ARVN. (How many Militia were there in your village?) There were about 70 militia in the village alone. Many people joined the Militia.

56. When the VC had come, how many guerrillas were there in your village?

The young men in the village worked for the VC, but the latter did not trust them. (How many of them were armed guerrillas?) They enlisted all the young men left in the village. (I want to compare the number of people who were armed for each period. Which period had more armed people? There had been over 70 Popular Force men; how many guerrillas were there afterwards?) There were over 100 guerrillas, but those guerrillas were not well-armed, because there was one weapon for five or six men.

57. How many were full-time guerrillas and how many part-time guerrillas?

The majority of the full-time guerrillas belonged to families that had members regrouped in the North. There were around 30 of them. The rest were part-time guerrillas.

58. How did the Front recruit people in your village for military duty?

They used conscription and nothing else. In each hamlet there were one or two young men absolutely committed to them (VC). They made use of those people to appeal to others to join them. (How did they persuade others to join them?) They summoned the young men to meetings, they criticized the GVN shortcomings, and they called the Americans "Imperialists." Then they would ask some of these young men to carry out some of their orders. Today they would give the gun to this young man and the next day to another young man, and so on. The villagers who came out here would report to the GVN that such and such persons were working for the Communists. Trapped as they were, they did not dare to come out here, and were forced to work for the Communists.

59. Was there anyone who refused to work for them?

Of course, many refused to work for them. They came out here and joined the ARVN. (What happened to those who were still in the village and who refused to work for them?) They would be watched. Still, they had their excuses, such as sickness and the like.

60. Did they persuade most people through propaganda?

Their propaganda was mostly lies. They gave inaccurate information. They tried to hide the truth from the people. They told the people that there was more chance to be alive in the Front than in the GVN. People were afraid to get killed, so they sided with them. They hid the truth from the people.

61. Those often came to Quang Ngai and knew what happened; how about the villagers, did they believe what the VC told them?

Most of them believed the VC.

62. Why did some of them not believe the VC?

Some of them wondered why there was more chance to stay alive in the VC than in the Front, for they had witnessed in some

of the engagements that had occurred in their village, more VC than GVN soldiers being killed. That was why they wondered and doubted the VC's words.

63. How did the villagers think about the Front's method of recruiting?

They did not like that method. There were parents who did not want their sons to join, but they were forced to give their consent; they could not refuse.

64. Were any members of your family taken by the Front for "re-education"?

I myself had to go through their "re-education." (When did that happen?) It was in 1962 when I was attending the third year of Junior High. That was the first time they came to the village and they camouflaged themselves as GVN soldiers. Thinking they were GVN soldiers, I showed them the place where their own kinds were, so they could fight them.

65. How long did the re-education course last?

Three days. (What did you learn during those three days?) They did not say much. They made propaganda about Russia launching a satellite and the United States launching one, but that the one from the United States was not as good. They talked mostly about the things that were beyond the ordinary man. They did not talk politics. The majority of their cadres had little notion of what they were talking about. They only repeated what they had heard. One cadre said this, and the next one would repeat exactly the same thing.

66. Were you afraid when you were sent for "re-education"?

Of course I was very afraid. My mother was very worried.

67. Were you afraid too?

Yes, I was afraid, but I was given a somewhat better treatment there because I was a student and still young. (Why were you afraid then?) I was afraid they would keep me there indefinitely and force me to enlist in their armed forces.

68. When the VC had taken over your village, did they call people to their meetings?

They held meetings often. They organized the villagers into different groups and held meetings for those groups each day. They held meetings from one hamlet to the next.

(If you went home in the village only on week-ends, then how did you know what the VC did during the week?) It is true, but I still could learn what was happening in the village through my family. (Did you learn through your mother alone?) I learned from a lot of other people too: those who still believed in the GVN. They were very cautious when they came. The VC had told them that they had blown up the Provincial Headquarters and attacked Quang Ngai airfield. These people came and asked me if this was true, and I told them that was not true. Those were people who were looking forward to my coming home so that they could learn about what was going on out here. But what I said was reported to the Communists and I was again threatened.

69. To my knowledge, the VC do not let the people from the cities go to the rural areas -- or vice-versa -- because they do not want the news to travel from one place to another. Why did they let you go back and forth for a month and a half without causing you any trouble?

They did not cause me any trouble because they knew that I could continue to attend school only with my family's support. Also they knew what school I was attending. They knew that each time I came home, it was to ask for more money for my studies. Furthermore they were then following a different political line: they would rather persuade people to come back than to force them.

70. Did they change their political line to win the people back because many villagers had left the village?

No, that was their policy. According to what I heard from the cadres, their political activities were divided into several stages. From 1960 to 1964 any GVN cadres who happened to be captured by the VC would be killed; but after that period they would be taken for re-education and then would be released. (Then, since 1964 their policy has changed?) Yes, but nowadays it has changed again. Now they would kill those who are not for them; therefore, the majority of students like myself have to flee. But there were many other students, such as those at Duc Pho district, who worked for the VC.

71. When they let you come back to your village, did they try to win you back or persuade you to join them?

They tried to persuade me many times but they were not able to change my mind. (They still hope, though, that one day you may change your mind.) Yes, they still hoped I might join them some day because I had a good friend who had joined them. (And you kept up your pretense of good friendship with that friend of yours.) Yes, outwardly I kept up all the signs of friendship, but inwardly I had no intention of following him.

72. How often did the people have to attend meetings?

They had meetings for each group separately. For instance, they would hold meetings for young men that would last four or five days. After that, they would hold meetings for the young girls. During the time I was there, the meetings were held regularly. They went from one group to another, from one hamlet to the next. They arranged so that the people had no spare-time -- especially those families having members in the GVN armed forces. They watched those families very closely.

73. How many families in your village had members regrouped in the North?

There were twenty families with regroupees in my hamlet. I do not know the exact number in my village -- probably 60 families.

74. Were those meetings held regularly or only on occasions?

They were held regularly. According to their policies, the young children should be paid the most attention. They worked with these young children most often, and after the young children came the adults. There were mothers who refused to let their children attend those meetings, but they in turn were sent for re-education. Those meetings were held regularly. One day it was for this group, and the next day it was for the next group. The people had no time to relax.

75. What did the people think about those meetings?

They did not like those meetings. Before, when the strategic hamlet was being built, the villagers also had to attend meetings to learn about the strategic hamlet. They did not like those (VC) meetings either, but since they were required to attend, they did so reluctantly. They did not feel happy. Only those who sympathized with the Communists were happy.

76. They had not liked to attend meetings even during the strategic hamlet period, how about after the VC had taken over the village?

After the VC came, the meetings were held regularly and the people had to attend them even though they did not want to. They were not enthusiastic.

77. What did the villagers think about what they heard during those meetings?

The VC informed the villagers about their successes and after informing the people, they shouted "hurray," and the people conformed by shouting "hurray." (What did the people think about what they heard from the VC?) In my opinion, the people did not trust the VC's propaganda much. After hearing much propaganda, the people rather leaned toward pacifism. They did not want to be arrested either by the GVN or by the VC.

78. Did the VC hold meetings for explaining to the villagers about the bombing of North Vietnam?

Yes, they held meetings and claimed that American airplanes went to the North and did not come back. They meant that all those airplanes had been shot down. A trusted friend of my family came and asked me if what he had heard from the VC was true. I told him about the first wave of bombing at Hon Gay. I repeated to him what I had read in the newspapers about the burning and what went on. He listened to me but did not entirely believe my words; he listened to the Communists but did not believe them either. He was in doubt as to the true version of what had happened.

79. What did the villagers in general think about those attacks on the North?

Generally speaking, the people did not believe in the VC's propaganda much.

80. What explanations did the VC give in connection with those attacks on the North?

Those attacks were only an act of invasion of the American imperialists. They could not help the GVN at all. As an example, they said before the Americans had helped the French to fight the Vietnamese; now the Americans helped their lackeys in their fight against the Vietnamese people.

81. What had the villagers thought about the Americans' aims in Vietnam before the VC came - take for example the beginning or middle of last year?

The majority of the villagers were not well-informed. They held the opinion that the Americans came here to take over the land. Was that the opinion held by the villagers before the VC came?) Yes, before the VC came.

82. In your opinion, where did the villagers get that idea?

They got that idea because the Americans had helped the French to fight the Viet Minh. The majority of the people loathed the imperialists. When the VC put forward the term "American Imperialists" the people were hooked.

83. What do you yourself think the Americans want in Vietnam?

I often explained to people that as soon as the Americans left Vietnam, Vietnam would fall into the hands of the Communists. In my opinion, when the Americans came here they helped us more than they did harm. There are some concrete examples: Vietnam does not have enough coal and construction materials for its own use and the Americans brought them in for our use.

84. In your opinion, what do the Americans come here for?

The Americans are here because they want to keep their promise. If they lose Vietnam they will lose their prestige. There are others who say that the Americans are here to hold on to their military bases in the South. In my opinion, the Americans have submarines, nowadays; they do not need to set up that many military bases on the mainland. They have to hold on to these bases because they have made their commitment with the Government.

85. The Americans live very far from here; in your opinion, why have they come here and helped us?

Because they have a friendly spirit. They want to protect the freedom of their allies.

86. What did the people think about the Americans after the VC had taken over the village?

They still believed the same thing. They still believed that the Americans were imperialists. However, before they not

dared not say no. After the VC had come they dared call the Americans imperialists. (They believed the same thing about the Americans before and during the VC control; but after the VC came they dared express their thoughts. Right?) That was exactly so. They said the GVN received Americans' aid to kill one another. These were their common lines.

87. Did the VC set up organizations after they came? What were the names of the organizations?

Going from the lower to higher on the administrative side: there was a 'Self-Administration committee" (Tan Tu Quan). Next to the "Self-Administration Committee," there were organizations such as Young Men's Association, Young Girls' Association, Old Men's and Women's Association. (Did they not organize the Farmers' Association?) No, that I do not know. (Did they not organize the association of all farmers?) Oh, yes, that they did. They organized that organization in order to distribute land to the farmers. They took the land from those who had left for the GVN areas and distributed the land to the poor. The majority of the people in the village were poor because our country is poor. If the Communists are strong it is because they get the support of the poor. They took the land and distributed it to the poor.

88. To whom did your family pay taxes during the past few years?

To the GVN authorities in the village.

89. Did the VC come to the village and force the people to pay taxes to them?

One time, before the VC actually took over the village, they came and took away our paddy. (Did they force you to pay taxes to them regularly?) No. Every now and then, they would come and take paddy from those who had much of it in the family. But after the GVN had left and they took over, they began to assess the tax amounts they would collect, since the harvest was not due yet. They would collect taxes in two waves. (Were they able to collect taxes in the first wave?) Not yet but they had started to line up people to bring rice to the mountain. They told people not to leave their paddy at home, for fear the Americans' lackeys -- that was the GVN soldiers -- would burn all the rice in their mopping-up operations. (Did they take that rice for their own use, or did they leave the rice for the villagers' use?) They left the rice for the villagers because that rice really belonged

to the villagers. But they got people to bring rice to the mountain where there was a storehouse so they could store the rice. Their intention was to keep the people chained to their village because they knew the people would not leave their possessions to come out here.

90. Did the amount of taxes you paid to the Village authorities change during the last few years?

It was the same all the time. During the Resistance period, my family had to pay very heavy taxes. After the GVN took over, our taxes were very light compared with the amount we had to pay under the Resistance. (Did the taxes you paid to the GVN increase during the past three years?) No, it was the same. Once, the taxes were doubled as they mentioned security taxes or something. (When did this happen? Was it before or after the Revolution?) Before the Revolution. (The taxes were doubled for one year, then returned to normal?) Yes. We had to pay security taxes in order to have better security.

91. Did your family have to pay taxes to the VC?

Not yet. After they came, they visited each family and urged each family to contribute so much to them. But they had not got around to my family yet. If they had come to our family they would have expected us to contribute a great deal, not just a little; but then there was that mopping-up operation and we came out here. At the present time, in the village next to ours -- [redacted] village -- the VC are organizing a gold collection. (A collection and not a tax payment?) A collection. They urge people to contribute.

92. Which do you think is heavier, the tax you paid for the GVN or the one you would have to pay to the VC?

When the villagers paid taxes to the GVN they thought nothing about that, but they were afraid of the taxes they would have to pay to the VC. They were afraid of the VC because of their taxes. They would have to pay taxes on many things, such as on buffaloes.

93. Have the VC actually collected taxes from the people?

They had just got around to determining the ratio needed in the village, but not to collecting taxes yet. (Have they got around to collecting taxes on the first wave "Tien thu"?) Not yet. On the first wave everyone had to pay an instalment

of the taxes, but the amount was small. On the second wave, they would collect the balance left from the first wave. They just got around to determining which families had how much land and to which category -- A, B, or C -- those families would fall into. After that they would find out how many persons there were in each family and how much taxes that family had to pay. (They just got around to making the assessment, they have not actually collected any taxes?) That is right. (And the people did not know how much they would have to pay?) No. (Why did you say that the people were afraid of the VC because they would have to pay heavy taxes to the VC?) They had lived with them under the Resistance and they knew how much they would have to pay as taxes.

94. Did the Front carry out land distribution in your village?

Yes. They confiscated the land of the well-to-do families who had left for the GVN areas. They called them enemies, opponents, and distributed this land equally to people.

95. What do you mean by saying that they distributed the land equally to people. Does that mean that each one in the village would have the same amount of land?

They classified the villagers into categories. They put those who were equally poor in the same category and then they distributed the land to them. There were some complaints among the poor. However, the majority of them refused to accept the land.

96. Why did they refuse to accept the land? Did they think it was not worth receiving it?

They were afraid that they might not be able to keep it and the GVN might come back and arrest them. Those who refused to accept the land were frightened.

97. When was the land distribution carried out?

After they came, they determined the number of people in the village, then distributed the land. That is their policy. Whenever they go, they carry out the land distribution. (What year was the land distribution carried out in your village?) The land had been distributed when the mopping-up operation occurred. That was in October (1964). (When did they take over your village?) In October. Probably in September. They had carried out the land distribution in other hamlets, but they have not got around to my hamlet yet.

98. How much land was given to each family?

Each family got three to five "Sao." It depended on the status of each family. If this family was relatively richer than that one, it would get less. Generally speaking, only those families who were really poor were given land. Well-to-do families such as mine got nothing.

99. Did you think they might take away some of your land?

I am sure they would take away some of our land.

100. What did the people think about this distribution of land?

Some of them were happy. They were those who sympathized with the Communists. Some were unhappy and did not dare to accept the land given them.

101. After the VC had taken over, how many mopping-up operations were there in your village?

The first mopping-up operation occurred in October 1964 and that was the time when we left for our here. After that first mopping-up operation there were other small ones. Then in March 1965 there was another big operation and this time all the villagers came out here. All the people from the five hamlets came out here.

102. They came here in March but did they return to their village afterward?

They left the GVN area for the village? Yes, and those were the people who sympathized with the Communists. They came out here and the GVN authorities were not able to contact them yet. Therefore they left to return to their village.

103. What was the percentage of people who left the GVN areas to return to their village?

Out of 20 persons who had come here, about one returned. Out of 20 families who had come out here, one family returned.

104. How many families had come out here in March?

They all came out here then, but very few of them returned. About 5o/o returned to their village. Out of 1o6 families about 5 families have returned. (When there was that mopping-up operation, did they all come out here?) They all came out here except for the cadres whom the Communists trusted.

There went into hiding with the Communists. (In that recent mopping-up operation, out of 100 families in your village, how many of them came out here?) Out of those 100 families, 90 came out here and stayed here, 5 left to follow the Communists, and the other five came out here and then returned.

105. Out of your 7 acres of land, how much did your family get as rentals?

Each year we got about 50 pole loads of paddy. The amount of paddy was not much, but there were few members in the family and that was why we had more than enough for our use.

106. When was the last time when you could return to your village?

That was in October. (You have not been back since?) No. (You have been staying at the Mo-Duc refugee camp since October?) Yes. (Did you continue your studies then?) When the VC came my family had to sell our paddy to the VC at a cheap price; they would not let us carry it to other places and sell it. We had to sell it to their purchasing section which paid us very little. They just gave us enough to support ourselves, so I was not able to continue with my studies.

107. After you had arrived in Mo-Duc, were you able to do anything to have an income?

We were not able to do anything. We stayed in a pagoda and subsisted with what we got from the pagoda.

108. Who sold the paddy for you in the village?

My mother. (She sold the paddy to the purchasing section?) Yes. They fixed a price for paddy.

109. Did they still let your mother hire tenant farmers to work for her?

Those tenant farmers will keep all the paddy the land produces. They will not share it with you anymore.

110. How did the people in your village live during the Resistance period?

During the war between the French and the Viet Minh, the people in the village lived very miserably because they had to pay taxes. My family was not able to pay taxes then; we were supposed to pay seven or eight tons of paddy. Also we owned more land then. The people lived very poorly and many of them had to go hungry.

(You were then only 11 years old, how could you be so well-informed?) I might not know what was going on but I still could listen to people discussing among themselves. I was only 11 years old then, but physically I was full. The worst impression that is left in me is the one I had when I saw some villagers being accused. I witnessed those accusation sessions. (How did they do that? Was it a public accusation?) They had not gone to the final stage then. They made those victims kneel down. My uncle was made to kneel down and he was badly beaten by the people. I was afraid for my family then. (Was your father still living then.) No. He died in 1945, a year after the Revolution had broken out. (Did he die of sickness or what?) He died of sickness.

111. Did the people volunteer to go North to "regroup" or were they forced to go?

Outwardly they let people ask to be sent to the North, but actually they urged and persuaded people to go. They persuaded people to go by telling them that the GVN soldiers were very cruel and so on. They would come to each family and urge people to go.

112. When the VC came September last year, was there some fighting or had the GVN soldiers left the village before the VC came?

There had been a big engagement in my village in which many Communists were killed. The district chief was then afraid the Communists might take revenge on the GVN company, so he ordered it to withdraw. After that company retreated, there were no other soldiers in the village. The people got scared because the Communists might take over their village anytime now. The Communists had been to that village on and off, and finally they took over the village.

113. Were the militia there when the VC came?

No, they had already left. After that battle which I mentioned earlier, the militia left the village in charge of an ARVN company. They went to another contested area, an area with less VC pressure so that they could defend it.

114. The ARVN company left in September, right?

Yes, they left in September. In that engagement the ARVN troops were supported by tanks and many Communists were killed -- between 40 or 50. Although the ARVN won that battle.

they could not protect the village and they had to withdraw. As soon as the ARVN had withdrawn, the Communists began to come down. At first they were still cautious because they were still afraid, but finally they took over the village.

115. While you were in your village, did you often meet the province chief or district chief?

The district chief came every now and then. He would come to the village and talk to the people cautiously.

116. Why did he have to be cautious?

The people were cautious. The district chief did not get in touch with the people. He stayed in his district headquarters and did not contact people.

117. Did the province chief ever come to the village?

The former province chief, Mr.---, came once or twice. He came to the refugee center and talked with people. The present province chief, Mr. ---, has not met the people yet.

118. How often did the district chief come to your village?

It depended on which district chief. Mr.---, for instance, would come to every family and inquire about them. As for the present district chief, he has been here for four or five months but he has not met the people yet.

119. Generally speaking, what do you think about the GVN administration?

The GVN has not had a clear and definite plan. Their control over their cadres' behavior is not strict. The lower echelon cadres have not identified themselves with the common people. In my opinion, in order to build up a strong Government, the lower cadres have to identify themselves with the common people. The GVN does not have any clear-cut plan. (What other opinions do you have about the GVN?) There are still many unclean personalities in the Government. The local authorities are the ones the people come into contact with most often. The people have little chance to meet authorities in higher echelons. Therefore, it is my opinion that the Government should give due attention to the behavior of the lower echelons.

120. What did the people in your village think about the fall of the Diem regime?

When Mr. Diem was overthrown, the people said they were happy about the event. But so much trouble followed the fall of Mr. Diem. The Communists took advantage of the confused situation in which one government followed another. After the fall of Mr. Diem, in the areas that were under the Communists' pressure, such as my village, the people began to regret the downfall of Mr. Diem.

121. Did the GVN carry out any programs in your village to help the villagers?

There were many programs, such as the one helping the people to get fertilizers for their land. That was a very good program for helping the farmers because it helped them to improve their land. But the program did not reap the result it should have. The commercial people got the tickets from the Farmers' Association and they presented those tickets to the same association and were authorized to buy fertilizers at a cheap price. They then brought the fertilizers to the farmers and sold them to the latter at a higher price. They made a profit of 50 or 100 piasters. Therefore the program was designed to help the people, but the execution of the program was put in the hand of people who were not fit for the responsibility.

122. What did the people think about the GVN programs designed to help them?

The people welcomed all the programs designed to help them, such as the distribution of sweet potatoes, rice, and other crops. Only a small amount of this aid reached the people, however. They heard that much was allotted to them, but they received only a fraction of what they thought they were supposed to get. Therefore there were many who complained or wondered about those programs.

123. What did the Front tell the villagers when Mr. Diem's regime was overthrown?

After the downfall of Mr. Diem, the VC came to the village and told the people that Mr. Diem had been overthrown and so on, and they also said it was all a fraud. When the people first heard the word "Revolution," they thought it was a revolution engineered by the Communists. And that same night the Communists came and declared that it was

their revolution. But the people later were told that the revolution was brought about by the Government itself. They said the regime under Mr. Diem was corrupt and that was the reason why it was overthrown. The VC urged the people to demand a strong and uncorrupted government under the leadership of Mr. Ho-Chi-Minh.

124. The night Mr. Diem was overthrown, the Front cadres got the wrong information and they thought it was their own revolution?

Yes. They told the people that it was their revolution, but the people got a different explanation a few days later. The cadres then had to change their line of propaganda. (What did they explain when they came back the next time?) They said the GVN did not have talented persons, so those servile followers of the Americans were chosen and put in the Government.

125. What have you heard about the present government and its policies?

The present government has promised to initiate social reform, to clean out corruption in the government. The people welcome a strong government. The Vietnamese people in general and the people in my village in particular do not like a democratic relationship between them and their government. They rather prefer to offer their services to a king, to a president, or to someone in the highest position, and they would rather pledge their allegiance to that person. Actually they serve their country, but they do not think of it that way. They think of themselves as serving an individual. And this is the result of their education.

126. Had you left your village when the present government came into power?

No, I was still in the village.

127. How many SDC were there in your village?

About 70 or 80.

128. Were they all from your village or did they come from somewhere else?

They were all from the village.

129. How did the SDC behave toward the villagers?

The villagers had nothing to complain about the SDC. The SDC treated the villagers nicely. They were not high-handed people.

130. Did the ARVN sometimes come to your village?

They often came. (How many times did they come per month?) When there was an operation going on they would come to the village and stay there for quite a while. Sometimes this or that company was stationed in the village. That happened often. The majority of them were well liked by the people, but every now and then there was a company, usually the Civil Guards, which would make people unhappy. The people did not like the Civil Guards soldiers.

131. What did the Civil Guards do that made the people unhappy?

The leaders of the Civil Guards, such as the lieutenants and the company leaders, would beat the Militia or the people without any reason at all. The people were afraid of them and they dared not go near the place where those soldiers camped.

132. How did the villagers feel about the activities of the hamlet and village guerrillas?

At first they (the VC) said nothing, they were more concerned about getting the trenches ready. Later they formed small organizations and organized their party members to strengthen their party chapter. The people did not like the VC's activities because first they required the people to do corvée labor and so forth. This made the people's lives miserable and, because of that, the people disliked them. On the other hand, the people were afraid of them because they believed that the Communists would win some day. The Front cadres drilled into the people's mind that their revolution would succeed. They gave the people much untrue information, and the people believed that the Communists would win. Therefore, they dared not say anything.

133. What did the people think about the village guerrillas?

When they (the VC) came, they recruited guerrillas. Those guerrillas have not done anything. They were rather free, each day they had to stand guard a few times and that was all. As for the full-time guerrillas, they were not high-handed people. If there were any families who disliked the guerrillas, these were the SDC and Popular Force families. The latter were taken to the mountains for re-education and were required to do heavy corvee labor and pay heavy taxes. The guerrillas were tormenting those families.

134. How did the villagers feel about Front troops stationed in or passing through your village? Was there any change in the people's attitudes?

People in my village did not welcome those troops with open arms like people in other villages. Their attitude was rather fearful, they kept quiet so that they would be left alone.
(By "change in the people's attitude," I mean to ask if people disliked those troops less than they had before or liked them better than before. Was there any change in their attitude recently.) People did not actually like the Communists except those who were working for them. People did not love the Communists for sure, but they preferred to be left alone. The people neither loved nor hated the Communists; they remained in the middle (were neutral, indifferent).

135. While you were in your village, what did the people hear about the aims of the Front?

Their purpose was to fight against the American imperialists. They said the people had been living under oppression, had been kept in the strategic hamlets, in the prisons, more prisons were built than schools, and that was the reason of this revolution. This revolution was to liberate the people, to fight against the American imperialists, to drive them out and to reunify the country. That was their propaganda.

136. What have you heard about life in the Front military units?

The VC informed us about the accomplishments of this and that person and from the news they gave us I could deduce that the VC led a hard and not happy life. For the cadres in the North, we were told how much the cadre achieved in a day, how much his wife did and how much his children did. As for the cadres living in mountains, they had to work very hard. They worked all the time. If there was any training course, the people were required to attend those courses. The people were said to attend the training courses, but the truth was that they were sent to the mountains to do corvee labor for the VC. The VC used slogans, such as cultivation competition and production competition, to reap the benefit for themselves.

137. How did the people in your village hear about Front successes and defeats?

The Communists said they had had many successes.

The information they gave me was completely untruthful, such as the story of the bomb explosion in front of the American Embassy. They said four American Brigadier Generals were killed together with another 100 Americans. Also over two hundred American families left Saigon for home by boat. They gave wrong stories in their propaganda. Although they made use of their propaganda often, the people in that village did not believe completely what they heard. Right in that village, the people had seen many engagements in which the GVN inflicted heavy casualties to the VC. They wondered why the VC did not mention those engagements. Therefore, they did not believe them (the VC) much.

138. Do you have any close friends serving in Front military units?

Yes. (What did he tell you about life in the Front?) He just joined them then. At that time I was trying to get him in the N.C.O. school for he had received a draft notice before the VC came. Later he escaped and joined the VC. After that, I heard that he had participated in a battle and was wounded in the leg. He was then sent to the mountains and from then on I heard nothing about him.

139. You said your friend dodged the draft and joined the VC. Did he volunteer to join the VC or was he persuaded to do so?

He volunteered. He belonged to a family in which the father was a regroupee. Therefore he could not leave the VC.

140. Are any members of your family or relatives serving in the ARVN?

Yes. (Have they visited you often?) Yes, they came to visit me everytime they come home. (How often did you see them or talk to them? How many times a month did you see them?) That depends. Some month a few of them came, and in other month none of them did. They might get a few days off during Tet. (When was the last time you talked with them?) The last time was almost a month ago.

141. Are any members of your family or relatives serving with the VC?

No. There was one relative who had sold his boss's cow and therefore dared not come out here. He remained in a VC-controlled hamlet with his family.

142. Have any members of your family tried to persuade him to come to live in the GVN- controlled areas?

Of course, I myself have talked to his children here but he dared not come out, he was very afraid. People now are suspicious about his activities up there; now he is afraid if he comes out, the GVN authorities will ill-treat him.

143. How many times has your village been the scene of battle?

Many fightings had taken place there, but there were only four times I had seen with my own eyes.

144. Would you describe what happened each time, which side came first and so on?

The GVN force in the frist battle which I witnessed was commanded by a master sergeant. He commanded seven SDC platoons. (Were these SDC from the village or did they come from somewhere else?) They came from other places too. There were many of them. They were surrounded in the hamlet by a great number of Communists. He fought against the Communists and at the same time asked for reinforcements which did not arrive. In that battle the Communists used many weapons, modern weapons. As for the SDC, they did not have many weapons, their best weapons were automatic rifles. The Communists brought down one of the gates and come in. Our side lost that battle, but actually we won because many VC were killed. However, the fact that they could come into the hamlet and we had to run, was considered as a defeat. (When was that battle?) It happened about 3 years ago. (In 1962?) Yes. (What was the casualty list of each side?) From what I know, six of our soldiers were killed. I do not know how many SDC were killed. As for the Communist soldiers, many of them were killed. According to what the people said, they had carried away many of theirs -- about 50 or 60.

145. How about the other battles?

The one I saw most recently happened when there was an ARVN company stationed in my hamlet. When the Communists came, the ARVN had already left the hamlet. They took over the hamlet. The next morning three tanks were sent to the place. They fought against the tanks. One of the tanks was damaged by their firing. That same afternoon, three more tanks came and the result was : many of them were killed.

(How many of that ARVN company were killed?) Some of them were killed because they had left the hamlet. But the next morning, a soldier of the reinforcement column was killed. He belonged to Regiment 21. He thought the VC were not in the hamlet, and the VC let him got close to the hamlet before they opened fire.

146. When did that battle occur?

Last September. It was the most gruelling battle in Mo-Duc

147. When did the other two battles occur?

Those two battles also involved the same ARVN company. It occurred just a few days before the one I spoke about. They came and surrounded the supporting point in the hamlet. The ARVN company withdrew from the hamlet after having fired many rounds. They then came in but found nothing, so it was as if they got nothing out of that attack. As for the other battle, our side reaped some good results. The SDC made contact with the enemy, with the Communists. The fight went on for a while; then the VC withdrew and the SDC came in. The SDC found that the VC had left two of their deads behind.

148. Did these battles involve different Front units: Guerrillas, Regional Forces and Main Forces?

I do not know which Front troops were invoved in each battle However, in the last one, the one with the tanks, many Main Force troops participated in that one. Those who got killed in that battle belonged to the Main Forces. The Main Forces also participated in the battle I mentioned in the beginning. As for the other small engagements, they invoved the lower-level Front troops such as guerrillas.

149. Were the villagers warned by the Front or by the GVN about the oncoming attack so they could hide in their trenches or leave the village?

No, not by the Communists. The SDC warned the people about the dangerous situation and told them to move to some other areas. As for the Communists, they would try to keep the people in the village. They would not let the people go.

150. Was your hamlet bombarded by artillery?

Very often. (Where did the shelling come from?) From the district. (Were there any VC in the village then?) Yes.

During the fighting, the village was heavily bombarded by artillery. (How often was your village bombarded by artillery?) There was no fixed schedule. The village was shelled with mortars whenever there was gunfire with the VC. (You mean only during the battles you just mentioned?) The shelling occurred sometimes at night too. At night, the SDC might call and ask for the artillery to shell at such and such coordinates. One time they made a mistake and a shell killed a man in the hamlet. That gave the VC something to build up their propaganda around. The man lived in Duc-Hoa hamlet and he was very kind. The Communists came and propagandized that the dead man was such a kind person and yet he was killed. Also, as he lived in the strategic hamlet, they urged people to leave the strategic hamlet and live outside it, for they said the people might get killed if they stayed there.

151. How much damage was done to the villagers' houses?

A great deal.

152. What did the people think about that damage and those casualties?

Damage that was brought about by the fierce fighting during the big battles was payed for by the Government; therefore, the people had nothing to complain about. Also, the people realized that if there had been no enemy, there would not have been any fighting. (Were people indemnified after the above battles?) Yes. (What happened when there was no fighting and the mortars shelled the village?) They would hide the fact from the higher echelons. The lower echelons hid those facts from their superiors. (When that old man was killed, did his family get any indemnification from the Government?) No. (When would the indemnification be given out and to whom?) The indemnification was given out after the big battles such as the one in which the ARVN withdrew and later the banks were sent in. In that battle, eight or nine dwellings were burned down. After that battle a ceremony was organized and presided over by the lieutenant colonel province chief. He handed out to each family 5,000 piasters.

153. Did any person in your village join the Front because they resented the attacks?

People did not join the Front because of the attacks. People joined because the local GVN authorities the low echelon cadres, the village and hamlet cadres had oppressed them.

They joined the VC so that later they could come back and mete out their revenge. In my opinion, the majority of the people who joined the Communists did so for this reason. Few of them joined because of their understanding of the policies of the Communists. Few of them joined because Marxism appealed to them. They joined so that they could have a chance to revenge themselves.

154. How many people in your village have joined the Front because of personal grievance?

Not so many people in my village joined the Communists because of personal grievance. They joined because they had members in their families regrouped in the North in or before 1954. Four or five persons in my village joined the Communists because of personal grievance, but many persons from the villages in the vicinity joined for this reason.

155. Did any villagers move to the GVN- controlled areas after each battle?

A lot of them did. Before each battle a general evacuation order was given and the people competed with one another to move out. Every time they saw the Communists coming, they evacuated. They went to the areas free of Communists so that they would be safe while the fighting went on. (Did they leave before the fighting took place?) They left before the fighting took place. The people in my village left whenever they saw the Communists coming, but if the GVN troops were not there the Communists would not let people leave; they would try to stop the people. With the people in the village, the GVN would be at a disadvantage because they would not dare to charge in. The Communists fell back on the people when they had to withdraw; the presence of the people would render their retreat easier.

156. Did the villagers move to the Front-controlled areas when the VC came?

That situation did not happen, when there was still security in my village and when the Communists would come every now and then. However, after the GVN had left and the Communists had taken over, whenever there was a mopping-up operation, some people would move to the Communist-controlled areas.

157. Did these attacks interfere with the people's work?

They certainly interfered a great deal. Because of these fightings, the people have become more fearful. They had to come back from work early so that they would be ready to move out. After each battle the people became more scared. These fightings interfered with their livelihood because they restricted their working time.

158. Have the GVN cadres ever come to explain to the villagers the reason for those attacks in their village?

The cadres should have come to the village and explained to the people the reason for those attacks on their village. But the truth was, the cadres were there but offered no explanation.

159. Did the VC offer any explanation before or after each attack? Did they come and explain the reason for those attacks and the reason for the damage done to the villagers' properties?

The Communists have many tactics. Only those who understand their nature could realize the wickedness of those tactics. When they came, they would gather the people and keep them there with the intention that when the GVN attacked them some people might get killed. The bullets would hit the people and the VC would use that in their propaganda --- which they called explanation.

160. In your village, out of ten families how many have a radio?

Few families in my village had radios. One or two families in my hamlet had radios. One out of maybe 60 families had a radio.

161. What station did these families listen to?

The majority of them would listen to the station in Quang Ngai. They might listen to Radio Saigon. (Could you get Radio Saigon there?) Yes, in the afternoon or in the evening. At noon, only good radios could get Saigon.

162. How did the villagers get news about what was going on?

They had no newspapers to read and find out what happened in the world. They heard the news from other people, from people who listened to their radios and reported back. Every now and then there would be a meeting and the people were informed about what had been going on, but the news was too late. The people did not get the news until much later.

163. Did they come to the village or hamlet information office to read about what was happening?

Some of them did come to the information office, but there were no newspapers nor books there. It was true there was an information office but there were no pamphlets nor books except for a few copies of the "The gioi Tu do" (Free World). (No daily newspapers?) No. (Was there any daily information bulletin?) No. (What was there at the information office?) When there was still security in the village, the reading room had copies of the "The gioi Tu do" and some pictures of CARE, nothing else. As for the weekly information bulletins, when they reached there they were two or three weeks old. Therefore the news reached the people very late.

164. Were there any newspapers sent to your village for sale?

No. There was no newspapers for sale in the village. When the village was still secure, every now and then people would buy newspapers from the district town and brought them back to the village for others to read. They would ask the students to buy and bring the newspapers back for them. The newspapers were sent to [redacted] School at Mo Duc and the students would pick them up from there and brought them back to the village; at the end of the month, people would go there and pay for the newspapers.

165. How many families buy newspapers?

Not many people bought newspapers. Four or five persons read newspapers regularly.

166. When there were attacks in your village, did the people think of moving to GVN- controlled areas and staying there.

The people wished very much to move to GVN- controlled areas and stay there. They also looked for a way to bring their paddy here so the Communists could not confiscate it. Also, they wanted to bring out all their personal belongings to the GVN- controlled areas. They could not make up their mind, though, because their homes, gardens, and fields were in the village. They were confused as what they should do.

167. How about your family? There were few members in your family. Did you think of moving to the district or to town to live?

My family was among the first to leave the village. When the Communists came, my family intended to stay in the village and continued to work on the land, we did not think of leaving. But after having lived with the Communists, many people began to look forward to a mopping-up operation so that they could move out. At the end, everybody came out, including those who did not wish for the operation to occur.

168. You have been to the town and to the district; will you compare life there with life in your village?

As far as I know, there is a great difference between the life of a person living in the village and that of a person living in the town. People in town have all the material conveniences and so on and they can learn about what is going on. As for the people in the countryside, they have to work on their gardens and fields all the time. Truthfully speaking, their thoughts have not changed from way back (in the past).

169. When you arrived at the refugee camp or at the district, how did you think the Government would treat you?

When I returned to the village I was asked about the GVN's treatment of refugees. I told them that the Government has put aside a special fund to help the refugees; and the latter would not have to worry about starvation. Sincerely speaking, the assistance given by the Government to each family is not adequate.

170. When did your family decide to leave your village to come out here?

We decided to leave the village when there was that mopping-up operation.

171. When did the mopping-up operation occur?

Last October (1964).

172. Did someone persuade you to leave or did you leave on your own?

Most of the people in that village decided to leave. My family also decided to move out too. We were somewhat reluctant for economic reasons. I have no job and would not be able to support my family. If we left for a GVN-controlled area, we would not be able to earn a living. Therefore, we had to wait until we could get assistance from the Government before we moved out here.

173. What preparations did you and your family make before you came out here?

We did not make any preparations. We brought out with us our personal possessions such as beds and straw mats for later use. Most of the people brought out the same things, they brought out what was left after they had stored rice in the mountains. None of them made any advance preparations.

174. What did you fear most when you were considering leaving your village?

In my case, I had nothing to feel uneasy about, but the majority of the people were worried that they might starve out here. I, myself, was not afraid because I was sure that the Government would take care of us, would assist us, because we were war victims.

175. When you were in your village, did you ever hear broadcasts from aircraft or read leaflets telling people to leave their village?

No such things happened when I was still living in the village. When the village was still secure, however, I heard broadcasts often. (What did they say?) They talked of the successes of the GVN armed forces and the evils done by the VC, how the VC had hidden the truth from the people. Every now and then we would receive leaflets. (What was said in these leaflets?) First, those leaflets informed the people about the flood; then after the flood, about the VC's hijacking goods designed to relieve the flood victims. Also, the leaflets described this or that family, saying it had been killed by the Communists, under what circumstances, and so forth.

176. Could you hear clearly, what the broadcasts from aircraft said?

Very clearly, but the people in that village were not used to the Northern accent and the Saigon accent. Also since the broadcasts were made through loudspeakers the people did not understand much.

177. When you were in your village did you hear about the GVN Chieu Hoi program?

Of course. (Did you hear about it when you came out here?) I heard about it when the program was first initiated.

(Did you hear about it in your village or when you attended school in town?) I heard about it in my village for there were sessions organized to learn about the program. (Were those sessions held for everyone in the village?) Yes, for everyone in the village. Under Mr. Diem's regime, that program had done something which I think very noteworthy. They invited all the regroupees' families and the families having members who had "gone to the mountains" (joined the Communists) and gave each family a card. Those families were then told to get in contact with their members and send them the cards telling them that if they took those cards and came out here they would get help and the armed forces would welcome them. Because of that, many Communist cadres, who had been with the Communists for over 20 years, rallied to the Government.

178. Did the program bring any result in your village?

Of course, it was very effective. The result had been very good before the January 11th revolution. (Date of the coup that overthrew Ninh.) Many people rallied. In my village alone five or six rallied. In Duc Pho district as a whole, over 300 persons rallied then.

179. When you left your village, how long did you expect to be away from it?

I expected to be away for not more than a year. I was sure I would be back within a year and it has been eight or nine months already.

180. What was the most important reason that made you decide to come out here?

The most important reason that made me to decide to come here and not any other place was because I would be closer to home and it would be easier to make it back from here.

181. What belongings did your family bring out here?

My family brought out here some paddy, some cooking items and household goods. (Did you bring your furniture along?) Yes, we were able to bring the furniture along. (How did you bring them all here?) On my bicycle. (How could you bring them all on your bicycle? How many times did you have to go back and forth?) It took one trip to bring a king-size bed out here. (Did you take the bed apart?) No, I left it as it was. (How many trips did it take you to bring out

all your household goods out here?) It took only two trips because there were only two beds which I brought out here. As for the paddy I brought out, I sold it to defray other expenses. (Did you bring the paddy out on bicycle too?) Yes. I carried it on my bicycle for 1.5 or 2 km, then the military vehicles took charge. The beds and the divans were not carried by military vehicles. There was only one route the vehicles could pass, but I took the short cut, so I did not use the facilities of the military vehicles. I guided the bicycle walking.

183. Are you worried about the property you left behind?

I do not worry about them. Those items we left behind I consider lost forever. Even our house is considered as gone.

183. Is there anyone in the village who will look after your property?

No.

184. What else would you have liked to take with you if you had been able to do so?

There was nothing left in the house. We have brought everything out here. Sincerely speaking my family did not possess too many things. If there had been transportation, I might have wanted to bring firewood out here. That is all.

185. When the villagers left, did the VC come and try to stop them or persuade them not to leave?

The GVN soldiers were there when the people left. As soon as the GVN soldiers arrived, the villagers began to move out. The soldiers told the people to leave or the village would be attacked.

186. How many people in your village left for Nho Duc camp at the same time as you did? How many people left during these few days?

Many of them left. Almost the entire village left.

187. How many days did it take the entire village to clear out of there?

Each time, the mopping-up operation was conducted only in three hamlets. Each time, the GVN soldiers came to three hamlets. When that happened, many people in those three

hamlets left except for a few families which ran after the enemy. Another operation was conducted in February, in which the mopping-up was carried out in the entire village. That time the entire population came out here. There were families who joined the Communists, most of them from the upper hamlets.

188. What do you think might happen to you if you went back to your village?

If I went back to my village right now, my life there would be extremely miserable. I might starve because, though there is no way to earn a living except for tilling the land, the land has been abandoned for many months now.

189. As for the VC, would they do something to you if you come back to visit your village?

If I went back to visit my village I would be arrested instantly. (Why were you able to go back and forth?) I was able to do so because I had not taken the step of moving out here permanently. If I went back now I would be arrested. Generally speaking, if anyone from my village went back now, he would be arrested.

190. Are there any differences between what the Front told you about life under GVN control and what you have heard and seen here?

When the VC described life under GVN they dared not say that people there went hungry or were miserable. They said that the people there were living under oppression, that they were beaten. The VC dared not describe how they lived.

191. In your opinion, how long do you think the war will go on?

I think the war has come to a decisive period. In a year or two, the war will end. (Why do you think that in a year or two the war will end?) This is only a guess and it may not be true. (On what basis could you say that the war will end in a year or two?) I base my guess on the wish of the politicians in the world. If there was a war between the United States and Red China the war in Vietnam would end.

192. Do you blame anyone for causing you to leave your village?

If I blame anyone for causing me to leave my village and my home, it's the VC.

193. What did the other people think about that?

Other people have the same idea but they blame the different side. They came here in order to get away from the fighting, from getting killed, they did not think that the Communists were their enemy.

194. Since you came out here, have you and others who came out with you received any assistance?

We receive assistance all the time. Each person receives from the Government 12 kilos of rice and 3 piasters per day or 90 piasters per month. (Does your family receive this assistance regularly?) Regularly. (Is your mother still at the refugee camp?) Yes.

195. How far is it from your village to [redacted]?

[redacted] kilometers. (Can the cars move on that road?) Yes, but one section of that road was blown up by the Communists.

196. What did the Government tell you they will do for you and other refugees?

The Government promised to give to each family 2,000 piasters, 10 bags of cement, and 20 tin sheets. The district cadres informed the people that they would receive so much assistance. Also, the Assistant Province Chief for Administrative Affairs said the same. This assistance will be given to people so that each family can build a house, and the Government will continue to feed them for six months. That was what the Assistant Province Chief said.

197. What do the people think of this promise?

They do not think about this promise; they think about the promise of giving them assistance for six months. They wonder how they can make a living when the six month period is over.

198. What did you plan to do when you left your village?

When I left I had planned to find a small job so as to be able to support my family through the war. But since I came out here I have been busy with my studies, and after the studies come the examination. I have not had time to look for a job yet.

200. What type of job are you looking for?

I would like to look for a job which requires light work and gives an adequate salary so as to be able to buy textbooks. There are such jobs in the companies.

201. Have you heard about the people who stayed behind in your village?

Their lives are extremely hard. They lived there alone. The people around them have all left. They have to work hard because now one family has to be in charge of everything. They lead a very miserable life. They are not happy.

202. How did you hear about the situation in your village?

I heard from the ralliers. They came out here after us. They left the village to take refuge from the Communists. (Were there many persons who came out here after you had?) Yes.

203. Since you came out there, has anyone persuaded you or other refugees to go back to your village?

No one has come to persuade the people to go back to their village.

204. Have you seen any Americans?

I have seen them many times, I have seen them face to face. The majority of them are political advisors to the district. They have come down here to meet with people often.

205. What have you heard about them?

What have I heard from the people about them? (From anyone, what have you heard about the Americans?) According to the criticism I heard, when the Americans appear side-by-side with the province chief or the district chief, there is a political implication. The VC in their propaganda call the Americans "imperialists," and yet whenever I go to a public place I find the Americans stand side-by-side with the district chief and such. I think the Americans' presence in such instances may have many political ill-effects. (What else did you hear?) Some people expressed their opinions as above. Others just said that the Americans were so and so. (What do you mean by so and so?) They said the Americans were imperialists, that the Americans came here to take things away from the Vietnamese people.

(Who were they?) They were the people. The people said so. For those who have some understanding of the situation, they appreciate the mutual-help spirit of the Americans. Those who have some patriotism in themselves, esteem the Americans when they hear of the American successes and American participation in the war and sacrifices.

206. What do you yourself think about them?

I appreciate the American sacrificial spirit in helping the Vietnamese people although we are separated by the Pacific ocean. They have brought here ammunition and medicines in spite of the difficulties involved. Also the MEDICO team has left a very good impression among the people about the Americans.

207. Have you seen people from foreign countries other than America (Koreans, Filippinos etc.) who are helping the Vietnamese people?

I have seen the Koreans, the Filippinos, the Australians. When the Australian Foreign Minister came here and gave a speech, I listened to his speech. (Did he come out here?) No, he was at Quang Ngai.

208. What did you hear about their activities?

When the Australian Foreign Minister was here he declared that Australia sent troops and aid here to help Vietnam fight against the invaders. As for the American teams such as the MEDICO, the political advisors, the military advisors, they are here to help Vietnam with manpower and military strength.

209. As you mentioned before, the Americans were separated from us by the Pacific Ocean. Why did they have to come here from such a distance?

According to the newspapers, and the statements of United States Presidents which I read in the newspapers, the Americans do not need to establish military bases here because they already have submarines. So military bases are not needed. The Americans are here because they do not want to see any part of the Free World change hands by armed invasion from any country or any imperialist country. For those who had been under the influence of VC propaganda, they thought the Americans came here to take over the land. Others, more understanding, believed that the Americans came here to establish military bases.

210. Who was your best friend when you were in your village?

My best friend is a student, he is attending school with me. (Could you talk to your friend freely on all matters?) Very freely. (What did you usually talk about?) When we visited each other, anything could come up and we would talk about it.

211. Have you ever been afraid that your friend might report what you said to the VC?

No. I was not afraid when I talked to my friends. I talked to them about the most secret stories which I could not tell outside people and I was not afraid.

212. Could you talk to the members of your family freely?

Yes, within my immediate family but not with my relatives. With the latter I still kept some reservations because I was not sure about them.

213. Is everything that in known to one member of the family also known to the others in the family?

Yes, when something happens and one person knows about it then the entire family will be informed. (In other words, if the men know something, will the women in the family be informed about it too?) The entire family will know about it. (Is there anything a man knows but the women are not informed about?) That I do not know, because there are only my mother and I in the family; whatever I know I tell my mother.

214. Did any family or individuals in the village help your family when you were in trouble?

They helped us in our work. We asked people to help us and paid them. (I mean when you were sick, for example, did someone come to help you, going to the market, buying things for you? I am not talking about paying that person. Was there any person in the village in such relationship with your family?) Of course, we held close friendship with people in the hamlet. When we were sick they would go and fetch the medicine man immediately.

215. Who would you say was the most important person in your village, after the village chief?

The most important and the most influential person in the

village was the village police officer. (Why was he the most important person?) Because he was the one who could drive the people away or unite them. When he did something harsh the people could be so frustrated that they might join the Communists. (Who was the most influential person among the population aside from the members of the Village Council and other authorities?) Aside from the members of the Village Council, there were others who had influence with people. (Who were they? What did they do?) Before the Revolution of January [redacted] there was a man who worked in town. He could get many things for the people in the village. He could ask for troops to be sent there for the mopping-up. (What did he do?) He was the Chairman of the Provincial Chapter of the Nationalist Movement. (Was there anyone afterwards?) No, there was no one after the revolution. (Was there anyone whose opinions were particularly respected?) No one in my village enjoyed prestige to a high degree.

216. Who was the most energetic person in your village when it is a matter of getting things done?

There was one in my village. When he said he would do some social action, then he would do it. He is now a member of the council. (Is he a member of the Village Council?) Yes. (What did he do before?) He was a member of the SDC, the Popular Force. (Was he enlisted or an officer?) He was the company leader. He had prestige and good will.

217. Who was the most energetic person when it come to getting roads repaired or asking for governmental action?

There was no one in the population who was strong enough to do so.

218. Who do you think were the best-informed people in your village about what is going on in the village?

The best-informed people in my village kept their knowledge to themselves; they would not share with others. (Talking about what was going on in your village, who were the best-informed ones?) As far as I know, one or two old men in the village understood what was going on, but they did not talk -- they would not tell people.

219. Who do you think is the best-informed about what was going on in Saigon?

There were many in my village, but they also were very cautious.

(Who were they?) There was a man who was not doing anything then, but had worked for the French in Hue and later returned to the village. (Was he an old man?) He was not old, he was about 35 or 36. (He did not do anything?) No, he has got his pension from the French. (Why did he go back to the village and do nothing?) He did not want to do anything. (Was he a well-to-do person?) Yes. He also came out here.

220. How about yourself, do you think you knew what was going on in your village? Since you are a person who has gone here and there and who has read much, more than others, do you think you understand what was going on more than others? Understand about the situation and so on?

I got the news before others did, that was all. As for understanding the consequences of events, that I cannot because my mind is still inexperienced.

221. Who do you think is the best-informed person about what was going on in Hanoi?

Some knew about what was going on in Hanoi; they had radios and they could turn them on. (Which station did they listen to?) The BBC and VOA. Every now and then they listened to Peking station and heard about the conflict between Russia and Red China. (Did anyone listen to Radio Hanoi?) Yes. Among those who had a radio, the middle-of-the-roaders dared not listen to that station; however, those who were absolutely committed to the GVN would listen to that station openly. They listened to understand what was happening and to see how distorted was the VC's presentation of the facts.

222. Who do you think were the best-informed people in your village about what was going on in the world outside of Vietnam?

The village teachers and those I have mentioned before. (Were the persons best-informed about what was going on in the country also those best-informed about what was going on in the world?) Yes.

223. While you were living in your village, how did you usually learn about what was going on in the outside?

What was going on in the world? (What was going on in this country but outside your village?) Through the newspaper or through the radio. (Whom did you talk to most frequently in order to learn about the news?) I often visited those rich families that had a radio in order to listen to the news.

As for newspapers, I got them from the town often; therefore I could learn about what was going on. (How could you learn about what the VC were doing in your district?) I could learn about the VC's activities through rumors. About the VC's activities in my district -- that I could learn through the SDC or the Popular Force men in the hamlet who had been here and there and who reported what they had seen to us. The news I learned that way was not always true. (How could you learn about what the village administration was doing?) I could learn about the Village Administration's activities from this and that person. They leaked out the news because they trusted me. (Who was this and that person?) Those members of the Village Council who trusted me. (How could you learn about what was going on in the district and province administration?) You mean the social work? (Anything -- anything the district and province administration did or intended to do. How did you learn about their activities while you were in your village?) I learned about their activities because I traveled often. Had I stayed in the village all the time I would not have known what they intended to do. (How did you learn about those activities when you traveled?) Through the speeches of the members of the district administration. They would say what the District Chief intended to do and what the Province Chief intended to do. As for the social work, I was a member of the Youth Organization. I attended the meetings and carried out this social work. (Were you a member of the Village Youth or District Youth Organization?) I belonged to the Youth Organization of the Cao Dai Church.

224. What is the latest information you have received about what is going on in Saigon?

The most recent news I have heard? It was small and unimportant news, but it appealed to me and was enthusiastically welcomed by the people. The news said the properties of the Chinese, the profiteers and the speculators would be confiscated. (How did you receive this information?) Through the newspapers. (From what other sources did you know what was going on in Saigon?) There are other sources, such as rumors. But rumors are often inexact, so I do not trust them. (Where did those rumors come from?) From those who had been there and now returned, they told us about what they had seen. (What other media do you have in order to know what is going on in Saigon?) The radio and the newspapers. (Which of those sources do you think is more truthful and reliable?) The more reliable source is the

newspapers. (Why are newspapers a more reliable source of information?) In this country, the newspapers [illegible] more reliable source of information than the radio because the newspapers can give the true version of the stories while the radio cannot do so because the radio is owned by the Government. Other radio stations, such as the BBC and "Washington," we can trust them.

225. What about news from Hanoi and North Vietnam, how did you learn about them?

I learned them through the Vietnamese-language broadcast of the VOC. (From what other sources did you learn about them?) Also through the newspapers, and the rumors but rumors are affected with the VC's propaganda. I listened to those rumors but I did not believe them. (How did you hear those rumors? Were you invited to their meetings, or did the VC come to each family and spread the news?) The VC made their propaganda with people in the village. Those villagers would repeat what they had heard when they came and asked me if those things really had happened. This was VC propaganda.

226. What is the latest information you have received about what is going on in Hanoi and North Vietnam?

The most recent news from Hanoi is that Hanoi is preparing to send here two brigades. (Where did you learn about that?) That news came from the Communist cadres. The persons who repeated that information to me said that Russia and Red China were preparing to send troops here to help North Vietnam. As for the most recent news, I learned it through the newspapers. (Did you learn that news through the villagers who in turn had heard it from the Communist cadres?) The cadres spread the rumors among the villagers; the villagers in turn repeated the news among themselves. I do not believe in that latest news which has come to me through the cadres. (I know you do not believe those rumors, but I am curious to know how the rumors spread.) The Communists wanted to create rumors; they liked to spread small rumors among the people. (Have you heard anything about life in the North?) When I was in the village I heard the Communist cadres repeat that the people in the North led a highly collectivized life. They talked about the benefits of life in the co-operatives, about how their lives were extremely happy. Everything was owned in common,

everyone could enjoy those possessions and everyone had the right to enjoy them, to enjoy the property in the co-op. (What else did you learn about life in the North?) The returnees said the life of the workers in the North was extremely hard because they had no time off, could not stay idle for a moment and the factories could not be left inoperative. (How did you learn about this?) From the Communist cadres. Radio Hanoi reported the same news, one hears that a citation was given to Luis or that person for working hard for the Party. From there one can deduce that life in the North is hard. (Have you listened to Radio Hanoi?) Yes. (Can you get the Front station?) Yes. (What other stations did you listen to?) I listen to Saigon and Quang Ngai stations regularly; every now and then I would turn on Radio Hanoi. (Did you listen to VOA and BBC?) I listened to BBC station regularly. When the Americans began to escalate the war in the North a few months ago, a friend here had a radio and I started listening to the BBC every night. (When the VC were in your village, were you able to listen to the radio?) No, when the VC were there I did not listen to the radio anymore. (Has anyone in your village been punished by the VC because they listened to Radio Saigon, BBC or VOA?) When the VC forbid something, they would shoot anyone who trangresses their order. No one dared to listen to BBC or Radio Saigon. (Has anyone been punished?) No.

227. There were no newspapers in your village, as you mentioned this morning?

No, there were no newspapers. There might be some copies of "The-gioi Tu-do" and the news in the information office was too old.

228. Did you see the Cai-Luong (Renovated Drama) or Hat-Boi (Classical Drama)?

To see the Cai-Luong and Hat Boi one has to go to town. There was no such thing in the village. (What was the subject-matter of your entertainment?) I very seldom see the Cai-Luong. I prefer to watch the movies. I prefer those movies that describe the ideal of a person who learned aside his personal feeling to "shoulder the national burden." If I go to movies, I will chose those with that subject matter.

229. When you were in the village, were there any kinds of news or information that you wished to know more about?

When I was in the village I would like to have known more about what the government planned to do. This I did not know enough about. (What other information did you not hear of, and which did you want to hear more about?) I want to know more about -- I see no other information that I needed to know better back in the village. (What information did you think you did not get in time?) The information I did not get in time was such as the students' demonstrations in Saigon. When I heard of them, they were already too late. But the cut here they started to organize their demonstrations.

230. How truthful was the news, information, and propaganda that you got from Front sources?

Actually the news the VC used in their propaganda was not true. When they made their propaganda, they distorted the facts and events rather than representing them impartially and justly. They only represented the mistakes and shortcomings of the Government and, on the other hand, their own good points. They only distorted the truth. (How did you know it was untruthful?) They gave wrong information such as the one about the bomb explosion in front of the American Embassy. I had read that news in the newspapers in town, but when I returned to the village I heard the VC give a different version to the story, as I have mentioned this morning. They said one hundred families left for their country and so many people got killed. (This morning you said two hundred American families left for their country.) Yes. (Is it not possible that you get a true version from the VC and a wrong one from the newspapers?) The newspapers may be partially wrong but the neutral station such as the BBC cannot distort the truth. Therefore I believe that the VC lied.

231. Here is a picture of a ladder. The bottom rung is numbered ten and the top rung is numbered one. Now, let's say that the top rung represents the best life you can imagine, and the bottom rung represents the worst life you can imagine. Where on this ladder would you say that your life was before you left your village?

When we lived in the village our lives were hard because my mother had to work, but then we had no worries.

(On which rung do you say your life was?) When the village was still secure, my life there was on rung number one. When we came out here our lives have gone down to rung number two or three. (Generally speaking, the best life you can imagine is one and the worst life you can imagine is ten, when you were still in your village, was your life on the average, on rung number five, or what.) It was on rung number five. (It was on the average?) Yes.

232. How was it a year ago? Was your life better or worse?

One year ago my life was much better. When I was still a student and lived at home, my life was much better off, my family could afford many things. (Where on the ladder would you put your life then?) On rung number four. (And now about five years from now? About where on the ladder do you think your life will be then?) I believe my future will be better. (How much better will it be?) It may go up to rung number three.

233. How would you describe the worst life you can imagine yourself living back in your village?

The worst life of the people in the village is so extremely miserable that I can not describe it. (Will you give some details?) Wearing wretched clothes -- not having enough to eat. In the village there was a family of a mother and a child, just like mine. That family was so poor that it did not have the means to earn a living. The mother scolded the child for not trying to earn a living, for not being able to support himself, but they have no means to earn a living.

234. How would you describe the best life you can imagine for yourself? What would it be like?

I would have things for entertainment, such as a radio and a bicycle to go here and there. As for myself, I would like to have newspapers so I could read and share them with others. (What do you think would make your life happier in the village?) I have to have money to be happy. (What do you want to do with your money?) Buy things. (Surely you can be happy if you have money. But what would you have done with the money in your village if you had had it?) If I had money I would have bought farming equipment, such as machines and water pumps to improve farming.

235. What kind of life do you hope your son will have?

I have not made up my mind about having children. (We are talking about the future. You have not made up your mind now. But suppose in the future you have a son; what would you like him to become?) I would want him to have a better life than mine. He would have more education, he would have more knowledge. (How much education do you want him to have?) I would want him to become a doctor, an engineer. If I have a son I will want him to have a spirit, a social spirit. I will let him travel all over the country so he will have an understanding of the land that will put a patriotic spirit in him.

236. What occupation do you want for your son?

I would like my son to become a politician, so he could help the people and serve as a bridge. The minimum he could do would be to serve as a bridge between --- (The word politician has too many meanings, which position would you like your son to be in?) It is hard to say which position. (Suppose in the future you have a son; what occupation would you like to see him have?) I would like him to be in the position of a Minister or a Province Chief so he could help the villagers. (What will be necessary to give him a good life?) He should have a high level of understanding, be intellectual to know important things. I would like my son to be an intellectual and a person of good character. (What will be necessary to give him a good life?) I think material things alone cannot give you a good life; although I realize that they have much influence on the spirit. I have seen people in my village who did not have much, but their minds were always at peace. It could be that they understood so much, that fame did not appeal to them.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

Subject is a student and is intelligent and fairly articulate. He is reasonably outspoken and sincere. However, he tends to be partial in favor of the GVN, although on various occasions he criticizes it freely. He also tends to describe the prevailing opinion when he is asked to give his own opinion.

No. AGR 29

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

1. Name of interviewer [redacted]

2. Name of subject [redacted]

3. Time and date of interview :

From 4:15 PM to 5:55 PM on August 1965

From 10:45 AM to 11:50 AM on August 1965

From 3:00 PM to 4:00 PM on August 1965

Total time 3:45

Interview based on : tape ( ) hand written notes ( )

4. Place of interview : [redacted]

5. Sex of subject : Male (x) Female ( )

6. Age of subject : 21

7. Ethnic background : Vietnamese

8. Place of birth :

hamlet [redacted]

village [redacted]

district Mo Duc

province Quang Ngai

9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :

hamlet [redacted]

village [redacted]

district Mo Duc

province Quang Ngai

10. (a) Length of residence in last location : since birth (21 .

(b) Who controlled the place of residence:

GVN ( ) VC (x) Contested ( )

(c) Since when controlled or contested ? 9 months

11. Number of brothers (none) and sisters (3)

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : none

13. Marital status : single

14. Number of children : none

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age : none

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject( ) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject( ) or not with subject ( )
} alone.

17. Religion : Caodai

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : student

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation dia-chu (landowner)
(b) Landowner ? 2 acres How much land _____

20. Education :
illiterate ( )
literate (X)
schooling completed : 1st part of Baccalaureat degree

21. Any relatives in VC : none

22. Any relatives in GVN : 4-5. All brothers-in-law in ARVN

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by :
(a) French none
(b) GVN none
(c) VC none

24. When became a refugee [redacted] November 1964, left village to move to Mo-duc district town.

25. Where took refuge first _____

26. Present residence _____

AGR

INTERVIEW

30

THE RAND CORPORATION

[redacted]

STUDIES OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT
OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR-30

Date of Interview : August [redacted] 1965

Subject's Category : Refugee. April [redacted] 1965

Area of Residence : Quang Ngai province.

Comments: Subject gave interesting information concerning the villagers' attitude toward the VC (Q.28-30, 181-182), toward the Americans (Q.327-330), and toward GVN artillery (Q. 151-161, 169-170) and security (Q. 162-168, 183-185). Also interesting were his opinions of GVN aid to refugees (Q. 317-319) and Psywar and information programs (Q. 173-179, 186-193, 349-354, and 362-382).

1. What are you planning to do out here now?

   I'll try to make a living here. And when I'm allowed to return to my village I'll start farming again to earn my living.

2. And if you cannot go back to your village in the near future, what will you do for a living?

   I'll look then for a job with the Public Works service here. I don't know what else I can do. It's difficult (to earn a living) when you're left your own place.

3. How did you move to this place?

   There was a government truck that took us here.

4. Did the truck come for you down in your village?

   Yes, it came right into the village.

5. What were you able to take along?

   Nothing. I left (the village) empty-handed.

6. Didn't you bring any rice with you?

   No. Since I came here, I've lived on government rations.

7. How many people in your family moved out here with you?

   Me and my wife, two children, and my mother. Also my brother and his wife and child.

8. Are your wife, children, and mother staying here with you?

   No, I'm here as a rallier. My mother, wife, and children stay at the resettlement camp.

9. Why have you been considered as a rallier?

   This is why. When they (the VC) came to occupy the village, they had me do this or that for them. As I didn't like communism, I left the village when the government troops came mopping up. They brought me out here.

10. What did the VC ask you to do there?

Nothing much. They wanted me to be a guerrilla, standing guard in the village.

11. How long ago did you leave the village?

Two months and twenty days ago.

12. Did you come here directly from your village?

I went, from my hamlet, to the Village Headquarters on April 14 and came here on May 19.

13. Did you stop by the resettlement camp with your family?

I stayed there for one month before coming here.

14. How many hamlets were there in your village?

[redacted]

15. About how many families lived in each hamlet?

A very large number of families left the hamlet. Only very few of them who liked the VC stayed behind in the hamlet.

16. About how many inhabitants were there in each hamlet?

Over one thousand.

17. In the past few years, did any of the villagers leave the village for other areas?

Yes, a number of the villagers left for this town.

18. Why did they leave the village?

They took refuge in town.

19. Who were they? What were they doing?

They were mostly government cadres, hamlet chiefs.

20. When did they leave the village?

They left in 1964. I guess in July or August.

21. That is, before the VC occupied the village?

Yes, before. They were afraid because the VC came marauding. As for us, we had to stay on because of our ricefields.

22. Did any villagers leave in order to join the ARVN?

Yes, many did.

23. About how many of them did so?

Several hundreds.

24. So many! And how many of the villagers left to join the VC?

No one did in my village.

25. What did the majority do in your village for a living?

The majority lived on farming.

26. What economic classification did the VC assign to your family?

They called us Ban-nong (poor farmer.)

27. Ban-nong even if you owned three sao of land?

Yes. For those who did not own any land, the classification was Co-nong (very poor farmer.) Those who owned small acreages were called Ban-nong.

28. During the last three or four years, did any change take place in your family's economic situation?

During the time when the village was under the control of the government, the villagers had enough to eat. After the VC had come to occupy the village, the villagers were poorer.

29. Why were they poorer?

It was because they had to pay heavy taxes to the VC even if the harvest was poor.

30. How many years of schooling did you have?

I did not go to school. But I know how to read and write because I observed other people who went to school. I can read a newspaper slowly.

31. Did your children go to school in the village?

They didn't go to school in the village. Coming here, they still don't go to school, because we are needy and aren't settled yet and the help of the government isn't sufficient.

32. Do you plan to send them to school here?

Yes, I plan to.

33. Was your village in a strategic hamlet?

Yes, it was.

34. How many strategic hamlets were there in your village?

There were [redacted] strategic hamlets. Each thon (hamlet) was a strategic hamlet.

35. Were there any houses located outside the strategic hamlets?

No, there weren't any. There had been some, but these we moved into the strategic hamlets.

36. Did these people move in on their own or were they required to?

The government called on them to move in, in order to have security and to be safe from the Communists.

37. Did living in the strategic hamlets bring about any change in the villagers' life?

It brought about a change in that the villagers had more security, their rest periods were more peaceful and they didn't have to fear artillery shelling.

38. Did living in the strategic hamlets cause any change in the villagers' livelihood?

Their livelihood was affected because they couldn't go out of their hamlets very early (in the morning.) They had to wait until the gates were opened.

39. Were these strategic hamlets disturbed by the VC?

The VC destroyed them all.

40. I mean, before the VC came to occupy the village?

They had come and demolished parts of the hamlets, but these were well-guarded. They destroyed all the strategic hamlets after they had occupied the village.

41. How did you feel about the strategic hamlets?

I felt that the strategic hamlets were useful to the government. One could control effectively the village and guard against inside agents.

42. What did you like about the strategic hamlets?

(After a long pause:) I liked them because the villagers were more united living close together.

43. What benefit did the families draw from being united and living close together?

There was no benefit for the families, because in the strategic hamlets they were crowded and didn't have enough space or enough land to grow petty crops.

44. And what did you dislike about these hamlets?

There was nothing to be disliked in the strategic hamlets except that people didn't have enough land for petty crops.

45. Now, I want to have your frank opinion. Before the VC came to occupy your village, how had you found the Village Council?

During the Diem regime, the village administration had not been solicitous toward the people. After this regime was overthrown, with the revolution, what the government sent down to the people, the latter received it all.

46. How did the Village Council behave toward the villagers?

They behaved correctly toward the people, in our [redacted] village.

47. Was your village under the effective control of the government prior to October last year?

Yes, it was. Afterwards, it was contested between the government and the VC. When government troops came up, the government was in control. When government troops left, the VC were in control.

48. Is any hamlet of your village now still in the hands of the government?

No, no more. [redacted] village with all its [redacted] hamlets is under VC control now.

49. Did the VC carry out terroristic acts in your village when you were still there?

If they laid their hands on the government cadres or soldiers, they killed them. They also brought the cadres up in the mountains for re-education and these cadres were never seen back.

50. How many persons in your village were killed by the VC?

They killed many soldiers.

51. Were these soldiers still in the village when the VC occupied it?

Yes, they were.

52. Were they soldiers in service, or discharged soldiers?

They were soldiers in service. The VC captured them when government troops engaged battle with them (the VC.).

53. Did the VC terrorize the villagers, kill any of them?

They arrested five or six persons in the village and have not released them.

54. Who were these persons?

They worked for the government. They were village officials.

55. Didn't they go into hiding when the VC came?

They did. But the VC found them out. They arrested these officials when the latter came back to the village from hiding.

56. Did this happen before or after the VC overran your village?

Before they occupied the village.

57. Were these officials replaced afterwards?

Yes, there were replacements.

58. How did you personally feel that the villagers were, after the VC had come and occupied the village?

After the VC had occupied the village, I found that the population was uneasy and didn't like the VC. The VC didn't allow the villagers to leave. Actually the villagers didn't like the VC.

59. Did you see any change in the villagers' attitude toward the VC since October last year?

The villagers were more miserable but their anti-Communist attitude didn't change. The VC oppressed the villagers, didn't allow them to go anywhere.

60. Did the population's attitude grow more favorable or less favorable toward the VC, day after day?

Less favorable, because they were oppressed by the VC. The villagers couldn't uprise because the troops (GVN) were not there. They disliked the VC and would uprise if the troops were there.

61. It is easy to say that the people disliked the VC. But for what reasons precisely did they dislike them?

They disliked them because the VC did not allow them to keep and consume their harvest, even though they didn't have much for themselves. If one harvested 100 an of rice, the VC would leave him only 40 or 50 an; the rest went to the resistance funds.

62. Did the VC establish combat hamlets after they occupied the village?

Yes, they did.

63. How many combat hamlets were there?

Each thon (hamlet) was made a combat hamlet.

64. Were the strategic hamlet enclosures maintained for the new combat hamlets?

No, the combat hamlets were smaller in size. The VC fenced up each Xom (agglomeration of houses) leaving only one gateway. They dug underground passageways through which they withdrew when they could not fight attacking troops of the government.

65. Since they made the combat hamlets smaller than the former strategic hamlets, did they force all the families to move into combat hamlets?

No. There were families living outside.

66. So, they prepared the combat hamlets just for themselves to stay in?

Yes, exactly.

67. How many young men were 16 years and older in your hamlet? Between 16 and 30 years?

Approximately 300 in each hamlet.

68. During last year, how many of these young men joined government forces?

About 250 of them joined government forces.

69. Are you sure?

Yes, I am.

70. And how many of them joined the VC forces?

No, nobody did.

71. How about the preceding years?

There were young men joining the VC before or during the "regrouping" period only. No one joined afterwards.

72. Out of ten families in your hamlet, how many had a member regrouped into the North?

Six or seven families in a hundred had a member regrouped into the North.

73. What did the VC do in order to recruit men for their forces, after they had occupied your village?

They proclaimed that now young men had to stand up for the liberation of the South, to fight the Americans and expel them back to their country. They said that the North was very happy with socialism. But nobody responded to their appeal.

74. Then, did they force young men in the village to join their forces?

They forced young men (into their forces), all right. But the young men did not like it and escaped.

75. How could every one of these young men make good his escape ?

Those who could not escape just stayed put, waiting for the (GVN) troops to come on an operation.

76. What did the villagers say about the way the VC were conscripting young men?

The villagers dared not say anything in the presence of the VC but, at night, they would try to persuade their sons not to become soldiers for the VC. They saw people coming down from the North, very pale, afflicted with malaria. They told their sons not to join those people.

77. Were any villagers taken by the VC to re-education sessions?

No, no one.

78. How often did the VC gather the villagers for meetings?

Very seldom. After each ARVN operation in the village, the VC would hold a meeting of the villagers to tell them not to go down to "nationalist" areas in order to be beaten up.

79. How often did these meetings take place?

Once in ten days, or fifteen days or in a month.

80. Were these meetings held regularly or in connection with some specific events?

The meetings were held also when they wanted to tell the villagers about their battles.

81. Did the villagers seem to believe what was told at these meetings?

The villagers did not believe most things the VC said. For example, the VC claimed they had attacked places in this town but the villagers later found out that there were no such attacks.

82. Since the population did not leave their village, how did they ascertain that that was not true?

Some of the villagers did come down here in order to see whether they could "rally" to the government.

83. At those meetings, did the VC tell the villagers about attacks by government aircraft on the North?

On this, the VC told the villagers that if the South should send its aircraft to drop bombs in the North, the South would be demolished to ashes.

84. But did they tell that government aircraft had actually attacked the North?

Yes, they did. They said that so many aircraft had been shot down.

85. How did they explain these attacks to the villagers? For what reasons did they say the North was being attacked?

They did not explain. They just said that the South sent its aircraft to disturb the North.

86. Did the VC establish a Nong-hoi (Farmers' Association) in your village?

Yes, they did.

87. What was the purpose of this association?

It arranged for the re-distribution of land. It took the land from the government cadres and other people who had left for the government-controlled areas and distributed it to the poor landless farmers.

88. Was the land re-distribution actually carried out?

Yes, but the population subsequently moved out here.

89. Did any farmer complain about the amount of land he was given?

No one did. Because the farmers knew that the land did not belong to them.

90. Did the farmers till the land distributed to them?

They had to accept the land and till it. They were forced to. They knew that there was no such thing as abandoned land.

91. How much tax did you pay a year when the government was still in control of your village?

I paid only 50 piasters a year.

92. Since the VC controlled the village, how much did you pay a year?

Even those who "had nothing" had to pay 30 or 40 an of rice.

93. How much did your family pay?

My family paid 30 an.

94. Was there any family who paid less than 30 an?

A family with no land paid 10 or 20 an.

95. You had had 3 sao of land. How much more did the VC give you?

They gave us 5 more sao.

96. How many members of your family worked on the land?

Only my wife and I did the farming.

97. And your brother's family was given land separately?

Yes, they were given land separately.

98. Did you till the land given you?

We have already transplanted rice sprouts on the 8 sao, but now we have had to abandon it.

99. When you tilled the 8 sao, were you thinking that some day you might lose part of them?

Sure, I'll lose them. I knew when the ARVN came the land would go back to the owner.

100. Who was the owner of the land assigned to you?

The land belonged to a village cadre who had left for the district town. The VC called him a tyrannical landowner and seized his land.

101. How were people living in your village during the Resistance?

At that time, people were very poor and hungry. They had to mix one portion of rice with three parts of sweet potatoes or Cassava roots. They hadn't enough clothes, and even those were all ragged.

102. Since the government's accession to this part of the country, when did the VC begin to disturb your village?

They began to disturb the village in early 1960. No, in early 1962, really.

103. What did they do?

They came to tear down the village enclosures and made the population stand guard a lot.

104. How did the villagers feel about the VC at that time?

The villagers would give the alarm or notify the Government troops when the VC came.

105. How did they feel about the VC? What did they think?

They didn't like the VC. As soon as the VC arrived, they informed government troops.

106. Did the district chief come to visit your village?

Yes, he did.

107. How often did he visit your village?

Once in two or three months.

108. Did the province chief come to your village sometimes?

He came a few times when the strategic hamlets were being built.

109. In what year was that?

In 1950 or 1951.

110. Were strategic hamlets built as early as in 1950 or 1951?

The strategic hamlets were built in 1951 or 1952. I don't remember very well.

111. What did you think of the national government prior to the VC's advent in your village?

I thought that we should have a firm anti-Communist stand, we should rebuild the national machinery for a strong government.

112. How did you and the villagers feel when the Diem government was overthrown?

He was overthrown because he repressed the religions for his party. And Mrs. Ngo Dinh Diem (sic) was too proud, too haughty.

113. Who is the present head of the government?

I don't know who is who, after the changes. I know that Mr. Minh overthrew Ngo Dinh Diem and that he was overthrown by Mr. Khanh. Now, it is Mr. Ton That Dinh or who else I don't remember.

114. What do you know about the policies of the present government?

The present government has the policy of liberating the North -- strengthening and reconstructing the South in order to liberate the North.

115. What did you hear the VC tell the villagers about the present government?

The VC always said "liberation of the South" and "socialism in the North."

116. What did they say regarding the present government?

They said that the present government was subservient to the Americans in order to oppress the people. The people in the North were happier.

117. What did you see that the government was doing in order to help the people?

The government gave rice, clothes, (construction) materials, and medicines.

118. When was that?

That was when the Revolution had overthrown the Diem regime.

119. How about the time of the flood? Did the government do something to help the villagers?

Yes, it gave clothes, blankets, and mats.

120. What did the villagers think of the government's help?

They acclaimed the helping spirit of the government, which devotedly assisted the people and rescued it from misery.

121. Did your family receive any such help?

No, my family was stuck up there. Those who had come down were given aid.

122. I am asking about the time when the village council was still in the village. Was the aid given at that time?

At that time, we were given corn and flour.

123. How many Popular Force men were there in your village?

There was a full Popular Force company.

124. Did these men come from your village alone or from other villages as well?

They came from several villages.

125. Was there any ARVN outpost in your village?

There was no ARVN outpost there but when they came, they were stationed at the village council headquarters.

126. How often did they come to your village?

They came and stayed there after the village began to become insecure.

127. When did the village first become insecure?

After the VC had come to operate twice in the village, the troops came to stay.

128. How strong were these troops?

There were a company.

129. How did you find the Popular Force men were treating the villagers?

There was nothing worth mentioning. They were united with the people.

130. How about the ARVN troops stationed in your village?

They were helping the villagers. They asked the villagers to hide their rice from the VC.

131. After the VC had come, how did the villagers feel about the VC guerrillas?

The villagers did not like the VC guerrillas.

132. How can you tell?

The guerrillas did several unjust things.

133. Namely?

For example, when the guerrillas came to keep watch in the village, the villagers had to help them with food, etc. Every villager, whether rich or poor, had to give.

134. Were there other units passing through your village?

Sometimes they passed through.

135. How did they treat the villagers when they came by?

They used "political" ways. They would call a villager an (elder brother) or bac (uncle) as the case may be.

136. Have the villagers' feelings toward the VC units changed recently?

They have changed in the sense that even if the villagers weren't happy, they had to remain in the village. Those who showed any unhappiness were watched.

137. In what way have the villagers' feelings changed? Have they come to like the VC units better or dislike them?

They disliked the VC but didn't dare say so.

138. Why did the villagers dislike the VC more than previously?

They saw unjust things and they disliked them.

139. Were there fightings in your village when you were still there?

Yes, there were two or three fightings.

140. When did they take place?

In October last year and also in 1960.

141. Who was fighting whom in 1960?

The VC attacked the Dan Ve. They attacked from 7 to 10AM but couldn't penetrate into the hamlet.

142. Who was the VC unit? Was it Main Force, Local Force, or Guerrilla Force?

The VC troops were Main Force. Many were killed and were carried away. The people saw it.

143. How many of the VC were killed?

About 60 or 70 VC were killed.

144. How about the casualties on the Dan Ve side?

Only 3 of them were killed because the Dan Ve were in the trenches inside the hamlet.

145. What other fightings took place in your village?

The VC attacked the ARVN troops in the village, at night, at about midnight. They withdrew after an hour.

146. Who suffered more casualties?

The VC suffered more casualties. They were outside (the fences).

147. How about the October battle you just mentioned?

No, it was in December.

148. That is, after the VC had occupied your village?

Yes. The ARVN troops conducted an operation coming down from the mountains. The VC were taken by surprise and a dozen of them were killed.

149. How strong were the ARVN troops on that operation?

There were three companies.

150. How strong were the VC in the village?

There was one company.

151. Was the VC company a Main Force unit?

Yes, a regular company.

152. How many guerrillas were there in your village?

They were scattered throughout the village and it's difficult to know how many they were.

153. Were most of the guerrillas in your village full-time or part-time?

The guerrillas came from other places. Only two or three were from our village.

154. Was your village ever attacked by aircraft?

No, not yet.

155. Was it bombarded by artillery?

Yes, it was.

156. Was the village bombarded before or after the VC occupied it?

Just after the VC came to occupy it, the village was bombarded with artillery.

157. When did it begin to be bombarded?

In 1964 or early 1965.

158. Had the village been bombarded before the VC came?

No, it had not.

159. Did the artillery shelling do any damage to the VC?

Yes, it did.

160. Did it do any damage to the population?

Yes, some villagers were killed.

161. What did the villagers say about those artillery attacks?

They said that it was all because of the VC. Had they not been in the village, as in the past, the ARVN would not have fired into the village. The villagers were very much irritated but did not know what to say.

162. What did the villagers say to one another, among themselves?

They told one another that if they continued to stay in the village, they would get killed when the ARVN troops came for mopping-up operations or when aircraft came to strike. They decided to wait for the arrival of ARVN troops in order to go down to a GVN-controlled area.

163. But the villagers came out here only recently, didn't they? They had not come out in the past few years?

Surely they had, occasionally.

164. Was your house damaged when artillery was fired into the village?

No, my house was not damaged.

165. After artillery had done damage to the villagers, what did the VC tell them?

They told the villagers that the ARVN was always doing damage to the people, not only during their operations.

166. Did the population resent the damage and casualties they were suffering?

No, because they thought this way: if the VC had not come, like in the previous years, the village would not be shelled. After they had come, the more the village was shelled, the more the villagers hated them (the VC).

167. Before the VC definitely occupied the village, had any villagers left to take refuge?

Yes, some had left the village.

168. For how long each time?

For up to a month, sometimes.

169. Where did they go?

They went to "nationalist-held" areas.

170. Did they go to the district town or to other villages?

They went to other villages.

171. Did as many leave as now?

No, not so many. They left in great numbers still, but came back during the day to work. They all left during nightime, leaving behind only the aged ones.

172. Weren't the aged people also scared?

They had to take care of the belongings and properties.

173. Did any family take refuge in a VC-controlled area?

No, none.

174. Did the operations, fightings and artillery fire affect the livelihood of the villagers?

They surely did. The villagers had to wait until things calmed down in order to go out for their daily work. And their houses were burned and destroyed.

175. Did the villagers complain about these difficulties?

They did, because they could not work regularly. But on second thought, they blamed the VC for coming down from the mountains and disturbing the villages.

176. Before shelling the village or conducting operations in the area, did the government forewarn the population?

No, the troops always came by surprise.

177. Did the VC ever forewarn the villagers of their possible operations?

The VC did not, either. When we heard gunfire we took cover. Nobody warned us. The VC had to run for their lives when there was gunfire.

178. Speaking of information, how many families in your village had a radio?

There were only a few radios in each hamlet.

179. How many families lived in each hamlet?

Three or four hundred. They had two or three radio sets.

180. How did the villagers get the news, since there were so few radio sets?

The Village Council had the news read over loudspeakers.

181. Did you have newspapers in the village?

Yes, we had newspapers to read.

182. Who owned the newspapers?

The Government.

183. You mean, the newspapers were provided at the Information Office?

Yes, the villagers came there to read.

184. What kinds of information did you get from the village information office?

Domestic news, news of victories within the country.

185. Had you ever thought of moving to live in a GVN-controlled area?

Yes, I had thought of that.

186. Why did you think of leaving your village?

We could not bear the VC any longer.

187. What did they do that you could not bear?

We were exhausted working during the day. Yet, at night, we were required to dig trenches, to sabotage roads for them. Sometimes, we had to work for them too close to ARVN encampments, and a few of us were shot and killed.

188. What did you know about life in GVN-controlled areas?

I knew that life was happier in GVN areas. People had more rice to eat, more clothes to wear.

189. How did you know about this?

People from the village went to the markets in the GVN-controlled areas and saw how people lived there.

190. Why did you and your family come to take refuge here?

My family couldn't live together with them (the VC). We had to come and live in a free and happy area and to benefit from the government's assistance.

191. Did you hear aircraft broadcasting when you were in your village?

Yes, aircraft came to broadcast occasionally - once every week or every two weeks, and sometimes once a month.

192. What were the broadcasts about?

The broadcasts called on the population to move to a "nationalist" area, where the government would help them to make a living.

193. Before the VC came to occupy your village, had there been broadcasts from aircraft over your village?

Yes, there had been broadcasts from aircraft when the Village Council had been there still.

194. What did the broadcast say at that time?

They said that those who were misled by the VC should find their way back. They should have no fears and would receive assistance from the government.

195. Did you see leaflets dropped in your village?

Yes, there were Chieu Hoi leaflets. The leaflets spoke of the leniency of the government, of happy and abundant life in government areas, of the government's full assistance to those who would come back.

196. Were those leaflets dropped in your village when it was still secure, under a GVN Village Council?

No; at that time, the leaflets were dropped in the woods, not in the village.

197. Were you able to hear distinctly, to understand every sentence broadcast from the aircraft?

Yes; the broadcast was clear and the aircraft were flying very low.

198. What did you think of the appeals made in the broadcast?

I thought that if the government called for us, it wouldn't do any harm when we went out from the village.

199. When you left the village, for how long were you expecting to be away from it?

I was expecting to go back after the government would have the area pacified.

200. How soon did you think the village would be pacified again? How many days, how many weeks, or how many months?

I didn't know. The matter depends on the government. I'd think a couple of months.

201. What was your family able to take along when it left the village?

We couldn't take anything with us.

202. You did not take anything with you, although the trucks came for you?

The trucks came only out there, at the Village Council office, at a distance from my place.

203. Did the VC prevent the villagers from leaving?

They did. But the villagers could leave anyway, thanks to an operation of the ARVN.

204. Did they threaten to punish those who would leave the village for a GVN area?

They did. They said they would not tolerate anyone who left for a "nationalist" area.

205. How many families left the village at the same time as you did?

All left the village; all of them, over 500 people.

206. How many remained behind in your village?

About one hundred remained behind.

207. All in all, there were only 600 people in your village?

Another wave had left the village earlier.

208. How many had left on the first wave?

Half of the population had left on the first wave.

209. For what reasons did the other persons remain behind?

They were too afraid. The VC "propagandized" that they would encounter this or that in a GVN area.

210. Why were these people afraid while the rest were not?

These people were more or less connected with the VC.

211. Were there people who did not want to leave because of their properties?

Definitely. Those who had much land didn't want to leave it.

212. Were there more young men or more aged persons among those who remained behind?

Both young and old people remained behind, but most of them were old people.

213. Did anyone in your family remain behind?

All of us have come here.

214. What would happen to you now if you returned to your village?

It's impossible to go back unless there's an operation by the ARVN in the area.

215. Suppose you should go back there now?

I'd be arrested by the VC. They would take me to the mountains for re-education, and nobody knows when I could come back.

216. Have you found any differences between life in a GVN-controlled area as was described by the VC and the one as you see now?

The VC said life was miserable in the "nationalist" areas because of American oppression, but actually we've found life with them (the VC) was too miserable.

217. How much longer do you think this war will last?

It's very hard to say.

218. Nobody can tell with assurance. But what is your personal opinion?

I want it to be settled this very year.

219. That's what you want. But when do you think it can be settled?

I should think it will last one more year.

220. Whom do you blame for causing you to leave your village?

I blame the Communists because they came to disturb my village.

221. Whom do other people blame?

They also blame the VC.

222. How has the government helped you since you arrived here?

The ralliers who came out here have been given two "pajama" suits, and also 20 piasters per day for food and 200 piasters per month for cigarettes and haircut. Those who are allowed to leave this Chieu Hoi Center would receive 500 piasters.

223. Leave this Center in order to go back to the village?

Right.

224. How have you found these allowances? Are you satisfied or dissatisfied?

I have been very much pleased with the government's assistance. The government is very thoughtful.

225. What did you plan to do at the time you left your village?

When I came out to take refuge I thought of keeping on farming and depending to a certain extent on the government's assistance, while waiting for the time when the village is pacified.

226. Do you plan to remain here, to move elsewhere, or to go back to your village?

I want to go back to my village when it's possible.

227. What have you heard about those people who remained behind in the village?

I haven't heard about them.

228. Has anyone gone back to the village?

A number have gone back.

229. Why have they gone back?

They went back to start farming again in the village. They live on farming.

230. Did they go back on their own or did the government permit them to?

The government allowed them to go to a resettlement camp.

231. So, they went to the resettlement camp but not back to their village?

To the resettlement camp.

232. Have you ever met Americans?

I met some Americans here, coming to visit us.

233. Did you see any of them when you were in your village?

Some came along with Vietnamese troops.

234. Why do you think the Americans have come to Vietnam?

I think they've come to help Vietnam, to bring peace to Vietnam.

235. Why should they come to help our country?

Our country is still too weak and doesn't have enough weapons, and it's being invaded by Communist China. The Americans know that we're in the Free World camp and came to our assistance.

236. Did you have many close friends in your village?

Yes, I did.

237. Could you talk to them freely?

Yes, I could.

238. Where would you meet and talk with your friends?

We used to meet when going to work or strolling around.

239. Suppose you wanted to criticize the VC when you talked with your friends, were you afraid the latter might report to the former?

I was afraid.

240. Even if they were your close friends?

They were close friends, but I didn't know how they felt on those things.

241. How about among members of your family? Could you talk to them freely about any matters?

I could talk to them at night, whispering.

242. Were you afraid that what you told people in your family might be passed on to others?

No, those were my parents and brothers, and no one else.

243. If a member of your family knew something, all the others should know about it too?

Yes, they should.

244. Was there anything the men knew that the women were not told about?

The women were told everything the men knew, because they were of the same one family.

245. When you were in trouble, did other individuals or families come to help you out?

People in the neighborhood would come to help us.

246. In what way did they help you, for instance?

For instance, when our house was burned or destroyed, they would come and help rebuild it.

247. Aside from the Village Council members, who had high standing among the villagers?

Aside from the Village Council members, there were also the hamlet chiefs.

248. Not counting the hamlet chiefs, was there any villager who stood out from all the others?

There were some farmers, because they always said the right things.

249. Who were they? Did they have more education? Were they older than other people?

Those were the old people of the village. They were old and experienced, and we listened to what they told us.

250. In your opinion, who was the best informed person in your village?

Only the Village Council members and the hamlets chiefs were well-informed.

251. When the village chief and hamlet chiefs were no longer in the village, who was the best-informed person?

Those who read newspapers and books were the best-informed villagers.

252. Who were they? What did they do in the village?

They were farmers.

253. Speaking of domestic news, who was best informed?

Those who read newspapers and owned a radio knew more about domestic news.

254. Where did you get your information when you lived in your village?

I learned the news from the radio and newspapers. The Village Council gathered the villagers and had the newspapers read to them.

255. How often did you attend these information sessions?

Once or twice a month.

256. How did you learn about VC activities in this province?

I listened to the news broadcast of the Village Council.

257. How about news of the ARVN activities?

I borrowed newspapers and read about ARVN activities or listened to the broadcast.

258. What is the most recent information you get about events in Saigon?

I heard that Mr. Diem was overthrown by Mr. Minh, who in turn was overthrown by Mr. Khanh. Another man then overthrew Mr. Khanh.

259. What other news about Saigon do you know lately?

Nothing besides that.

260. How did you know about these events in Saigon?

I read in the newspapers or listened to other people's radio.

261. How did you learn about news from Hanoi, from North Vietnam?

The cadres held meetings of the villagers and told about Hanoi and North Vietnam. I borrowed newspapers from those who bought them. The VC rounded up the population in order to tell the news.

262. What did you know about life in North Vietnam?

The VC told the population that the North was marching toward socialism, that the people there lived happily.

263. How would you imagine the best life in your village?

In comparison, I find life here much better. We are free. We go to work or we rest whenever we want to. We can spend all we earn.

264. How would you imagine the worst life in your village?

In the village, we work in the ricefield day in and day out if we are farmers. We work during the day and rest at night.

265. How many boys do you have?

Just one.

266. What will you want him to do in the future?

I'll send him to school if I can; then I'll see later.

267. What would you wish to see him do?

I wish he would study and do farming. It is best to live from the land.

268. Why do you think it is best to live on agriculture?

We in the villages say: Nhat nong chi ban. (Farming is the first basic.)

269. What do you think will make a good life for your son?

If he can study a little bit, that will help in his farming and he will be happy and have a good life. He will not be intimidated by anyone.

270. Do you think farming requires much schooling?

Yes, it does. The more anybody learns, he can read newspapers and books and become more intelligent. He can plan better.

271. Do you think your son's education should cover everything, or just agriculture?

It should cover everything including agriculture.

272. In your village, did you see posters and newspapers pasted on the walls for the villagers to read?

Yes, they were posted at the information offices and at the corners of the roads.

273. Were there newspapers or just news bulletins?

Both.

274. Did you go to theaters in your village?

I went to see the movies only. Sometimes people from the district information service came and prepared movie shows for the villagers.

275. What were these movies about?

They were about methods of farming, farming experience.

276. Who in the village had newspapers?

A few bought newspapers; others could read at the information office the newspapers sent down from the district office.

277. Where were the newspapers bought?

Those who wanted to buy asked the village council members to bring back newspapers for them (from the district).

278. About how many persons in your village bought newspapers?

I can't tell. The village is so large.

279. About how many?

About 150 persons. Nobody knows for sure.

280. Did they tell other people in the village about what they read in the newspapers?

Yes, they did when other people came and asked.

281. What kind of information did you want to get more of?

I wanted to know more about domestic news. And also world news.

282. Was there any information that reached you too late?

Yes, there was information that came to us too late when the Village Council had to gather the villagers for a meeting -- information of the country, about victories.

283. Did you sometimes listen to other people's radio in the village?

Yes, I did. The soldiers who visited their families in the village brought a radio with them.

284. To what stations did you listen to?

We listened to Radio Saigon and Radio Quang Ngai. To Radio Saigon alone, when Radio Quang Ngai had not been established.

285. Did you listen to foreign stations, such as BBC London, the Voice of America?

Yes, sometimes.

286. Did you also listen to other foreign stations, such as Peiping, Moscow, or Hanoi?

No, we didn't.

287. After the VC had come to settle in your village, to what radio stations did you listen to?

We no longer had a radio to listen to.

288. Did the VC bring in their radio for the villagers to listen to?

No, they didn't.

289. What kind of information did the VC give you that you found accurate?

No information of the VC was accurate. They simply spread rumors.

290. What kind of information given by the VC was comparatively more accurate than others?

(Long pause).

291. Was there anything reliable in the VC information?

No.

292. How about the information provided by the government? What was accurate and what was not?

The government told the population that it would help them and called on those who were misled to come out; the victories on the battlefields. This information was accurate.

293. How were you able to find out that VC information was not accurate?

There were things in the village that didn't check with the VC information.

294. How about the information they gave concerning events outside your village?

If they lied on these things, they also lied on other things.

295. Here is a drawing of a ladder. The rungs are numbered from 1 to 10. Rung No.1 represents the worst life you could imagine and Rung No.10 the best life. Rung No.5 is the average. How would you rate your life at the time you left your village?

I would say No.4.

296. How was your life a year ago? Where would it be on this ladder?

Here, No.6.

297. Five years from now, would you say your life will be better or worse? Where will it be on this ladder?

How can it be better, when I have to take refuge here?

298. Taking refuge may be only a temporary event. But five years later, where would your life be on this ladder?

It will be on No.6, I guess.

299. You expect it to be at the same level as one year ago?

Correct.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

The subject came to Quang-Ngai city along with other refugees, but was classified by the provincial authorities as a rallier because he had been forced by the VC to do corvee labor and sabotage work in the village. For the purposes of this interview, he was considered as a refugee.
The subject was reasonably articulate and outspoken. He seemed sincere, but on several occasions the interviewer was under the impression that he tried to give favorable opinions concerning the GVN. He was of average intelligence.

NO. AGR - 30

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

1. Name of interviewer [redacted]

2. Name of subject [redacted]

3. Time and date of interview :
   From 8:05 a.m to 9:50 a.m on August 6 1965
   From _____ to _____ on _____ 19 ___
   From _____ to _____ on _____ 19 ___

4. Place of interview :
   Chieu Hoi Center, Quang Ngai

5. Sex of subject : Male (XX) Female ( )

6. Age of subject : 34

7. Ethnic background : Vietnamese

8. Place of birth :
   hamlet [redacted]
   village [redacted]
   district Mo Duc
   province Quang Ngai

9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :
   hamlet [redacted]
   village [redacted]
   district Mo Duc
   province Quang Ngai

10. (a) Length of residence in last location : 34 years since birth
    (b) Who controlled the place of residence :
    GVN ( ) VC (XX) Contested ( ) How long? 10 months

NO. AGR- 30

11. Number of brothers (1) and sisters (0)

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : 1

13. Marital status : Married

14. Number of children : 2

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age : 0

16. Parents with subject (XX) or not with subject (Father dead
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ([redacted])
Brothers with subject( ) or not with subject (XX)
Wife with subject (XX) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject(XX) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion : Buddhist

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : Farmer

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation Poor farmer
(b) Landowner? 3 sao of land

20. Education :
illiterate ( )
literate (X)
schooling completed : None

21. Any relatives in VC : None

22. Any relatives in GVN : One brohher-in-law (killed by VC)

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by :
(a) French None
(b) GVN None
(c) VC One brother-in-law (Civil Guard) killed by VC

24. When became a refugee : April [redacted] 1965

AGR

INTERVIEW

31

THE RAND CORPORATION

[redacted]

STUDIES OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT
OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR-31

Date of Interview : September [redacted] 1965.

Subject's Category : Refugee: September [redacted] 1965

Former Residence : [redacted] hamlet,
[redacted] village,
Ben Cat district,
Binh Duong province

COMMENTS: Subject was a 50-year-old farmer classified by the VC as "very poor." He spoke readily about such subjects as the impact of military actions on his village (Q: 32-33, 141-158, 198-199) and on the VC (Q: 207-221, 266-267), the Strategic Hamlet program (Q: 37-48), VC activities in his village (Q: 68-102), VC attitudes toward refugees (Q: 252-255), the local GVN authorities (Q: 109-112), the Saigon Government (Q: 113, 119-123), psywar results (Q: 159-162, 167, 230-244, 346-361), and crop spraying and defoliation (Q: 298-323).

1. When did you arrive here ([redacted] city)?

I have been here for six days. I don't remember the date of my arrival because when we left the village it was all in a hurry and we did not stop to figure what day it was.

2. Did you come directly here ?

We stopped at [redacted] before coming here.

3. From what village did you come from ?

We came from [redacted] village, Ben Cat district.

4. How did you come here ?

We took a motor-sampan. The trip cost [redacted] piasters per person.

5. How far did you walk from your home to the river in order to board the motor-sampan?

A little more than 1 km.

6. What have you planned to do here?

We have to depend on the Government's assistance. But I shall be looking for places where they need hired labor. Although we have nothing out here, we are more pleased because our family is united and has not lost any of its members. Back in the village, bombs and artillery shells poured in, day in and day out.

7. What kind of a job do you plan to do now?

I am a farmer. I am not a skilled worker. I can offer only my labor for hire.

8. How many members of your family have come here?

My wife and I, and our four children.

9. How old are you this year?

I was born in 1915. I must be 50 this year.

10. How much schooling have you had?

I have had three years' of schooling (in elementary school).

11. Did your children go to school in your village?

No, my children were too young.

12. How old are they?

The first one is 15, the second 11, the third 6, and the last a few months old.

13. Did your oldest son go to school yet?

We were too poor to send him to school. Here also, we shall have to find him a job in order to earn something. We have to accept sufferings in our time: one either stays behind and gets killed, or moves away and stays ignorant.

14. Do you plan to send your children to school here, some time in the future?

After we get settled and if we have the means to, we will send them to school.

15. Has any member of your family gone somewhere else?

No. All of our children are here with us. My first wife did not have any children; I remarried later and my children are now still very young. They have to stay with us. People of my age usually have grandchildren, but I still have young children to take care of. It is very bothersome.

16. How many hamlets were in your village?

My village has Hamlet [redacted] Hamlet [redacted] and Hamlet [redacted] It has [redacted] hamlets.

17. How much population did each hamlet have?

Each hamlet must have over one thousand inhabitants.

18. Have you always lived in [redacted] village?

I grew up in [redacted] Do you where [redacted] is ? It is only [redacted] (by bus) from here to [redacted] My parents had lived there.

19. In what district is [redacted] located?

Ben The belongs to [redacted] district city. I lived in [redacted] with my parents but I went to work in [redacted] and met my present wife there. I moved to settle in [redacted]

20. For how long have you stayed in [redacted]

I met my present wife in [redacted] more than 15 years ago.

21. In the past few years, did some people leave your village?

Many people left the village during the past few years.

22. Why did they leave?

During the "nine-year period" (the Resistance period), there were many sufferings in my village. There were artillery shells and bombs, there were mopping-up operations. I stayed behind in the village but life was unbearable.

23. Who conducted the mopping-up operations at that time?

Well... the "Nationalists."

24. Where did the villagers go?

They went to stay with their relatives in other more peaceful villages. I myself sometimes took refuge in Ben The, staying with my parents and brothers.

25. What were the main occupations in your village?

People in my village lived on farming and on rubber-shedding at the rubber plantations. In the recent bombing, the rubber plantations were ruined, and nobody dared work there any longer.

26. To whom do the plantations belong to?

They belonged to the French. Now they belong to a former district chief, Mr... People say that he bought it with loans from the Americans.

27. Did you find your village generally well-off, medium, or poor?

How could it be well-off with so much suffering during the "nine-year period" and also recently? It is already very lucky that we are still alive; how could we work to become well-off?

28. How were the majority of the population in your village --- well-off, medium or poor?

Very poor; very poor, indeed.

29. How was your family classified by the VC?

Since the "nine-year period," my family has not participated in the "revolution" on a "departed-from-home" (thoat-ly) basis. Occasionally, they required us to participate in sabotage work with the militia. That was all there was to our participation in the revolution. I had a family and I could not "depart from home."

30. How did the VC classify your family? Did it belong to the rich, middle or poor class?

They assigned us to the Co-nong class (very poor farmer).

31. Why were you classified as Co-nong?

We did not own any land or property; we did not have any income. So, they placed us in the Ban-co-nong class.

32. During the past few years, was the economic condition of your family improving or getting worse?

It was getting worse all the time, because we were not able to produce, and to build up anything new. Just think of it: we built a house; it would last at most one year before it was destroyed. At most. It might last only five or six months at times. How could one be happy under such conditions?

33. How were your dwellings destroyed?

They were demolished or burned often during the nine-year period. We were afraid and would run away when, uh ... "they" came up. The unattended houses were then torn down and burned.

34. During the Resistance, did you participate in any activities in order to be fearful?

During that period of time, everyone in the village was drafted into the militia. The resistance members ordered the villagers to work for them and everyone had to obey.

35. What religion are you?

I have never observed any religion.

36. Do you observe ancestral worship?

Yes, I do. But I observed it only in the past. How could I now that my wife, my children and I have drifted this way?

37. Did you live in a Strategic Hamlet?

My house was in a Strategic Hamlet.

38. When did the VC disturb or destroy your Strategic Hamlet?

It was not destroyed. It was abandoned by "those gentlemen" who decided to withdraw from it. The VC did not disturb or attack it.

39. Who withdrew ? The Dan Ve?

Yes, the Dan Ve of the village.

40. Did the village council also leave the village?

The village council had been staying in Ben-Cat district city.

41. Does your village still have its council at this time?

Yes, it does. The village council is still in Ben-Cat.

42. When did the council leave the village?

Long ago. I don't know. I can't remember.

43. How was life in your Strategic Hamlet?

Life in the Strategic Hamlet was easier. People could move

freely for their daily work. When the Strategic Hamlet was abandoned, the population lived miserably and became poorer.

44. Why was it so?

When the Strategic Hamlet was set up, Government troops defended it and required the villagers to build their houses in straight lines. People went in and out at specified times. Life was more organized and became easier than before.

45. How did living in the Strategic Hamlet affect your livelihood?

The troops always "supported" the villagers and the latter never had to fear artillery and bombing. Some time later, when the village authorities had gone away, it was harder to earn our living.

46. Were the villagers' movements restricted by Strategic Hamlet regulations?

Yes and no. The villagers could leave the hamlet at seven in the morning and come back before five in the afternoon. This was just "normal."

47. What did you like about the Strategic Hamlet?

People were able to work for their living easily. Now, there is nobody to defend the village and people cannot work easily and in order and security. Moreover, artillery and bombing harass the villagers day in and day out.

48. And didn't you dislike anything about the Strategic Hamlet?

I didn't dislike anything in it. The troops defended the village, and the villagers were able to go to work; this was possible, thanks to the Strategic Hamlet.

49. When there still was a village council in your village, how did that council behave toward the villagers?

The village council issued papers to the villagers promptly When some villagers occasionally had to ask for papers, they could go to it for the papers and come back immediately; they did not have to wait.

50. How did the villagers feel about the village council?

They saw that the village council issued them the necessary papers promptly. That was a good help for the people.

51. Who was in control of your village one year ago?

Last year, when the Strategic Hamlet was still there, the village was under the control of the Government.

52. When did the VC come to occupy your village?

They occupied the village when the Strategic Hamlet was abandoned.

53. In what month was the Strategic Hamlet abandoned?

I don't remember very well. It was in May or June last year. More than a year ago.

54. At the time you left for this town, who was controlling your village?

At that time, well, there was nobody controlling the village. At times, Government troops came in from the cross-road at the outskirts of the village.

55. At times, Government troops came in; at others, VC troops also came in. Is that correct?

Yes, but the VC came in not so often.

56. So, you are not sure who was controlling your village?

No, I am not sure.

57. Did the VC carry out terroristic act against the villagers?

No, they never did. There were still Government troops.

58. But you have told me that Government troops had withdrawn from the village?

No, I am thinking of the place where I have been living these last five or six days. I only see Government troops. I do not refer to [redacted] village.

59. In [redacted] village, did the VC kill or terrorize anybody?

Sometimes they passed through the village peacefully. At other times, we heard a few shots. I did not see them kill anybody.

60. Did the VC establish combat hamlets in your village?

I haven't seen anything of that kind yet. I saw cars and trucks running through feverishly.

61. How many young men between 16 and 30 were there in your hamlet?

There were very few; it is hard to guess how many.

62. If there were only a few, wouldn't it be all the easier to estimate?

Only 6 or 7 young men were in the hamlet.

63. Only 6 or 7 in all your hamlet?

Many had left the village to go here and there, to join Government or VC forces. There were only between 5 and 10 young men left in the hamlet.

64. Were there more who had left to join Government forces or VC forces?

They joined either side.

65. But which side did more of them join?

That I don't know.

66. Was anyone in your village taken by the VC to re-education?

Previously, "five or ten" of the villagers were taken to re-education by the VC.

67. When was that ?

That was when the Strategic Hamlet was abandoned.

68. That is, last year?

Yes, last year.

69. What did these people do in order to be taken for re-education?

That I don't know. I was occupied with earning my living and didn't pay attention to what other people did.

70. For how long were they taken away from the village?

For a period of about half a month.

71. Did the VC gather the villagers to mass meetings?

Occasionally they did.

72. Occasionally? How many times a month?

That was some time ago. At present, they had to disperse because bombs exploded day in and day out and artillery fire never stopped. We had to spend most of our time in trenches. How could people move around to attend meetings?

73. When did they call meetings, how often did they do so?

Once every ten or fifteen days.

74. What did they say to the people when they held mass meetings?

They explained questions related to --- uh, questions concerning the hamlet.

75. What kinds of questions, for instance?

They made propaganda that they had won battles here and there or that the Americans were struck here and there. I simply heard what they said and did not know anything. I had to listen to what they said.

76. I agree with you that people have to listen at such meetings. But I am just interested in knowing what they told people. Did they tell anything about the air attacks on North Vietnam?

I can't remember now what they said about those air attacks.

77. But they did mention the air attacks on North Vietnam?

Yes, they did.

78. How did they explain the reasons for these attacks to the villagers?

They explained quite a lot but I just can't remember. I forgot everything after each meeting was over. I can't remember.

79. When the VC came to your village, did they require you to join their Farmers' Association?

Not the Farmers' Association, but the people's militia. They always had need for the militia.

80. When did they organize the militia?

The people's militia was in existence for a long time, since the nine-year period (the Resistance). It was discontinued during the six-year period of political struggle. When the Strategic Hamlets were there, the ranks of the militia were dislocated and they no longer existed. The militia came into existence again last year.

81. To whom did people in your village pay taxes during the past few years? (After a long pause) To whom did they pay taxes during the past three years?

During the last three years, people did not pay what is called taxes. They paid what was called a contribution to (the support of) the troops.

82. The villagers did not have to pay any taxes to the Government?

They did not pay taxes to the Government. They did, yes, in this way. Those who owned land paid taxes; those who were poor like myself were not required to pay.

83. You mean to say land rentals or land taxes?

Land rentals.

84. How much contribution did you make to the VC?

It depended on the acreage. Those who tilled more land paid a higher contribution.

85. How much contribution did your family make a year?

No, we did not make any contribution. We contributed only one or one-and-a-half bushels (gia), because of this. Each year we harvested about 50 gia of paddy. We turned over to the landowner 20 or 30 gia. We netted only 20 or 30 gia and contributed one or one-and-a-half gia.

86. Was there any land redistribution carried out in your village?

Yes, there was.

87. When was that?

During the nine-year period (the Resistance).

88. I am referring to the Viet Cong period rather than the Viet-Minh period. Was land redistribution carried out recently?

By the Government or by the Viet Cong?

89. By the Viet Cong. Did the VC carry out any land redistribution?

Land distribution has followed the same pattern throughout. Now, it is only a change in ownership. Imagine that I have lived there for more than ten years and yet I have not received even a ball of earth. They (VC) said that I was able to carry on and did not distribute anything to me.

90. But did the VC actually distribute land to some villagers?

Yes, they did.

91. Did those who received land begin to till it?

Surely they did.

92. Whose land was distributed?

They distributed the land belonging to the village (communal estate).

93. Did they distribute the land when the village council was still operating in the village?

No, it no longer was in the village.

94. When was the distribution carried out?

Just after the Strategic Hamlet was abandoned. Last year.

95. And your family did not receive any piece of land from this distribution?

No, it received nothing.

96. And yet your family was landless?

Yes. But there was a reason. I was able to rent land from a private individual and they (the VC) said that those who were renting land needed not be given any land.

97. Were those who were given land afraid that some day such land might be taken back?

If they (the VC) had distributed land, why should they take it back?

98. Did the new landowners feel that their land might be taken back if the GVN village council should be re-instated?

They surely would lose their land if the "Nationalists" came back.

99. Was there any year in which you did not have to pay land rentals?

I paid land rentals regularly. But after the village was in turmoil, I did not pay because I went back to Ben-The to stay with my parents during the trouble years.

100. Did you till the land still?

Whenever we had time, we did.

101. And the landowner did not claim rentals?

When we did not till the land, we returned it to the landowner and we did not have to pay rentals.

102. Did you ever till the land without having to pay rentals?

This never happened. I have rented the land during the last two or three years only. I have always tilled the land and have never given it up. This year is really hard because I had planted the rice just before I left the village.

103. How was life during the Resistance period?

The Resistance period was one of suffering and death.

104. How did life become after the nine-year Resistance period?

During the six years of peace, people were having better and better livelihood and were able to build brick houses in the village. Everyone were having enough to eat. But people were faced with sufferings and destruction again after this six-year period.

105. When did the VC first come into your village and disturb it?

They came in when the Strategic Hamlet was abandoned. I don't remember which year it was. But as soon as the Strategic Hamlet abandoned, the Viet Cong "upross."

106. Was this a year or so ago?

Yes, I think so.

107. But had the VC come before the Strategic Hamlet was abandoned?

Yes, they had.

108. What did they do when they arrived for the first time?

They came in very seldom. They just passed through and did not say or do anything.

109. Did the Ben-Cat district chief come to visit your village sometimes?

The district chief came often when the Strategic Hamlet was still operating. He stopped coming when the Strategic Hamlet had been "disbanded."

110. How often did the district chief come into your village?

He usually came in every two weeks or every month. At times he did not come for two or three months.

111. How about the province chief? Did he visit your village often?

I was not familiar with these officials. I heard the district chief had come or was coming but I did not see him.

112. Did the province chief ever visit your village?

He did. He visited the Strategic Hamlet and distributed blankets, rice, and so forth.

113. How did you feel about the national Government?

The national Government helped the people. It gave rice and money to the people. What it did agreed with the people's wishes. When the national government "withdrew" and the Viet Cong "uprose," life was more difficult. Living became "restricted," that is, more difficult, because of bombing and gunfire; therefore, the villagers became poorer and more miserable.

114. How did people in your village feel when the Ngo-dinh-Diem Government was overthrown?

The villagers did not understand that problem.

115. How did you and other people in your village feel when you learned of the overthrow of the Ngo-dinh-Diem regime?

People in my village did not know about this.

116. Do you mean to say that most people in your village still believe that Ngo-dinh-Diem is still in power? (After a long pause). Do you think that people believe that Ngo-dinh-Diem still is the President?

Yes, they knew it, They knew that Ngo-dinh-Diem had been overthrown and no longer working (=in office). They knew that much. I don't know how they felt.

117. What did they say when they heard about this?

They did not say anything.

118. Why did they say Ngo-dinh-Diem was overthrown?

I did not hear them say anything.

119. Do you know who is the head of the present Government?

Who else The present government is headed by the Nationalists and the Americans. The Ngo-dinh-Diem Government no longer exists; it is now the French -- I mean, the American Government and the Nationalist government.

120. What is the name of the head of the Vietnamese Government?

That I do not know. That question is too "remote" and the citizen is too stupid to understand.

121. How about you? Don't you know the name of the leader of the government?

No, I don't.

122. What did the Viet Cong say to the villagers about the present Government?

The Viet Cong said that the Ngo-dinh-Diem Government had been overthrown and replaced by a Nationalist government. They said so, and we just understood what they said.

123. What has the Government done in your village in order to help the people?

As I told you earlier, when the Strategic Hamlet was established the Government gathered the population into the hamlet and helped them either by providing work for them or by supplying them with rice and money. The population was able to go to work at regular hours. Now, it might be easier for the population to move around and they can move anytime, but they cannot work. How could they, with such bombing and shelling? Bombs and shells poured in day and night; when could people go to work?

124. Before the VC came, how many Dan-ve were stationed in your village?

The Dan-ve under the village council? I saw only a dozen of them.

125. Only a dozen of Dan-ve in the whole village? Or in your hamlet alone?

Not in the hamlet -- in the village. Of this number, I just saw one or two living out here.

126. How did you see the Dan-ve treat the villagers?

I did not see them doing anything bad to the villagers. Only when a villager did something wrong was he arrested by the Dan-ve.

127. Did ARVN troops often pass through your village?

They came very often.

128. How often?

Now and then, I saw military trucks coming down from Ben-Cat, loaded with troops who would give talks or movie shows on the soccer ground for the villagers. They came once in two weeks or a month.

129. How did the ARVN troops behave toward the villagers?

They just came in and did not disturb anyone.

130. What did you hear the aims of the Viet Cong were?

I did not hear about them.

131. And what were the aims of the Liberation Front?

I merely heard of the name: Front for the Liberation of the South.

132. Everyone knows what the Liberation Front is after. But what did they tell the villagers as their aims?

I think that the Liberation Front is aimed at waging war; that is why it is called the Front.

133. With whom do you think they wage war?

They wage war with the "Nationalists" and the Americans.

134. Why do they wage war with the Government?

I just know they do. I don't know why.

135. And why do they wage war with the Americans?

I have seen that they fought the French troops, then Diem's troops, and now the Americans. But I don't understand why.

136. In your opinion, why do you think the Americans have come to Vietnam?

Who, the Americans? As I see it, the Americans have come to defend our country and also to support our people.

137. How have they supported our people?

After the battles, especially from what I heard from people coming down from Dong Hoai, they supported each individual with several thousand piasters. They had likewise supported people from three villages in Phu An. This is rather comforting for those people who have drifted from their villages.

138. Has anyone in your family served in the ARVN?

They are all too young in my family.

139. How about your relatives?

My relatives have been living far away and at several places and it has been difficult to visit them. But among my relatives, some must be more or less connected with the national government.

140. Have you seen any of them recently?

I very seldom see them.

141. When did you see any of them last?

I told you I very seldom see them. My brother's sons are in the ARVN and very seldom come home.

142. Is there anyone among your family members of relatives working for the Viet Cong?

I went to settle in my wife's village, Phu An, but she has no relatives there. I have relatives only in Ben The where my parents lived.

143. Were there battles in your village?

There were a few minor ones only.

144. Were the villagers given warning in order to take cover?

Yes, they took cover.

145. Were they warned before each fighting?

No, they were not warned. The area had immense ricefields and very few houses.

146. You said earlier that you had been working on 50 sao of rented land? How many persons were working on the land with you?

I alone was working on that land. It was not a large piece of land; it yielded only about 50 thien of rice.

147. How often was your village shelled with mortar and artillery?

Very often. It was shelled so often that I just don't know what to say. And it is being shelled even more fiercely now.

148. But how often was it? Once in how many days?

The village was shelled invariably during the day and at night from Ben Cat and Thu Dau Mot.

149. What did people do when the village was being bombarded?

They took cover in trenches.

150. Did they dig trenches?

Every household had its own trench.

151. Who told the villagers to dig trenches?

They did it "spontaneously." Nobody told them. They dug trenches in order to take cover from cannons, mortars, and bombs.

152. Did any casualties result from the shelling?

Yes, the shelling "brought about results."

153. Were houses damaged and destroyed?

Many houses were destroyed. They were hit by shells.

154. What did the villagers say about this damage?

They said that since bombs and shells were destroying their houses, they should think of moving to a more peaceful area.

155. Why was your village bombarded by artillery?

I realized that as this war sprang up, it brought about conflicts, clashes and sufferings. Our village was just bearing the effects of the war.

156. Were the VC in the village in any of these bombardments?

They were sometimes. Occasionally, some of them were also killed.

157. What did the VC cadres tell the villagers about the damage and casualties caused by artillery fire?

They soothed the villagers by saying that these things were bound to happen in a state of war.

158. Whom did the villagers blame for these losses?

The war brought about these things. The villagers did not know who to blame.

159. Did these artillery attacks hamper the daily life of the population?

They surely did.

160. Which hampering most: bombs, cannons, or mortars?

The bombs and rockets from aircraft did the greatest hampering.

161. Did the Government warn the villagers of the artillery attacks or of the bombings?

Yes, it did. Its helicopters came to broadcast over the village, telling the people to move to Binh Duong city where they would receive help from the Government. The helicopters said that if the population kept on staying in the village they would have to suffer from the upcoming bombings.

162. How many days after the broadcast did you leave your village?

Aircraft came to bomb the very next day. And the bombing has continued until this day.

163. You left your village six days ago, right? How many days ago did the broacast take place?

The broadcast took place one day or two before I left the village.

164. How many times did the helicopters come to broadcast?

Since last year, helicopters have come to broadcast quite often. When we were still in the Strategic Hamlet, they also came often. They called on the population to withdraw from the hamlet and to apply for passes at Ben Cat district office. Thanks to this, we now are able to move out here freely. It has been comforting to know that the Government issued passes easily.

165. When did you get a pass from the Ben Cat district authorities?

I got it ---- I don't remember. Let me look for the paper and I can tell you ----

166. Just tell me roughly how many months or years ago you got it?

I think that it was in 1955.

167. That is, about ten years ago?

This year is 1965, I guess so.

168. You got that paper that long ago?

Yes, very long ago.

169. When the helicopters came last, did they say when the bombing would take place?

No, they did not say. They only told the villagers to leave in order to get away from danger of being in a bombed area. The next day, the village was bombed and I think it is still being bombed now.

170. How long after the bombing did you leave the village?

My family left that very day. I stayed behind trying to gather something before leaving. I left the next day.

171. How many bombings had taken place in your area before you left?

It is hard to say. The bombings had taken place in the morning, in the afternoon, at night.

172. They never ceased?

There were moments of lull, but I cannot tell how many times the bombing had taken place.

173. Did you see the aircraft?

I saw strafing jets, big and small.

174. How many people left your village at the same time as you did?

It is hard to tell. Nearly all of them left the village.

175. Out of ten persons in the village, how many would you say left it?

All ten.

176. Do you mean to say that there is no one in your village at this time?

Only the aged, the incapacitated, stayed behind. All those who were able to move like myself left the village. Why should they stay behind to suffer hardships and death?

177. Had aircraft come to bomb in your area in the past few months?

They had come to bomb very often, but they had not given any warning.

178. What differences did you see in those aircraft and the aircraft which bombed your village recently?

They were just of the same type.

179. Were their bombs alike in type?

The bombs were also alike. The larger bombs dug craters several meters deep and over 10 m wide.

180. Had these larger bombs been dropped in your area say, three months ago?

These bombs had been dropped quite frequently, yes.

181. Did you see any new type of aircraft in the recent bombings?

I saw both strafing aircraft with a single propeller and jets which bombed. There were other jets of which we heard the noise but which we did not see. They flew very high up.

182. How did you know these were jet aircraft?

The noise they made was different. The prop (piston-engined) aircraft did not make that kind of noise and they could be seen as they arrived.

183. At what time did the most recent bombing occurred when you were still in the village?

Bombs were dropped in [redacted] village in the morning and in the afternoon.

184. At what time did they arrive in the morning?

Just after sunrise.

185. Did they drop heavy bombs or light bombs?

Both heavy and light bombs.

186. How many aircraft came at that time?

Three or four.

187. Were they prop aircraft or jet aircraft?

They were of both types.

188. Did they drop bombs within your village?

Yes, right in the village. They dropped bombs in [redacted] and [redacted] villages. The population in these villages have come here, all of them.

189. Did they also bombs in the woods?

Yes, they did.

190. Were the VC around?

Only a few.

191. Why were there such intensive bombings, then?

I don't know.

192. Just before the bombings took place, had the VC been around?

Only a couple of them.

193. Were there VC troops in the vicinity?

No, I did not see any.

194. Was there dense vegetation in your village?

There were only orchards, with tall fruit trees. Only the woods had dense vegetation.

195. How is that woods area called?

It was called "Rung Cam" (Forbidden Forests).

196. Was the Rung Cam heavily bombed?

Yes, it was very heavily bombed. The village was not so badly bombed, perhaps in order to allow the villagers to flee.

197. How far is the Rung Cam from your village?

It was about [redacted] from my village. The forests extend to the Ben Cat area.

198. When the forests were bombed, were the VC there?

I left my village in a hurry. I did not stop anywhere in order to look or ask.

199. Do you know if the VC had their encampments in these forests?

I did not go there and I don't know.

200. How was the damage suffered by the villagers in the recent bombings?

Houses were destroyed and some families suffered death.

201. How many houses were destroyed and how many persons were killed?

Over ten persons were killed. Five or six houses were demolished.

202. Each time they came to bomb in your area, did the aircraft dive or did they fly high and level?

The aircraft with propellers dived but the jet aircraft did not dive. The latter just flew high and dropped cluster bombs.

203. Did you remain in trenches during the bombing?

Who dared stay out of trenches?

204. Did you see the aircraft when you were in your trench?

When I heard their noise dying away, I went up on ground and looked.

205. In your village, did you see more aircraft during the past six months?

Yes, there were more aircraft in the past six months.

206. Did you see any new type of aircraft during the past six months?

There had been jet aircraft before but they did not cause so much havoc.

207. Were the jet aircraft you saw recently of the same type as the ones you had seen more than six months ago?

As far as I could see, they were of the same type. I cannot tell the differences.

208. Had aircraft bombed the Rung Cam area before?

They had bombed the Rung Cam and my village before.

209. When did they bomb more heavily, now or a few months before?

They bombed more heavily now.

210. How often had they come previously?

Once every two or four weeks.

211. And how often recently?

Much oftener. Several days in a row with half a day or one day of respite.

212. Almost daily then?

That's it.

213. Did you see any change in the VC's activities in your area during the past few months?

When artillery and bombing became more intense, the VC were less seen.

214. Since when did you see less of them?

Since a couple of months ago.

215. Let us say about one week ago, when you were still in your village, who did you think will win the war when it ends?

I did not know who will win. But I saw this evidence. The Americans have stirred up the villages so that the villagers can no longer stay in. At the same time, they have dislodged the VC and the VC's activities have ceased somewhat.

216. Well then, who did you think will win this war?

I have seen less of the VC. From Ben Cat to this city, I saw only ARVN troops all along the way. I had seen only a few guerrillas back in my village.

217. I just want to know who, in your opinion, has more chance of winning the war?

America is a great country. It has plenty of weapons and money. In fighting this war, it has succeeded in helping the Vietnamese people while the VC talk much and accomplish nothing. It has shown signs of winning.

218. One year ago, who did you feel will win the war?

I saw that both in the countryside and in the cities, the Government troops and the Americans were occupying larger areas. If they withdrew from the Strategic Hamlets, they did so from a few of the hamlets only. The Strategic Hamlets were scattered and isolated and couldn't be defended against the VC.

219. Now, more recently, say, six months ago, who did you feel will win this war?

I felt that the VC had no chance of winning. The Government had to cover a large territory but was still very strong.

220. In your opinion, why do the VC persist in fighting while the Government has been using so much military power?

I think that the VC continue to fight regardless of whether they will win or lose. They continue to fight until they die.

221. Why? Why do they continue until they die?

The VC are very peculiar. They do not surrender and yet they do not carry out an all-out fight. They drag on.

222. I see what you mean. But why do they do so?

I think they do so in order to wage this war indefinitely.

223. What would they gain from waging an indefinite war?

I don't know whether there is a gain at the end. But by doing so, they suffer losses and casualties; and yet they do not hesitate to carry on.

224. Had you and your family ever thought of leaving your village in order to take refuge?

We had left for refuge elsewhere during the nine-year period (the Resistance). I have not told you about the time, two years ago, when the Strategic Hamlets were not yet in existence. Aircraft came to broadcast and tell the villagers to leave the village for Ben Cat or Binh Duong and to return when construction of the Strategic Hamlets would be completed. The villagers obeyed and a great many left [redacted] village. On the road, the ARVN troops did not stop them, because they (the villagers) were allow to move. After getting passes from the Ben Cat authorities, the villagers returned to Ben Cat.

225. So, the villagers went out for the papers and did not take refuge anywhere?

No, they did not take refuge yet.

226. How long did you and the other villagers stay in Ben Cat before going back to the village?

We stayed there about one month.

227. During the past few years, did you take refuge in [redacted]?

Yes, on that occasion, I went to [redacted] from Ben Cat while waiting for the papers to be issued. It took nearly two months to obtain the papers.

228. It took you two months to apply for a pass?

It was not so prompt. I had to go back and forth between [redacted] and Ben Cat. I spent all my money on transportation fares.

229. You went to stay in [redacted] in order to come more conveniently to Ben Cat, right? How far is it from Ben The to Ben Cat?

A single-trip ride cost 7 piasters.

230. And how far is it from [redacted] to Ben Cat?

There is no public transportation between [redacted] and Ben Cat. The direct road was about [redacted] km but is no longer passable since the Resistance time. Vehicles would have to make a detour to [redacted] and the trip would be more than [redacted] km between Ben Cat to [redacted] village.

231. Have you been to Binh Duong city before?

Occasionally I went to Binh Duong to buy things.

232. Before you came to take refuge here, did you have an idea as to how life in a Government-controlled area would be?

I got an idea from the air broadcast. The aircraft told the villagers to leave the [redacted] area in order to move to Ben Cat and Binh Duong towns where they would be helped, given jobs and issued papers.

233. How did you expect the Government to help you as you were leaving your village?

I was assured of the help of the Government, realizing that it should help the villagers when it called on them to move out. When we applied for passes at the village chief's office, we got them easily.

234. What kind of help or assistance were you thinking you would receive from the Government?

We were on our own. How could the Government help us? We all walked out here and did not see any assistance from the Government. The Government issued papers and this was the first step in helping. Other help may come later. It would be useless to let people move out here without providing them with any papers.

235. When did you first decide to move out here?

When the aircraft came and broadcast the appeal, I sent my wife and children off immediately and I also moved the next day. That was a week ago.

236. As you were leaving your village, what did you fear most?

Even if I had stayed and worked in the village, I would not have been able to live through it because of the bombing. Therefore, the Government did a very valuable thing in calling people out.

237. Yes, but what were you concerned about at the time you were leaving your village?

I was concerned about the property I had to leave behind. I was worried about how secure the trip would be, whether I would be able to earn a living down here. This second problem was more important, because the first thing is to stay alive.

238. When you were living in your village, did you see leaflets dropped from aircraft?

Yes, they dropped leaflets quite often.

239. Just before the population left the village, were leaflets dropped that asked them to leave?

Yes, they were.

240. So you had both broadcast and leaflets from aircraft? Did you pick up and read any leaflets?

I read them very often.

241. What did the leaflets say?

They said different things on each occasion. I cannot remember just what they said. Previously, the leaflets told of the air bombings in North Vietnam, of how much damage had been inflicted. Recently, they asked the villagers to leave the area to avoid casualties.

242. When were those last leaflets dropped?

I don't remember when.

243. How many days ago?

Leaflets were dropped very frequently -- even last year.

244. How many days ago was leaflets dropped to call on the population to leave?

About nine or ten days ago.

245. Were you aware of the Chieu Hoi program when you were in the village?

I heard about it frequently.

246. Whom did you hear from?

I heard about it from aircraft of "Vietnam Cong Hoa" (the Republic of Vietnam.) The broadcast called on the youths to go back to their own homes, live with their families and have a more secure life.

247. When you were leaving your village, did you think you would leave it for a long period of time or just for a short time?

We left with "no date of return in mind." What would we go back for? We had seen our houses, our properties demolished; there was nothing left.

248. Was your house damaged or destroyed?

It was destroyed by cannon shells. How could it stand undamaged while cannon shells poured in all day long - 20 or 30 rounds each time?

249. What were you able to take along with you?

Nothing. People in my family had a few changes of clothes for each.

250. Didn't you bring any rice with you?

No.

251. Why didn't you? You left the village by motor-sampan ...

We had 2 or 3 gia of rice left. We carried it out here but that wasn't much.

252. Are you worried about the property you left behind?

Why should I? It is now all desolate and useless.

253. If you had been able to, what would you have taken with you?

I would not have taken anything else with me. I have to start anew here with my own hands.

254. Did the VC cadres forbid the population from moving out?

They tried. But how could they? Aircraft were overhead, and the hamlet cadres could not stop the population because the latter had to run for their lives.

255. Did the cadres try to stop the villagers while aircraft were bombing?

No, they tried to stop them while the villagers got ready to move.

256. Were there aircraft overhead at that time?

No, they were already gone.

257. Did the VC threaten to punish those who would leave?

No, they didn't. They only said that people should not leave the village and endure hardships and uncertainties. But how could the villagers stay behind?

258. Those who did stay behind, why did they do so?

A few families stayed behind because they did not want to leave their properties. But I have seen that out of ten families, seven or more moved out here.

259. How about the other three families? Why did they stay behind?

That, I don't know. But I know there was no safety at all for those who stayed in the village.

260. Do you think they stayed behind because they were concerned about their properties or because they were connected in one way or another with the VC?

I think that both reasons are valid.

261. Did the young men of the village also move out here?

There are not so many young men in my village, as I told you earlier this morning. The few young men, most of whom are married, also moved out here.

262. What would happen to you if you went back to your village now?

Since we moved out here, the Government has provided us with shelter and food. Why, then, should we go back to the village?

263. But suppose you went back there now. What would happen to you?

I don't think anything would happen to me. If they (the VC) asked me questions, I would ask them whether they would have been able to assure security for the population.

264. In your opinion, how long will this war go on?

I cannot think far ahead. I am afraid it may go on forever.

265. You mean, it will never end?

I don't know how many more years it will last. How do I know?

266. Why do you think it may go on forever?

We have the nine years of Resistance. The next six-years' period was more peaceful, but death and desolation still took place. I see no end to it. Therefore, when the population started to leave the village, I also moved out.

267. Whom do you and the villagers blame for causing you to leave your village?

It is not possible to blame anyone at this time.

268. Why? Just think who is to be blamed for causing you to leave your village and say it frankly?

Let me talk back of the nine-year Resistance period when the troops of the Nationalist Government came to be stationed in the village, they said to us: "You have cozy brick houses. But if and as soon as we leave your village, you will have to sell the bricks in order to buy rice. And this is true now. After Government troops had withdrawn from the village, not even a thatch house was left standing. That was because they (the VC) had come to the village. It is a pity that the revolution has started.

269. Specifically, whom do you think the villagers should blame?

(In muttered voice) The fault lies with the revolution. Whenever a revolution began, people had nothing to eat and wear.

270. In what year did the revolution begin?

It came about since 1945.

271. What assistance have you gotten from the Government since you left your village?

When my wife and children got here, they received over 400 piasters and a bag of rice from the neighborhood. But that was long ago, more than a week ago.

272. Did that assistance come from the population here or from the Government?

From the Government, from the (Social Welfare) Service of the province.

273. Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the assistance of the Government?

I am satisfied because that was aimed at relieving the refugees at a critical time. They should work in order to contribute to the maintenance. The Government cannot support entirely several thousand people.

274. What has the Government promised to do for you and the other refugees?

It has promised to help. It has promised to distribute relief every week, then every ten days, then every two weeks. In fact, nothing substantial has been given. How can it be substantial when the Government has to take care of several thousand people at one time.

275. What did you plan to do when you were leaving your village?

I was thinking of getting settled, then going out to find some work. I can offer my labor for a living.

276. Do you plan to stay here or to get settled somewhere else?

We are here just temporarily. If we are given some other place where we can live and work, we shall move.

277. What have you heard about those who had stayed behind, in your village?

I don't know. I have not heard about them.

278. Have you heard whether bombing is still going on in your village?

I have not heard but I know that it is going on. We can hear the noise of the bombs from here.

279. Has anyone here tried to persuade you to go back to your village?

No, nobody has.

280. Has anyone from your village gone back there yet?

Nobody has gone back.

281. Now let's talk about foreigners. What do you think the Americans have come to Vietnam for?

(Lowering his voice:) I think they have come to help. Difficulties may have taken place somewhere else, but here I think they are helping.

282. Have you seen many Americans around?

I have seen many of them around here.

283. How about in your village? Did you see any of them back in your village?

No, there was not any in my village.

284. Did ARVN troops sometimes come to your village?

Yes, they came often.

285. Were there fightings in your village when they came?

There were very few fightings.

286. Were there many fightings in Rung Cam?

Also very few.

287. Were there Americans among ARVN troops?

Yes, but there were only a few.

288. What did the Americans do among these troops?

They accompanied in order to command or to do what else, I don't know.

289. What did the VC say the Americans had come for?

The VC came elsewhere in my village, and I don't know what they said.

290. When they rounded up the villagers for mass meetings, what did they say about the Americans?

They said that the Americans had come to start the war and they had taken part in the war openly because they no longer could conceal it.

291. Did they say why the Americans took part in this war?

The Americans took part in this war in order to defend their country.

292. How could they defend their country by fighting in the war in Vietnam?

They defended their country by fighting the Communists out of Vietnam.

293. I am now interested in what the VC say about the Americans. Why did they say the Americans participated in the war in Vietnam?

I already answered you, no?

294. Did the VC say so? Did they say that the Americans defended their country in Vietnam?

The VC said that the Americans were waging the war in Vietnam to "rob away" (conquer) this country.

295. Did you see foreigners other than Americans?

Up to now I have not seen any other foreigners.

296. How often did fightings take place in your village?

Very seldom. When ARVN troops came, there were sometimes a few gunshots. I think they exchanged gunfire with VC guerrillas.

297. Were there encounters between the VC Main Force and ARVN troops in your village?

Never.

298. Did any fightings take place near your village, in the Rung Cem jungle?

There were only a few fightings. Long Ago, there were two or three skirmishes in the jungle.

299. Were they fierce battles, lasting a day or so?

Oh, no! The longest encounter lasted thirty minutes or so.

300. Did you see defoliation sprayings in your village?

Yes, there were sprayings which destroyed the foliage of trees.

301. Right in your village or near your village?

Both around and in my village.

302. Did the sprayings affect your crops?

Half or more of the crops were destroyed.
(Note: Subject misunderstood question and answered incorrectly. See his answers to Q: 304, 306, 312, 315.)

303. Did you hear if the district authorities might pay for the damage done?

No, I didn't.

304. How often were sprayings carried out?

There was no spraying in my hamlet. Farther up, there were lots of sprayings.

305. Where was that?

Way up in Ho Bo, and elsewhere.

306. How far is it from your hamlet to Ho Bo?

About [redacted]

307. Were there defoliation operations in the jungle near your village?

That area of the jungle near my village was sometimes bombed and sprayed.

308. What effects did the sprayings have?

Wherever there were sprayings, the trees became bare.

309. How about in the jungle? Did they have any effects?

They devastated an area about 15 km wide and 30 or 40 m long in the jungle.

310. Was this the only place of defoliation in the jungle?

Yes.

311. Was there any defoliation along the roads?

Yes, there was. I think the troops sprayed wherever they suspected (VC presence).

312. Were your own ricefields and gardens affected by the sprayings?

Yes, they were destroyed by artillery and bombing.

313. Speaking of defoliation sprayings were they affected by those sprayings?

No, that has not happened yet.

314. Were your neighbors' and other villagers' ricefields damaged by sprayings?

No, their ricefields were all right.

315. Then, where did the sprayings take place?

I saw that there was no damage from spraying in my hamlet. I heard that sprayings devastated many other places.

316. Did you know if those people whose fields were damaged resented the sprayings?

That I don't know. I think they resented them but realized that there was nothing they could do about it because the country was at war.

317. Suppose your ricefields were sprayed, would you be angry?

Be angry with whom? Even if they were not sprayed, they could not be intact after such artillery and bombing.

318. Were the sprayings hindering VC activities in and around your village?

I don't think VC activities were affected. Only some villagers were intoxicated or killed by the spray.

319. Did the spray kill people also?

Yes, it did. I did not see anyone killed by the spray but so I heard.

320. Did you hear so from the villagers or from the VC?

From both the villagers and the VC. I have been talking about sprayings and napalm-bombing from aircraft where Government troops suspected (the VC's presence). But there was no such spraying and bombing in my hamlet.

321. What did the VC tell the villagers about the sprayings?

They told the villagers to fight the Government which was spreading poisonous chemicals over the ricefields and orchards.

322. What did the VC do to hide themselves when the trees had been defoliated?

That was up to them; I don't know.

323. Do you think that the sprayings did more harm to the villagers or to the VC?

Of course, it was more harmful to the VC. The ARVN troops were not there to be harmed...

324. Who were more harmed by the sprayings, the VC or the villagers?

The people were harmed more.

325. Why was that so?

The people could not move, while the VC would go somewhere else if their area was sprayed.

326. Did you talk freely with people in your family?

Why not? We talked freely.

327. And did you talk freely with other families in your hamlet?

Yes, I talked with them freely.

328. Were you afraid you might be reported...

No, I was not afraid because I talked about facts concerning ourselves. Who did what, I did not know and did not talk about.

329. Who were your close friends in your village? What did they do?

My friends were peasants, farmers in the village. They were also neighbors. We talked about our livelihood.

330. Did you talk freely with these people?

I did. I was not afraid.

331. If you had criticized the VC, would you have feared that they might have reported it to the VC?

No, I would not have feared anything. If the VC did anything wrong to us, we spoke out loud about it.

332. When you were in trouble, did someone or some other family come to help you?

That has never happened. We never were in trouble. That was not likely because we did not watch and help other families.

333. Who had the highest prestige among the population?

It was all complicated in the village. When the Strategic Hamlet had been established, "they" had to go into hiding, they did not have stable control; therefore, they did not do anything to support or help that satisfied the population, the entire population in the village.

334. Who do you mean by "they?"

"They" are those who had been in the village and were expelled from it with (the start of) the Strategic Hamlet.

335. Who was the person who had the highest prestige among the population in the village? The person who was believed and listened to by the villagers?

That happened only once or twice. A loudspeaker broadcast was listened to by the villagers when it called (mass) meetings, but it did not have any prestige.

336. In your village, who was the best informed person, the one who knew a lot about many things?

I think that kind of people already left the village; only a very small number of them were still there. They were not very much listened to (by the villagers). Those who had been leaders in the village and in the hamlets were no longer there.

337. I am asking about the person who in the village knew about things that were going on.

"They" were not in the village. They came in once in a while and gave talks and left.

338. Who were they?

District cadres of the Government.

339. Where did you get information about what was going on, when you were still in your village?

On this question, people like me, of my age, were "in the dark." Day in and day out, we were busy toiling in the fields. We did not go regularly to meetings because we would have to sit down for too long a time after a day's work.

340. At the mass meetings, what subjects did the VC talk about most frequently?

They gave news (of what happened) from the North down to here. But no matter what they said, we did not understand a word. I don't understand even what is going on around me here.

341. How did you get to know about what the VC were doing in your district?

I did not know about that.

342. Did you hear about it from other people?

I did not. They did what they wanted to do; I did not know about it.

343. Did you know about activites of the ARVN in your district?

During the time of the Strategic Hamlet, people from the Ben Cat district came to make propaganda from time to time. After the hamlet had been abandoned, they no longer came. Previously, every five or ten days they came to make propaganda.

344. What did you hear most recently about what was going on in Saigon?

People like me do not understand. I knew nothing about Saigon. I was working for my living. When the order came to evacuate, I just left and knew nothing.

345. How did you know about what was going on in Hanoi and North Vietnam?

The cadres from the village and district offices told the villagers about it.

346. Whose cadres? VC cadres?

Yes, VC cadres.

347. Did you hear how life was like in North Vietnam?

I didn't hear about that.

348. How many people in your village owned a radio?

Only two or three people in the village could spare three or four thousand piasters to buy a radio.

349. How many radio sets were there in your hamlet?

There was only one. People in my hamlet were poor; they could not afford it.

350. Were you allowed to come and listen to their radio?

If I wanted, I could come to listen. They did not say anything to disapprove.

351. Did you listen to Radio Saigon?

They tuned in Saigon and listened to "Cai Luong" (reformed drama).

352. Did the VC prohibit listening to Radio Saigon?

They did, but people still listened to it.

353. Did they listen to Radio Saigon openly? Did they turn their radio on loud?

They did, indeed.

354. Did people listen to Radio Hanoi as well?

Yes, they listened to Hanoi and Saigon. I was not familiar with this sort of things.

355. When Radio Saigon was tuned in, did people listen to the news or to Cai Luong?

Both to Cai Luong and the news.

356. And the VC did not object to listening to news from Saigon?

They objected all right, but when they were gone, people still tuned in Radio Saigon.

357. Was anyone given warnings or reprimands by the VC?

No, nobody was. They were not there all the time.

358. Weren't people afraid that someone might report it to the VC?

Everybody wanted to listen. Who would have the heart to report it to the VC?

359. Were newspapers available in your village?

Very few. None. Some occasionally had newspapers bought from the market place.

360. Were the newspapers bought at the village market or at the district market place?

Newspapers were not sold at the village market. Those who wanted a newspaper would ask the ice-cream or bread peddler to bring it back from the district market.

361. Who were the persons in the village who bought newspapers sometimes?

They were also farmers or mechanics who were better off than most people.

362. What kind of information did you want more of in your village?

I was concerned with making a living and did not care for news.

363. How reliable did you find the news you got from the VC?

Their news was basically reliable, but it was exaggerated.

364. What was exaggerated, for example?

They (the VC) talked about what happened all the way from the North to here but nothing happened as such. They talked about many big things which never have come about.

365. Now, on this ladder you see ten rungs. On rung number one lies the best life you can imagine for yourself in your village, and rung number ten represents the worst life. How about one year ago? Where would you say your life was on this scale one year ago?

(Long and incoherent responses not pertinent to the question.)

366. If you think one year ago your life was the worst you can imagine, you will say it lies on rung number ten. If you think your life then was the best you can imagine, you will say it lies on rung number one. If it was not so good and not so bad, you will say it lies in the middle on, say, rung number five. There are also other grades between one and five, between five and ten. Where will you say your life was on this scale a year ago?

I would say it was on number four. Or number five.

367. Five years from now, where would you say your life will be on this scale?

Five years from now? You mean to say the years of the past peaceful period?

368. Five years after, that is say in 1970, in the future, where your life will be on this scale?

I think it is better now and may arrive up to number two or number one.

369. You are 50 years old this year. When you are 55, would you say your life will be better or worse than now?

How can I tell about a time that is to come.

370. How would you expect your life will be when you are 55 years old

I expect that life will be better after I have come down here. Life may be easier from now on.

371. All right. Where do you think it will be on this scale five years after, when you are 55 years old? You said a year ago, your life was on rung number five. How much will it go up. Five years later?

It will go up to number six or number seven.

372. That is going down.

Going down? All right. Perhaps it will go up to number two or three.

373. How would you imagine the worst life for yourself in your village?

For a few years past, the worst life in the hamlet has been caused by the bombs and bullets. Now that we have come here, we have shelter and food and find life easier.

374. What makes life in the village the worst?

If one is poor and had to work hard, that means the worst life. Next, one worries every day about bombing and artillery fire, about death and destruction.

375. Now, what may make the best life for you in your village?

I never saw anything that made the best life in the village.

376. Suppose you lived the best life in your village, what would you have?

I cannot see anything that makes the best life in the village. One has to work in order to live. Life is always poor and hard in the village.

377. Suppose a spirit told you that you could wish for the best life a man could have in the village. What would you wish for?

I told you life cannot be good in the village.

378. What kind of life do you hope your children would have in the future?

My children are still too small, and I have not made up my mind.

379. When they are grown up, how do you hope they would live?

I hope they would have the means to support themselves. That is my only hope.

380. What occupation would you want them to take?

It depends on whether they are boys or girls.

381. What occupation would you want your own son to take?

I don't know. I haven't thought of that.

382. What do you think may make the best life for your son?

He must have an occupation that can support him.

383. What occupation do you think can support him through?

If we have the money, we should send him to school so that he may take an occupation that would not require him to be exposed to the sun and rain. It will depend on him. It is useless for us to hope or wish.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS.

The old man was lively and talked fairly fast. He was not very intelligent and at times could not respond pertinently to the question being asked. He seemed to be sincere although he gave the impression that he tried to avoid leaving the conversation to dwell on VC control or activities in his village.

No. AGR 31

QUESTIONNAIRE II
For Refugees

1. Name of interviewer [redacted]
2. Name of subject [redacted]
3. Time and date of interview :
   From 10:00 AM to 12:00 on Sept. [redacted] 1965
   From 2:30 PM to 4:30 PM on Sept. [redacted] 1965
   From _____ to _____ on _____ 196___
   Total time 5 hours
   Interview based on : tape ( ) hand written notes (✓)
4. Place of interview :
   Binh Duong Province
5. Sex of subject : Male (X) Female ( )
6. Age of subject : 50
7. Ethnic background : Vietnamese
8. Place of birth :
   hamlet [redacted]
   village [redacted]
   district Chau Thanh Thu Dau Mot
   province Binh Duong
9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :
   hamlet [redacted]
   village [redacted]
   district Ben Cat
   province Binh Duong
10. (a) Length of residence in last location : 15 years
    (b) Who controlled the place of residence:
    GVN ( ) VC ( ) Contested (X)
    (c) Since when controlled or contested ? Since April and May 1964

11. Number of brothers (2) and sisters (4)

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : 1

13. Marital status : Married

14. Number of children : 4

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age : one

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject( ) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject (X) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject(X) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion : Ancestral worship

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : Farmer

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation very poor Farmer
(b) Landowner ? _____ How much land _____

20. Education :
illiterate ( )
literate (X)
schooling completed : 3 years of elementary education

21. Any relatives in VC : no

22. Any relatives in GVN : brother-in-law in ARVN

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by :
(a) French no
(b) GVN no
(c) VC no

24. When became a refugee : September [redacted] 1965

25. Where took refuge first [redacted]

26. Present residence [redacted] City

AGR

INTERVIEW

32

MASTER COPY

THE RAND CORPORATION [redacted]

STUDIES OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR. 32

Date of interview : September [redacted] 1965

Subject's Category : Refugee

Area : Ben-Cat district, Binh-Duong province

COMMENTS : Subject describes the more intensive bombing his village area has recently undergone. He identifies the bombers as B-52s -- on one occasion, at least, incorrectly (Q.38). He discusses VC casualties (Q.12,16), civilian casualties and reactions (Q.14,17-18,23,27-8,54), the effect of GVN psywar (Q.68), the conditions among refugees (Q.64), and his own changed views on the war's outcome (Q.44).

1. How many times was [redacted] village bombed before you took refuge here? When was it bombed for the first time?

   It was bombed twice: the first time last week, and the second, two days before I came here.

2. Have you seen more aircraft during the past six months than before?

   Yes, in the past there were only ordinary fighter-bombers. Now there are three kinds of bombers : the same ones used by the French people in the past, helicopters, and jet aircraft. Also there are the recon-dragon-flies.

3. What about the aircraft that bombed in your area last week?

   Jet aircraft that people called the B-52. (Note: Subject's response to Q.38 makes this identification doubtful.)

4. What about the aircraft that bombed your village the first time last week?

   The same B-52s.

5. Did you notice any difference between these aircraft and the ones you have seen in the past?

   These aircraft bombed more ferociously. Each one dropped a series of 10 bombs which blew up continuously. Those who took cover in deep trenches were also killed.

6. Were the explosions much more heavy than those you have experienced in the past?

   The earth still quaked 10 km from the place bombed. Their explosions were five or ten times heavier than those of the bombs dropped by other aircraft.

7. When -- between what hours -- was [redacted] bombed each time?

   Once at 5 P.M, another time at 10 or 11 P.M. One time, [redacted] village which was 9 or 10 km from [redacted] was bombed in the morning, at about 8 or 9 AM.

8. How long ago did that bombing -- in the morning -- took place? Was it the first bombing which took place in Ben-Cat area?

   It took place about one month ago. Before that, there were also a few others.

9. If you compare the two bombings in [redacted] and the one in [redacted] -- in the morning -- which one, in your opinion, was the most ferocious?

The bombing in [redacted] was more ferocious. Those in [redacted] were only a third as fierce, but [redacted] was bombed only once while [redacted] was bombed incessantly.

10. What do you mean by " incessantly "?

More than two months ago, a jet -- bigger than the B-52 -- which flew more slowly came to bomb [redacted]

11. Which bombing had caused the greatest damage?

The one which took place more than one week ago caused many houses to cave in and some people were killed. I didn't hear anything about damage or casualties from the last bombing.

12. What have you heard about VC casualties?

They certainly suffered casualties; how could they avoid it? But I didn't hear anything about it because they never disclosed such a secret. Only their close relatives whispered among themselves. The civilians are nowadays in a very difficult situation -- on both sides nobody trusts them.

13. Did the GVN conduct ground operations to your area?

Nothing as yet. But once I was here, people told me that the GVN was conducting a ground operation in my area. There were paratroopers and troops who had been carried by helicopters. Also there were other troops who came from Ben-Cat. According to my countrymen, these operations lasted until now.

14. Did the aircraft drop bombs in the woods or in the village, or in both?

They dropped bombs in the woods, but a few stray bombs fell onto the village. Helicopters also strafed the woods most.

15. What was the effect of bombs on vegetation?

In the places bombed, three-fifths of the trees were destroyed. Those trees that were hurt but not broken could still be alive.

16. What VC units were located in those woods before the strike?

I don't know anything about this, because they concealed it from the population. People knew that they had certainly suffered casualties, but nobody dared say anything or sift the question to the bottom for fear of being killed. In the past, those hamlet chiefs who didn't bow to their decision by resigning were also killed.

17. What damage was done to civilian personnel and installations?

One or two villagers were killed, and one night fifteen days ago, the aircraft strafed by mistake a group of private junks on the river near [redacted] killing one or two civilians.

18. What were the reactions of the civilians to the strike?

The very old people sacrificed themselves by staying behind and let women and children leave the village. In general, only one-tenth of people stayed behind to watch over their lands and ricefields. In the past they hesitated and didn't want to leave their villages because they feared that they would starve. Now that they hear the GVN is feeding them, they come in a body.

19. Since your village has been bombed, did the VC come to carry on propaganda?

When the area was still safe, they forbade anybody to leave it. Now everyone can go anywhere they want. This, because they cannot protect the villagers against the strikes.

20. Would you please describe the VC installations in your village since they have occupied it?

I didn't see them set up any installations. They only destroyed roads, piled up earth into mounds, etc., to prevent GVN vehicles from getting in. In daytime there were only a few guerrillas, and the Front troops only moved at night, but I don't know how many they were.

21. Did they dig tunnels?

They dug tunnels in 1952. From 1953 to 1954 the village was under GVN control and the latter demolished them all. More recently I didn't hear that they dug tunnels anymore.

22. Do you know the dimensions of craters caused by those recent bombings?

They were 4 or 5m deep and/or wide. Perhaps they were wider because I only estimate and am not sure of those figures. Those craters were very deep and could easily contain a small house.

23. What comments were made about those bombings by the population?

They said many things and they all dread those bombings. For instance, under the nine-year-resistance when the government called to the villagers, they rarely left

their villages and only dug trenches to take cover in. Nowadays, even if the trenches are 5m deep, people are killed. If the trenches were 10m deep, people still wouldn't be sure that they would come away unscathed, because of the air pressure or because the trenches might cave in, etc. Furthermore, it's very expensive to dig trenches 10m deep and people cannot take cover in time.

24. What was the effect of terrain and vegetation on the weapons?

The VC used to build houses in the thick woods, but if the bombs dropped right on them they would be damaged too. The highest trees in that area were about 10m high, but the bombs released on that place were also able to dig the ground about 5m deep, root the trees up, and throw them about 10m away. The small trees were all killed. The big trees were able to survive, but the rubber trees were not tough at all -- they were immediately killed when the bombs hit them.

25. What was the effect of bombs on vegetation and terrain?

Seven-tenths of the trees survived -- for example, low bushes -- because aircraft only bombed places of thick vegetation.

26. Were there indications of prior knowledge of the strike? Did the VC evacuate the area prior to the bombing?

It's very difficult to know it, but in my opinion, certainly there wasn't prior knowledge of the strike because under the Nine-Year-Resistance, French aircraft used to bomb my area at 3 PM. They only bombed it in the morning when they had received special information. Nowadays, airplanes catch everybody unawares. Sometimes we heard their sound but they didn't bomb at all. When they bombed, they could do it at any time -- morning, afternoon, or evening. Furthermore, if the VC evacuated the area prior to the bombing they would certainly give thanks to their relatives who had informed them in advance and thereby spared them from death. But I didn't hear anybody whisper such a thing.

27. Do you know what evasive or protective techniques were employed by the VC during the strike?

I didn't hear that they had any evasive or protective techniques. To my knowledge and according to what I have heard through the villagers, nowadays nobody can avoid or protect himself from such a bombing. People did nothing but prayed and wished that the bombs would not drop right on them. In regard to those bombs released by the B-52, people

didn't feel like taking cover in trenches because it was useless to do it. They only lay down on the ground and prayed. But, if a bomb exploded 20m from them, people felt that they had a weight on their chests and ... died because of the air pressure. Nowadays if you ask the peasants in my area how many kilos those bombs weigh they certainly won't be able to tell you the exact weight, but if you let them have a look at the craters, they can immediately tell you which ones were caused by the B-52 bombs and which ones by the ordinary fighter-bombers' or by the rockets of helicopters. We can say that now they possess the matter very precisely. In the past, they used to dig trenches to protect themselves against artillery shells and rockets; now they " give up " to the B-52 bombs.

28. What were the psychological effects of the strike on civilians?

I was told that some of the people were griping about damage they had suffered. They said that as the VC were in the woods the GVN should bomb the latter instead of the villages to kill the villagers. More exactly, I think that since the GVN forces have withdrawn from Strategic Hamlets the area became unsafe, and the GVN strafed and bombed it carelessly, causing the civilians damage and casualties. That was the reason why the latter were complaining about it. In my opinion, we had to endure those difficulties because we lived in an insecure area.

29. Have any VC rallied due to the strike?

In my opinion, one after another they regularly rallied to the GVN. A certain number of people who were, so far, neutral also came to [redacted] to enlist in the GVN army engineer unit.

30. Have you seen or heard about GVN spraying of trees and bushes to kill the leaves, to prevent the Front people from hiding in them?

My area was not sprayed, but I have heard that on both sides of the national road connecting Chon Thanh to Hon Quan, all trees were killed by such a spraying.

31. Did the GVN destroy crops in your area?

There was no crop destruction either, because my area is only 9 or 10 km from here, and the GVN is able to launch a raid at any time. So far there has not been any big battle, but only sniping attacks which caused the GVN a little bit of damage. From time to time, the GVN sent helicopters to catch the VC by surprise, but many a time

they arrested the villagers by mistake, brought them to the Sector, and set them free later. Only once did they arrest a man who had a Russian rifle.

32. How far from your house did the second bombing take place?

About 2km from my house and from the place I lay down.

33. From the place you lay down, did you think the explosions made a great noise?

The earth quaked and I had a weight on my chest.

34. Did you see any shrapnel of the B-52 bombs?

Not yet, because I only pay attention to earning my living. I have seen the fragments of the artillery shells. More recently, fifteen days ago, some villagers who came from An Dien carried with a pole and two containers many round pieces of aluminum that they said were bombs dropped by the B-52s.

35. How big were those pieces of aluminum?

They were as big as the two arms could hold, with rivets intact. The villagers sold them to Chinese junkmen. They said that those pieces of aluminum were napalm bombs dropped by the B-52 (?). Their thickness was about an inch; the diameter, as big as the two arms could hold; the height, about 10 cms.

36. How do you know that the aircraft which bombed your village were B-52s?

I knew that they were B-52s after I had been in my village. First, we saw just one, then two, three, and four of them. As they flew fast and they were very large, the villagers asked each other for the designation of those aircraft, and so found out that they were B-52s.

37. Did the villagers learn that they were B-52 through the VC, or newspapers, or Radio Saigon?

Through newspapers.

38. Did you yourself see those aircraft?

I myself saw four of them that made wide circles and flew very fast. They also nose-dived and almost touched the peak of the trees like the B-29s under the Resistance.(Sic:) My countrymen told me that the B-52 could release bombs from a high altitude. (See comment after Q.3)

39. How did people welcome the VC when they came back in 1964 to seize the village?

They thought differently! the villagers whose sons or relatives were regroupees were very pleased; others whose sons or relatives had been killed by the VC hated them but didn't dare express their thoughts out loud. After all, certain hamlet chiefs who only earned 400 or 500 VN$ per month were also killed by the VC. Therefore, between people in the village there was also a secret and permanent struggle.

40. Were those who backed the VC more or less numerous than those who inwardly resisted them?

I am sure that nobody likes to back the VC, but people were only compelled by the VC to do this and that and of course, they had to bow to their decision. I am sure of it, because people were toiling hard to earn a living. On the one hand, they had to spare themselves from bombs and shells. On the other hand, they had to pay taxes and contributions. Certainly, they didn't have time to think of supporting the VC.

41. What do you know about taxes and contributions that people had to pay to the VC?

For instance, as the VC decided that each person had a right to 15 " gia " of paddy per year, if I harvested 50 "gia" and my family had five members, I was able to protest against contributions. Those who had more than enough had to contribute. It was very difficult for everyone to refuse, however, because they always called upon our understanding and encouraged us to contribute.

42. What was your view about the outcome of the war one year ago?

At that time, they came to the village noisily in a body, beating empty kerosene-cans -- instead of drums -- to boost up their morale. That's why, I confess, I thought that they would win.

43. What was your view about the outcome of the war six months ago?

Six months ago, I doubted whether it would be so that is, they would win because at that time, helicopters and jets had already started to bomb, and tanks, artillery, etc., to shoot at the village.

(At this moment, we suddenly heard four series of roars. The subject immediately said to the interviewer, " The B-52s are bombing again. Do you hear it?")

44. What was your view about the outcome of the war a week ago?

As a matter of fact, prior to the past six months I actually thought that the VC would win. For the last six months, though, I have thougnt in an entirely different way because I've read newspapers and also saw for myself that nowadays the GVN forces are no longer fighting all alone, but are helped by many friendly countries -- the USA, Australia, New Zealand, etc. Also, I have noticed that the Americans became more numerous day by day and their assistance policy wasn't dim anymore. Day by day there were more and more jet aircraft. North Vietnam is bombed every day. Cam Ranh harbor was set up. I noticed that the GVN became stronger day by day. Not just me, but every illiterate peasant now knows that the VC won't be able to win. In the past, there were fewer GVN ground operations and helicopters that carried troops. Now jet-aircraft bomb almost every day; the B-52s come from an island -- I can't recall its name -- to bomb; the general situation has completely changed.

45. What do you know about the American participation?

I rarely see them. In the past, some countrymen told me that in an ARVN platoon there were two or three Americans. More recently, I noticed that aircraft strafed and bombed more often, but I didn't see too many Americans.

46. You told me that the Front troops only moved through your village at night. How often did they move? How many persons moved together? How many people were they in all?

They moved through my village every ten or fifteen days, or every month. This was unforeseeable. They were about hundred persons in all, and they moved in single file. I didn't dare count them because I feared that they would suspect me of being a GVN spy; in such a case they would bring me somewhere else to investigate for two or three months, and I would certainly be "exhausted".

47. For more than a year the VC occupied your village; how much work did they compel the villagers to do for them, like digging trenches or tunnels? How many people were compelled to work at the same time? When, between what hours?

Sometimes for two or three months on end, we didn't have to do anything, then all of a sudden they compelled every able-bodied-man to work for them except those who were busy tilling their lands. Usually, we had to dig up the roads from dusk to midnight. We didn't dig tunnels.

48. Why do you think the VC continue the war while the GVN has such powerful things as the B-52?

In my opinion, people all want peace. On either side they are demoralized and don't want to fight any longer. On the VC side, people do nothing but reluctantly bow to the decision of the higher ranking cadres. For instance, the villagers never dare take off the leaflets or banners posted by the VC on the front side of their houses while they were always fearful, wondering whether the GVN would shoot its artillery or conduct ground operations or not.

49. In your opinion, what effects did the B-52 bombings have on people's morale? on the VC morale?

As the VC all fled after the very first trouble, I don't know what their thoughts were, but in regard to the villagers, they become very uncertain.

50. Since the first bombing of the B-52, have the Front troops come back to the village?

I didn't see them go through my village anymore. Perhaps they did, and I was not in position to know it. They moved at a very late hour, because they feared most those who disliked them. They might be denounced and held at bay by the GVN forces.

51. Since the first bombing of the B-52, what did the guerrillas tell the villagers?

I didn't hear them say anything. When they fired one or two shots at the aircraft, and the people complained, even then they didn't say anything.

52. At the height of the rainy season, did the VC carry out more activities? Did they come to the village?

Usually, they only moved at night. They rarely moved when it rained, except in case of emergency.

53. Do you know or have you heard of any changes in the VC activities in the past three months.

I only noticed that the more active the GVN aircraft were, the less active were the VC. I didn't see any other changes.

54. Whom did the villagers blame most for the attacks?

The villagers reacted differently. At the end of 1964, the GVN called on the people of my village to move to the National Road #-13 connecting [redacted] to Ben Cat, insisting that the Government would not be responsible for

anything that might happen to those who stayed behind. Therefore, when the village was bombed, some people only complained about the VC who shot at aircraft and provoked that strike. Others, as I told you, were griping about the GVN bombing the village instead of the woods where the VC were.

55. How long do you think the war will go on?

It's very difficult to foretell such a thing. During 1948, 1949, 1950, the French aircraft and warships also bombarded fiercely. They fired at everybody. Now, the peasants who are tilling their lands aren't shot at. Under the Resistance in my area, the freedom fighters all withdrew; from time to time, a lone man passed by with a knapsack on his back. Nevertheless, they were able to keep a see-saw situation until 1954 when the French people had to give up, and the country recovered Peace. Therefore, it's very difficult to foretell how long this war will go on.

56. Didn't the VC forbid the villagers to read the GVN newspapers?

Usually, we read newspapers secretly. They didn't forbid us to do it, but they didn't like it because they feared that we would learn their defeats.

57. Were there any villagers who had radio sets?

The VC certainly had many radio sets. Among the villagers, we could find at most two.

58. Usually, which station did people in your village listen to?

We picked up Radio Saigon only secretly. Radio Hanoi is too far, and we couldn't hear it distinctly.

59. Did those who had radio sets pass the news along?

They didn't dare, because no one trusted each other. They feared that those who were GVN sympathizers would denounce them. Nowadays, people are wavering, they don't know who they have to side with. This causes them many hardships and difficulties.

60. How did you know about the air attacks on North Vietnam?

When I was still in my village, I read newspapers and learned that North Vietnam was bombed.

61. What did the guerrilla cadres tell you about the air attacks on North Vietnam?

They were very discreet and didn't say anything about those attacks. Even when an important event took place, they behaved as if nothing had happened. They never made any comments with the civilians. When they were asked: "Is it true that the North was bombed?" They casually answered: "Yes". And when people insisted, "Did the North suffer much damage?" They briefly replied, "A little bit".

62. How did people (the villagers) react when they learned that the North had been bombed?

Those who read newspapers only said that the North had been bombed. They didn't dare add anything else.

63. What do you think of those attacks on North Vietnam?

I don't know even the borders of North Vietnam. I only know that -- through what I read in newspapers -- the GVN sent a hundred aircraft to the North to drop ... I don't know how many pounds of bombs on Con-Co, Thanh-Hoa, etc. As I have never been in the North, I don't have any idea about those attacks.

64. What do you know about other refugees who are scattered around in Binh Duong province?

In the Ho-Khanh pagoda, the refugees are very crowded. They defecate and urinate at random. It's really too dirty. Furthermore, as the pagoda is open, it's very windy. In Lai-Thieu, the refugee center is 400 or 500 m from the national road, and despite the fact that the path leading to the center is very muddy, people are satisfied because they have a large house. At Go-Dau, the refugees live under very low canvas, and those who have children complain about the heat. Furthermore, that encampment is far from villages, and it's pretty hard for them to buy things like rice or firewood. Therefore, they left that place and are scattered around to take refuge temporarily in relatives' or acquaintances' houses, like my family and I.

65. Did all the people of other villages come here too?

No, those who lived in [redacted] have to take refuge in [redacted] center. Only those who lived in [redacted] came here.

66. What did people who took refuge here say about the B-52 bombings?

They only said that they didn't dare stay in the village any longer for fear of death. There were actually one or two inhabitants of my village who were killed. I don't know how many people in [redacted] were killed by those bombings.

67. What about VC casualties after the B-52 bombings?

It was impossible to know, because nobody dared say anything. For instance, did any villager tell you anything about the casualties the VC suffered in Dong Xoai battle? The VC concealed those secrets from everybody and it's impossible to know about them.

68. Why hadn't you taken refuge here earlier? Why now?

In the past I didn't dare come here because I feared that I would starve. Now that the GVN calls to us by loudspeakers and those who already took refuge here told me about the GVN policy, I came.

69. Among the two strikee on your village -- one late afternoon and one in the evening -- which one was the most fierce?

Both were the same. They lasted for hours.

70. Which one did you fear most?

I feared both, because the aircraft bombed too fiercely. They dropped series of bombs. Four aircraft bombed at the same time, and I couldn't do anything but lie down there and wait for death.

71. To sum up, during those two bombings didn't anybody take cover in trenches?

Some people who were at that time beside trenches took cover in them. But many others thought that even if they took cover in trenches, the air pressure would cave the trenches in and they would be asphyxiated, or when the B-52 bombs dropped right on those trenches they wouldn't be able to go away unscathed, because those bombs dug the ground 5m deep.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

Although the interviewee couldn't give precise information about the VC casualties, most of his answers were fairly interesting.

He was very talkative and obviously tried to show that he was cooperative.

He is 35 years old, and could be at least a VC civilian worker. The interviewer thinks that he has changed his mind because of the recent and heavy bombings of the B-52.

MASTER COPY

No. AGR 32

QUESTIONNAIRE II
For Refugees

1. Name of interviewe [redacted]
2. Name of subject [redacted]
3. Time and date of interview :
   From 10:15 am to 12:00 am on Sept [redacted] 1965
   From 2:30 pm to 4:40 pm on - 1965
   From _____ to _____ on _____ 196___
   Total time 3 hours 55 min.
   Interview based on : tape ( ) hand written notes (X)
4. Place of interview :
   Province office - [redacted] (Binh Duong)
5. Sex of subject : Male (X) Female ( )
6. Age of subject : 35 (b.1930)
7. Ethnic background : vietnamese
8. Place of birth :
   hamlet _____
   village [redacted]
   district Ben-Cat
   province Binh-Duong
9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee : 1949-1954 - SAIGON (Mechanic)
   hamlet _____
   village [redacted]
   district Ben-Cat
   province Binh-Duong
10. (a) Length of residence in last location : since 1954
    (b) Who controlled the place of residence:
    GVN ( ) VC (X) Contested 1961-1963
    1 year 1963-1964
    (c) Since when controlled or contested ? since June or July 1964.

(1 deceased)

11. Number of brothers (2) and sisters (10) (3 deceased)

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : one (52 years old)

13. Marital status : married

14. Number of children : four

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age : none

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject( ) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject (X) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject(4) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion : Ancestor worship

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : Farmer tilling his mother's ricefields " 70 sào " 7/10 ha)

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation " I don't know. But I'm sure that I was in the poor class."
(b) Landowner ? _____ _____ How much land _____

20. Education :
illiterate ( )
literate (X) Can read and write vietnamese
schooling completed : _____

21. Any relatives in VC : None

22. Any relatives in GVN : A brother-in-law served in ARVN

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by :
(a) French
(b) GVN None
(c) VC None
VM Two uncles

24. When became a refugee : Sept [redacted] 1965 (Saturday)

25. Where took refuge first _____

26. Present residence _____

AGR

INTERVIEW

33

THE RAND CORPORATION [redacted]

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STUDIES OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT
OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR-33

Date of Interview : September [redacted] 1965

Subject's Category : Refugee : September [redacted] 1965

Area : [redacted] Village
Ben-Cat District
Binh-Duong Province

COMMENTS : Subject was informative concerning the effects of air bombing (Q.1-4,8,20,21,23), the attitude of the population (Q.9,15), and the circumstances of leaving the village (Q.13,37).

1. How many times was your village bombed before you took refuge here?

Three times. The last strike took place at night, about midnight or 1 AM, the first two strikes, at about 3 or 4 PM. To tell you the truth, when I was still in my village I bore many hardships because I have a son who works for the GVN police in Bien-Hoa, and the VC had an old grudge against me. If I wasn't so old they would certainly have killed me long ago. I had a tile house built at the bank of the river and an orchard. I lived from hand to mouth by selling fruit from that orchard. I took refuge here because, during the last air strike, I saw that the strafing aircraft sank many boats and killed many people. Also, though the bombing took place at 30 km from my house and though my wife and I took cover in the trenches, I felt a pain in my chest because of the air pressure. When we came here we asked to be placed in the hospital. My eldest son, who is 43 years old by now and who lived with me, came here also. Fortunately, he was hired by [redacted] It was helpful for his wife and children.

2. Why didn't you take refuge after the first bombing?

Because with my orchard I could earn a living by selling fruit, but if I came here what could I do? There was only a little damage after the two first bombings, but the last one completely destroyed my belongings. So I had to take refuge here. Furthermore, I heard the GVN broadcast from aircraft loudspeakers only fifteen days ago telling the people to evacuate the area. Only then did I dare come here.

3. What casualties from the strike did the VC and the civilians suffer?

There were dozens of people killed -- among them, many women and children. Those families who took cover in trenches hit by bombs were killed to the last person. At the last air strike, eight people were killed on the river. In regard to the Communists, I am in no position to know, because they jealously hid that kind of secret.

4. Did you notice any difference between those air strikes and the ones you have seen in the past?

Nowadays, aircraft bomb too ferociously. Under the French regime there were also ferocious air strikes but the government didn't call on the people to evacuate. Now, people dare to come here because the Government has called to them.

5. When was [redacted] Village occupied by the VC?

Last year, as the GVN troops withdrew, the Communists came to the village. They established camp in the woods or mingled with the villagers to obtain food. As I was living near the bank of the river they didn't dare come to my place. They mostly lived farther because the three villages [redacted] and [redacted] are very large.

6. Were there many of them every time they came to the village?

Every time they came to my place at the bank of the river they were only seven or eight persons, but when they moved on the national road 14 -- which was later cut off and covered with obstacles -- they were 500 or 700 to move noisily in a body. Now and then, when they organized ceremonies or banquets only the youths in the village attended these reunions; they never paid attention to me because I was old and because I had a son working for the GVN. In the past, when I was still in a better shape, sometimes they forced me to make them five or seven special baskets in bamboo used to carry away the earth that was dug up.

7. During these air strikes, did the aircraft bomb your area from a hign altitude or did they nose-dive?

I don't know, because once I heard their sound I only worried about taking cover in trenches.

8. Did you notice any difference between the damage caused by those recent bombings and the ones you have seen in the past?

The air strike today is much more ferocious than that under the French regime. For instance, behind my house there were many craters that were 8 or 9m deep and 20m wide. In this rainy season they were filled up and there were a lot of frogs and fishes. Now, the artillery and aircraft bombarded all the time. We couldn't run anywhere else but were supposed to lie down at the same place to run the risk of being hit by bombs. A whole family could be killed that way.

9. Whom did the population blame most?

My countrymen were complaining about these air attacks very much, but they didn't dare express loudly their thoughts. You can easily imagine it : why did they (the VC) fire one or two shots at the aircraft and run away afterwards to have people " enjoy " the consequences of their act? The villagers didn't dare say anything because they feared that the VC would arrest them, but they didn't dare leave the village either, because they didn't know how they could

earn a living. Now that they have heard that the GVN is ready to feed them they come in a body.

10. Do you know what kind of aircraft have bombed your village the last three times?

As they flew in the air I only knew they belonged to the GVN. That was all.

11. How often did the Front troops move on National Road 14? When did they move -- between what hours?

They moved in day time, every ten or fifteen days.

12. Where did they establish camp?

I don't know. I only saw that they passed by, and I guessed that they camped in An Nhon Tay or Rach Bap (Corn Canal). That's all.

13. Do you know or have you heard about their unit's designation number?

I don't know. They always concealed it from people. Even when there were some members of their unit who died, and they made offerings, etc. I didn't know anything about it. Which proves how much they hated me. Sincerely, I have to thank the GVN. If the GVN hadn't called on people, they wouldn't have rushed here, and my wife and I wouldn't have been able to follow them, because the VC forbade everybody to leave. But when people moved noisily in a body, how could the VC prevent them from leaving. There was no reason for them to kill everybody.

14. Did the VC force people to work for them, for instance, to cut roads or to dig trenches?

Yes, they forced the young men to dig trenches, foxholes, etc., for them.

15. At night or in day time?

At night. In these circumstances, if they tangled with the GVN they all ran away, and if the civilians were unable to escape they died unjustly. That was what people were griping about.

16. What were your views about the outcome of the war one year ago, when the VC just came to your village?

I have noticed that three months ago they didn't come to carry out their activities as they did in the past. For

example, they used to send the civilians to investigate before they crossed National Roads 7, 13, and 14. This because -- as you can imagine it -- they were closed in upon by the GVN forces on three sides : Ben-Co, Ben-Cat, and they couldn't get out of the area. At night, the GVN aircraft dropped flares. Once they heard the sound of aircraft, the civilians ran, bound for the trenches, while the VC jumped in too. If they didn't jump into trenches in time, they were killed by bombs. The most bombs were dropped in An Nhon Tay along National Road 7 leading to Ben-Co and Tay Ninh. In regard to the last air strike, as An Tay village is only separated from An Nhon Tay by a river, it was also bombed a lot. For the last months, I guess that the VC hid in Long-Nguyen and in the area north of Ben Cat because that area is covered with thick woods; they rarely came to my place and were not active any more.

17. Did the VC evacuate the area prior to the strike? Were there indications of prior knowledge of the strike?

I knew that the village guerrillas didn't withdraw before the strike. As the Front troops camped in the woods I didn't know whether or not they had evacuated the area, but I guess that they couldn't do it.

18. What was the effect of terrain and vegetation on the weapons?

The small trees were all destroyed, the tall ones as the rubber plants were cut into two or three stumps. In general, even if the area was covered with small or big trees it was dug 7 or 8m deep, and the trees were all rooted up.

19. What was the effect of weapons on vegetation and terrain?

Everything was damaged. The villagers didn't dare drop in on each other -- especially when they lived in different hamlets, because they feared that they wouldn't be able to take cover if they were surprised by an air attack. So they would rather stay home than move about.

20. I have been told that because the big bombs now being used dig very deep craters, many people didn't bother to take cover in trenches but simply lie down on the ground and run the risk of being bombed. Is this true?

No, they ought to take cover in trenches because it was very dreadful as it rained continuously rockets and artillery shells. There was at my place a woman who had two children. During the second air strike, she took cover in trenches while her two children hid in the bamboo because they didn't

have time to join their mother. A bomb was dropped away from her trench, but a heap of earth dug up by the bomb was thrown right on her trench and covered it up. Only three days later, a nasty smell caused people discover it. In my area, those who were not killed got sick because of the air pressure. Now, all children are sick.

21. What evasive or protective techniques were employed by the VC during the strike?

I don't know how they avoided bombs but the villagers only took cover in trenches. For example, at the second air strike in An Tay, there were eight people -- two guerrillas and six villagers -- who were eating Chinese soup in a small shop when they heard the sound of aircraft. They got out and saw four airplanes flying by. They told each other that certainly they only flew by. They didn't dream that at that moment the four aircraft had released a lot of bombs that beheaded six of them and smashed the two others into small pieces. As for me, at the first air strike, I was sitting with my wife in a trench when a bomb 40 m from my house blew up. I fell down with a pain in my chest which I still have.

22. What were the psychological effects of the strike on the VC? on the civilians?

Certainly the strike affected everybody. You can imagine it. The villagers all left the area; how could the VC dare come? If they came, they would be destroyed by the bombings. About the civilians, everybody was sad and worried; they all hoped that there soon would be peace, so they could come back to their villages to earn a living. I don't know how the VC behaved towards those who didn't have relatives working for the GVN, but they hid everything from me because they hated me too much. My 47-year son who lived with me was also compelled to work for them -- for example, to cut roads, to install spike pits, etc. It was so hard for him that he left home and went to [redacted] village with his wife and children. When he learned that I came here, he immediately followed me. Fortunately, he was hired by [redacted] more than ten days ago. (paused) When we were still in our village, my son was only compelled to dig spike pits and to cut roads. The VC never told him to dig tunnels. As for my other son, who is a policeman, he was sent on a mission in [redacted] about 45 days ago and was shot in the thigh by the VC. Fortunately, the bone wasn't broken.

23. What damage was done to the tunnels dug by the VC?

I don't know, because if they dug tunnels, they certainly did it in the woods. But in my opinion, how could these tunnels not cave in? A lot of them (VC) were certainly killed: a hundred, fifty, seventy .... I don't know.

24. Besides the air strikes, did the GVN conduct any ground operations in your area?

The GVN only bombarded my area with its aircraft and artillery, and this very often. The GVN forces never tangled with the Front troops in my area, except with a few guerrillas who fired at random before running away, and it was difficult for the GVN to capture them. I don't know where the big battles took place.

25. How did people welcome the VC when they came more than one year ago to seize the village?

The VC didn't camp in the village. They only passed by and stayed in my village for a few hours. They stayed in other villagers' houses, but never in mine. Moreover, they threatened me that if they could arrest my son who was a policeman they would put out his eyes.

26. What have you heard about the American troops?

Last year, before the GVN forces withdrew from the Strategic Hamlets, I had seen one or two Americans who followed the GVN troops.

27. Why did the GVN forces withdrew from the Strategic Hamlets?

I didn't know why. I only knew that the VC shot their mortars at the Strategic Hamlets, and after that the GVN forces all withdrew from [redacted]

28. How many GVN soldiers were in your village when there was still a Strategic Hamlet?

About 60 or 70.

29. What kind of unit did they belong to?

I didn't know whether they were SDC, Civil Guards, or ARVN.

30. Did you see the aircraft that bombed your area recently?

I didn't dare look at them. Once I heard their sound I immediately took cover in trenches.

31. Were the explosions much more heavy than those you have experienced in the past?

The explosions were very heavy, and I became deaf for two or three days.

32. Did the GVN conduct defoliation or crop destruction in your area?

I didn't see such operations. I only saw that along the banks of the river, the trees died day by day because of the strafing.

33. Why do you think the VC continue to fight while the GVN has such powerful things as aircraft and so on?

I don't know why, but according to what they said, they fought the Americans because the latter came here to bully them.

34. It's obvious that you were unable to see the VC casualties, but according to what you have heard, do you know how many casualties the VC did suffer after the last bombings?

Of course, how could they save themselves from death? But because they carried off their dead from the area after every air strike, it's quite impossible to know how many casualties they suffered.

35. After those air strikes, did the village guerrillas go on living in the village?

Yes, only a few of them. They didn't dare come to my place, at the bank of the river, because after each air strike or artillery bombardment, six or seven GVN boats came from Binh Duong to fire at my village, and nobody could lift up his head.

36. Do you know how many people were killed by boat-artillery? By air strafing? By ground artillery? By bombings?

I don't know how many they were. I only knew that there were many wounded and killed, and many people whose legs or arms were broken.

37. How big was your village (how many hamlets, how many people)?

There were 2,200 families, but since the bombings there have been at most 2,000 left. Each family had about five persons.

38. Did the Front carry out any terroristic acts in your village or kill any of the people? Did the villagers think the killing was justified or not?

Three years ago, there was a Village council in Ben-Cat. But the VC killed those village representatives one after another and finally, there was nobody left and no more Village Council. Those Village Representatives were actually pitiful.

39. Was your Strategic Hamlet destroyed by the Front? When?

The VC destroyed it immediately after the GVN forces' withdrawal, in June or July 1964.

40. If your hamlet was under Front control, was it a Combat Hamlet?

No, they only set up obstacles in the way or cut the roads.

41. How many young men 16 or more years old were in your village?

The VC brought about 50 or 70 away, the rest escaped from the VC and came here.

42. How many youths escaped from the VC and came here?

If they were right with the GVN authorities they came here. Otherwise, they get themselves up as civilians to be right with the GVN authorities before coming here to earn a living. I didn't know how many there were, but I knew that all families who didn't have any relationship with the VC all left without any regret.

43. How did the Front recruit people in your village for military duty?

I didn't see how they did it, but I have been told that some parents cried and shouted out that their children who were still too young were seduced, etc.

44. Did the Front persuade most of them through propaganda or did it order people to serve in the military forces?

The VC persuaded them through this kind of propaganda: " If you work in the Front, your parents and ancestors will be glorified, etc." As for me, I truly couldn't bear those insolent guerrillas.

45. Did the Front hold meetings with the villagers in your village? How often?

Yes, once every two or three months.

46. What did they say each time? What was the occasion?

If they said something, they always hid it from me. I didn't know anything about their meetings.

47. Did the Front people say anything about the bombing of North Vietnam?

I didn't hear anything about this. If they said something, they did it among themselves.

48. Did your contributions to the Front increase during the past years? By how much?

I didn't contribute anything, but I've been told that those who had ricefields or who had been given them had to contribute more or less according to their harvests. As for me, I didn't receive anything from the VC -- not even a bit of earth.

49. When did the VC make their land distribution in your village?

In 1948.

50. Whose land was distributed?

The communal property -- the government's land -- or the land belonging to some rich landowners living in Saigon who didn't dare go back to the village. The VC distributed those lands to the poor people and made them contribute to the Front.

51. When did the Front become active in your village?

In 1955, they started to carry out their activities in my village.

52. What form did this activity take?

I don't know where they became active but they only sent to my village a few guys whose faces didn't please me at all and whose duty was to look over the village. My policeman-son left the village when he was seventeen years old; now he is 32, and during this period of time I had many difficulties until now I'm sick. For example, last year there were only two guerrillas who came to my village. All the day long they did nothing but watch for boats or aircraft and then fired one or two shots before running away -- in that way making the villagers endure bombs and shells and death.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

The subject was cooperative and sincere. He was honest in his answers, except when he said at the beginning of the interview that he didn't know anything about the VC casualties. Later (Q.23), he blundered by stating that 100 (or 50 or 70) VC had been killed by the recent bombings in his area.

MASTER COPY

No. AGR 33

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

1. Name of interviewer [redacted]

2. Name of subject [redacted]

3. Time and date of interview :

From 9:55 AM to 11:50 AM on Sept [redacted] 1965

From 3:00 PM to 5:00 PM on - 196 2

From _____ to _____ on _____ 196

Total time _____

Interview based on : tape ( ) hand written notes ( )

4. Place of interview :

Phu-Cuong

5. Sex of subject : Male (X) Female ( )

6. Age of subject : 68

7. Ethnic background : vietnamese

8. Place of birth :

hamlet _____

village [redacted]

district Ben Cat

province Binh Duong

9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :

hamlet _____

village [redacted]

district Ben Cat

province Binh Duong

10. (a) Length of residence in last location : _____

(b) Who controlled the place of residence:

GVN ( ) VC (X) Contested ( ) How long: one year and half

(c) Since when controlled or contested ? _____

11. Number of brothers (1) and sisters ( )

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : 1

13. Marital status : Married

14. Number of children : Five

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age : Five

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject( ) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject (X) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject(1) or not with subject ( )
and one 13-year grandson

17. Religion : Ancestor worship

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : Farmer

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation Middle
(b) Landowner ? _____ How much land _____

20. Education :
illiterate ( )
literate ( )
schooling completed : Elementary school

21. Any relatives in VC : one child (Policeman in Bien Hoa)

22. Any relatives in GVN : " " " "

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) Killed by :
(a) French
(b) GVN
(c) VC

24. When became a refugee : September [redacted] 1965 Taking refuge in Phu Cuong hospital with his wife

25. Where took refuge first _____

26. Present residence _____

AGR

INTERVIEW

34

THE RAND CORPORATION
[redacted]

STUDIES OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR-34

Date of Interview : September [redacted] 1965

Subject's Category : Refugee : September [redacted] 1965

Former Residence : [redacted] Village
Ben Cat District
Binh Duong Province

COMMENTS : Subject, if not pro-VC, seemed far from pro-GVN in her attitude -- which makes her remarks all the more interesting on the following subjects: VC recruitment (Q.15, 53-55), recent disruptment of VC activities (Q. 20-21, 56,64), casualties from air attacks (Q. 31-34, 43), civilian resentment toward air attacks (Q. 50, 72-73, 80,90-92), and GVN psywar (Q.81).

1. How long have you been here?

   Fifteen days.

2. Where did you come from?

   I came from [redacted] village.

3. How did you get here?

   I walked with my countrymen. On our way here, each time I heard the sound of aircraft I crept in, no matter where, to hide myself. In the past, when I worked in ricefields I also hid every time I heard the sound of aircraft, for fear of their strafing.

4. Did all the members of your family live together before you came here or were some living apart? Where did they go and why?

   When we took refuge here my husband immediately hired a few ricefields in [redacted] to work on. As we have many children it's impossible for us not to worry about earning a living. My husband works all the day long in his ricefields and joins me at night in my sister's house in [redacted] To tell you the truth, he is my second husband and we have had this two-year son. (Gestured toward baby.) My five other children came from my first marriage. My first husband died four or five years ago.

5. How and why did your first husband die?

   He died because of sickness.

6. How big was your hamlet? How many people?

   There were about two or three hundred houses in my hamlet. I only guess -- I don't know exactly how many they are.

7. How long have you lived there? Where did you live previously?

   I lived there for more than ten years. In the past, I lived in [redacted] village. I only came there after having gotten married.

8. What did most of the people in the village you just left do to earn a living? Was the village prosperous or poor? Were most people rich, medium, or poor?

   Most of the people were farmers. They were poor. Even if they had been rich, they became poor because of this war.

9. What did you, your family, or your parents do to earn a living? What category did the Front assign to your family: rich, medium poor, very poor, or others?

We were tilling ricefields and were poor.

10. How much land did you own? How much did you work?

We worked on 40 "sao" of rented land.

11. How much education have you had? Can you read and write?

I can read a little.

12. When was your Strategic Hamlet organized?

In 1963.

13. Was it destroyed by the Front? When?

Last year, when the GVN forces withdrew, "the others" (VC)came to destroy it. At that time, the paddies had only started to bloom. The harvest season hadn't take place yet. I think that it was in July or August 1964.

14. Did the Front carry out any terroristic acts in your village or kill any of the people?

Everybody left. Nobody was there to be killed.

15. If your hamlet was under Front control, was it a Combat Hamlet?

No, the VC only destroyed the Strategic Hamlet.

16. How many young men 16 or more years old were in your hamlet? How many joined the Front last year? How many joined the ARVN?

Those who volunteered joined the Front, but it didn't compel anybody to do it. But I have noticed that the ones who joined the Front were more numerous than those who joined the ARVN. Unless the ARVN was able to arrest them, the youths all hid.

17. Do you know how many joined the Front? The ARVN?

I was busy earning a living. I don't know.

18. Were you or any members of your family taken by the Front for "re-education"?

Yes, a cousin of mine was brought away for two or three months.

19. Why was he taken for re-education?

I don't know.

20. Did the Front hold meetings with the villagers in your hamlet? How often?

Before the air strikes, the Front held meetings, but not in these last months.

21. How often did the Front hold these meetings in the past?

Once a month on an average. These last months they didn't dare hold any meeting. If they had, they would certainly have been killed.

22. Did the Front people say anything about the bombing of North Vietnam?

No. Furthermore, they never called women who had children to attend their meetings. They only invited men.

23. How much did you pay or contribute to the Front?

As I was poor and had many children I was exempt. Each landowner and everyone who had more than enough had to contribute 10 gia of paddy per year. Contributions depended, more or less, on what people had.

24. Did the Front carry out land distribution in your hamlet?

If they did, they only distributed land to those who were very poor, who didn't have any house to live in. But as a matter of fact, the people didn't receive a lot of it, each of them could harvest at most 15 gia of paddy. As I had enough to eat I didn't claim anything.

25. When was this land distribution done?

Long ago. I don't recall exactly when, because I didn't receive anything.

26. If you rented land, did the landlord live in your village?

He lived in [redacted], near my village. Therefore, at every harvest season he came to collect paddies.

27. What did the people in your village think of the fall of the Diem regime?

Nobody said anything.

28. What did the Front tell the villagers about the present government?

I didn't hear anything about this. As I have many children I rarely moved about, so I didn't hear anything.

(Interviewer's note: It seemed fruitless to proceed on the AGR. Therefore, the interviewer turned to the new questions.)

29. How many times was [redacted] bombed before you came here?

Too many times -- day and night. I didn't count and didn't know how many times it was bombed. For instance, I am sure that this morning it was bombed again.

30. How many times was your village -- not the woods -- bombed?

Nowadays, the villages and the woods are the same. They all were bombed because the GVN had given warning in advance. The napalm bombs and even the artillery shells burnt all the houses. The brick and tile houses were also damaged. One day, some kids were gathering guavas when they saw a dragon-fly (L-19). They immediately ran away. But the GVN artillery also started a curtain fire. Fortunately, the kids weren't killed, but two other grownups were wounded, and the house of another man caved in just because the kids were headed for it. The dragon-flies spotted the targets very well. Every time they did, the artillery shot accurately right at the desired point. By now, my area has been razed; the craters dug up by the bombs are as large as houses and turn into small lakes when they are filled with rain water. Some "sao" trees which were as large as the two arms can hold were rooted up and thrown about 10 m away.

31. What casualties were inflicted on the population by the strikes?

During the nightly air attack on the bank of the river, twenty-nine junks carrying firewood were fired at. They sank to the last one. The people on these junks all cried out against it, and finally, there were almost forty people who were killed. The strike was carried out in three stages. The first took place at [redacted] the second, at [redacted] and the last, at [redacted]. The strikes were done by helicopters that started to strafe at 10 PM, and completed the attack at dawn. They didn't strafe continuously, but after discharging their weapons they flew away, and came back later. This kept up until dawn. It was certainly the fault of the people on these junks. Perhaps they didn't know that there was an order forbidding everybody to move on the river at night. But if they left their junks and went ashore after the first attack they wouldn't be killed to the last one.

32. What about the civilian casualties caused by the bombings?

So far, there certainly have been fifty or sixty people killed. Seven or eight out of them were killed because their trenches caved in. Another trench where three kids and one dog took cover also caved in. After the strike, their parents came from the ricefields and heard the dog barking. They immediately dug up the place. The dog ran away panic-stricken and barked furiously. The three kids, though, were already dead because the rescue wasn't done in time.

33. What casualties were inflicted on the guerrillas by the strikes?

Only one or two were killed.

34. What casualties were inflicted on the Front troops in the woods?

I didn't hear anything about it. They hid that kind of secret very jealously.

35. Did the VC clear the area before the strike? Were there any signs of them knowing about the strike beforehand?

How could they know about the bombers in time to clear the area before the strike?

36. What ways of escaping or of protecting themselves did the VC use during the strike?

Of course, they had to take cover in trenches too. How could they do differently, unless the bullets were unable to go through them? (Smiled.)

37. What was the effect of weapons on vegetation and terrain?

The woods were all destroyed, and the trees were all rooted up.

38. Did the Front troops pass through your village? How often?

Yes, once every month or every two months.

39. Did they move in day-time or at night?

Both day and night. The moved all the time.

40. How many men moved together?

There were very many. I shook with fear when I saw them. I was always at home and didn't know anything.

41. Were there a thousand men?

Yes, it's possible.

42. Why were you scared?

I was afraid the GVN forces would come and tangle with them. For example: there were recently three women and one man who came here [redacted] to buy rice and other goods. On their way back, when they were off [redacted] bridge they were arrested by the GVN authorities who suspected them as VC recon-agents. They were given a rough handling and received the " third degree," etc. Then, they were set free. When they went back to the village their eyes turned red, and all of them were sick. It's really dreadful. (Paused.) Yesterday, I went to Go-Dau where the GVN had pitched many tents for the refugees, but it was so hot that my children couldn't endure it. Also, I couldn't find some fresh water and was forced to go back here.

43. How did the recent bombings differ from the ones you have experienced in the past?

Now, the bombs are bigger than those in the past. They were more of them dropped too. It's impossible for everybody to stay there. Now, there's only one end for anyone who wants to stay there: death.

44. Did you see the aircraft that bombed your area recently?

Yes.

45. Did they release bombs from a high altitude or did they nose-dive to do it?

They nose-dived before releasing bombs.

46. Did they almost touch the top of the trees?

No. they still flew pretty high.

47. How many were there?

Four in all.

48. How tall are the trees in the woods next to your village?

About 60 or 70 m. Of we sawed them, we could get 10 cu m from each.

49. What was the effect of terrain and vegetation on the weapons?

If the bomb hit the tree-top it blew up, and the shrapnel was scattered around. If it didn't hit the tree-top, it dig up the ground 20 or 30 m deep, like a well.

50. How did the strike affect the spirit of the civilians?

The GVN didn't let the people stay in the village any longer. If the people went on staying there and were bombed, they had to put up with it. What could they complain about?

51. Have you heard anything about what the VC did after those air strikes? What did they say?

They didn't say anything. The people were able to go everywhere they wanted.

52. Did they try to keep people from taking refuge here?

No, they didn't stop us. Everybody was able to go anywhere he wanted.

53. Why weren't there any youths among the people who took refuge here?

Because the youths were forced by the VC to stay there.

54. Were there many of them?

Several dozen, I guess.

55. Of course, if they stayed there they certainly had to work for the VC. Didn't they?

(Nodden.)

56. Have any VC rallied due to the strike?

The other day, I heard that some of them had rallied, but I didn't know how many.

57. Did you see how the four aircraft bombed your area? Can you describe them?

They were very big and their wings looked like the bat ones: the kind of aircraft that had a propeller right on the nose (Skyraider) and only strafed in the past, but now also bombs.

58. Have you seen the same aircraft before -- like the four that bombed your area?

That was the first time I saw them. So far in the past, there haven't been such aircraft.

59. Did you notice any difference between those aircraft and the ones you've seen in the past?

The wings were different from those of other aircraft. They looked like bat-wings, and there wasn't any propeller.

60. How did the attacks differ from the ones you've had in the past?

There are more attacks today than in the past.

61. Were the explosions much heavier than those you've felt in the past?

Now, the explosions are so loud that the noise is ear-splitting.

62. Do you know any changes in VC activities in the past three months?

I didn't see any changes. They were always in and out.

63. If they were always in and out, weren't they afraid of the air strikes?

(Chuckled.) How could I know whether they were afraid or not? If they wanted to go, they went. If they wanted to come, they came. That's all.

64. Did they move in daytime or at night?

(Interviewer's note: It's presumed that we were talking about the VC activities during the last three months. Her answer should be compared with C.39.)

They moved more often at night, and rarely in daytime.

65. Did you see any Americans coming to your area?

No, I didn't see any American coming to my area.

66. Do you know how much work the people in your village had to do for the VC -- for example, dig trenches, tunnels, etc.? How many persons worked together? When did they have to work, day or night?

Every able-bodied man had to cut off roads, or set up obstacles on them, etc. They only did these things at night. Women were exempt.

67. What were your views about the outcome of the war one year ago?

As a commoner I don't have any idea about this. "Come what may." The people only want peace. They never want trouble. (Smiled.) We want peace, but if they (VC) don't want it, what could we do?

68. What were your views about the outcome of the war one week ago?

I don't know. (Smiled.) I only noticed that both sides were fighting to death, and I don't know who will win.

69. Why do you think the VC continue to fight while the GVN has such powerful things as aircraft?

How could I know? I only worried about earning a living.

70. Before these air strikes, did the GVN carry out any programs in your village to help the villagers?

Nothing. "Everyone for himself." Interviewer's note: The second half of the proverb, not supplied by the subject, is: "And God for all.")

71. How often did GVN troops pass through your village?

Once every two or three days, but they only came to Cau-Ong-Do bridge and went back. My village is on the other side of the river.

72. How did the villagers feel about the activities of the hamlet and village guerrillas?

They hated them.

73. Why?

Because they (the guerrillas) always fired one or two shots to provoke the GVN, which brought bombers or artillery on the village, and then ran away letting the people bear everything.

74. How did the villagers feel about the Front troops stationed in or passing through your village?

The Front troops only passed through the village from time to time. So, the villagers didn't hate them like they did the guerrillas who caused the people so much trouble.

75. Have there been any changes in the attitude of the villagers toward the Front forces in the past three months?

No. So far, the attitude of the villagers toward the Front forces has remained the same. There was no change at all.

76. Do you have any close friends serving in Front military units? (Stressed that we aren't interested in names.)

I have a cousin who worked for the Resistance and then for the Front.

77. Are any members of your family or relatives serving in the ARVN or with the GVN?

I have an uncle who serves in the ARVN in Lai-Thieu.

78. Have you or other members of your family tried to persuade your cousin to surrender to the GVN or to come home?

Although we are members of the same family, everyone lives as he likes, and everyone for himself.

79. How did you feel about the air attacks?

I was very frightened, otherwise I didn't run away. Who doesn't fear death? If only I was alone! But I had too many children.

80. Did anybody in your village join the Front because they resented the attacks? If so, how many?

I didn't see anyone who joined the Front after the air strikes. They had joined it long before.

81. When did the GVN warn your village that it would be attacked?

More than ten days ago. They gave warning in the afternoon, and next morning they immediately started to bomb. The villagers didn't have time to evacuate. They gave warning on September [redacted] 1965 in the afternoon. Next morning, September [redacted] they already made a terrible noise. The villagers immediately evacuated the area when they stopped the attack.

82. Did all the villagers evacuate the area immediately after that air strike?

They all evacuated on that September [redacted] Later, those who had cattle went back to drive them here. Dozens of cattle were killed, and the people butchered a lot of them.

83. Were there any radios in your village?

Yes, only two or three.

84. Were any newspapers read in the village?

Yes, people bought newspapers every day.

85. Didn't the VC forbid people to read newspapers?

No, everybody read any newspaper he wanted. The villagers bought newspapers and lotteries a lot, and nobody forced them not to.

8 6. Did the VC forbid that in the previous months, or last year?

No, they never did forbid it.

87. How did the GVN tell the people to take refuge?

By loudspeakers from aircraft that circled overhead many times.

88. Could you hear clearly what the broadcasts from aircraft said?

Yes, clearly.

(Interviewer's note: At that moment, we heard the sound of jets, and the subject said, "This is the kind of aircraft that bombed my village.")

89. How long do you think the war will go on?

How could I know? (Smiled.)

90. Whom did the other refugees blame most?

They were complaining about both sides. Because of this side, there has been the other side.

91. What do you mean by this side and the other side?

(Smiled.) This side is the GVN, and the other side is VC. There are but two sides. How many sides do you think there are?

92. So, in your opinion, the VC arose because of the GVN. Do you mean it?

The masses don't know anything. (Smiled.) "Come what may." As long as we live, we only try to earn a living. If we died, we would be free from care.

93. What help did the GVN authorities give you and your family after you left your village?

I have received more than 20 liters of rice.

94. Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the help you received?

Of course I'm satisfied. We were satisfied with every liter of rice they gave us. Because we're poor, we beg them for food. If we're rich, of course we never do it.

95. Do you want to stay here, go back to your village, or move elsewhere?

If my village is pacified I will go back to earn a living. Otherwise, I'll stay here for good. Where can I go now.

96. Have you heard about or from the people who stayed behind in your village?

In my village there are now only the elderly people. I know that there is an old man, more than 80 years old, who can't walk and who stays in the trench all the time.

97. How did you hear about it?

His wife, who is also very old, came here at the same time with me to beg for rice in order to feed him.

98. Have any of the villagers who left with you moved back to your village? Why did they do so?

No, nobody dares move back yet. They are all scattered around here.

99. Have you seen people from foreign countries other than America (Korea, the Phillipines, etc.) that are helping the Vietnamese?

Not yet.

100. Could you talk freely to your friends in your village about all matters that concerned you?

Yes, we talked to one another naturally.

101. Was there any danger that they would report you if you criticized the VC or violated VC regulations?

No, it never happened.

102. Which ones did not identify themselves with either side?

Almost all the people only worried about earning a living. They didn't sympathize with either side. Most of the people who were killed by these air strikes were those who regretted leaving their belongings.

103. What property did you bring with you?

I only brought my children and a few cooking pots with me. I couldn't bring anything else.

104. Are you worried about the property you left behind?

Yes, but I have no choice.

105. What else would you have liked to have taken with you if you had been able to do so?

I couldn't carry along with me my house, my jars, and so on.

106. Here is a picture of a ladder. The bottom rung is numbered "ten," and the top rung is numbered "one." Now, let's say that the top rung represents the best life you can imagine, and the bottom rung represents the worst life you can imagine. Where on this ladder would you say that your life was before you left your village?

I led a very hard life that should be on the bottom rung. It can't be on the fifth. or on the sixth either. Aircraft bombed every day. I was so scared that the blood drained from my face. All the day long I did nothing but waited near the trenches.

107. How about one year ago?

I would say that it was on the eight rung.

108. Where on the ladder would you put your life then?

I only wanted to have enough to eat. As I have too many children I think that I cannot be rich.

109. And how about five years from now? About where on the ladder do you think your life will be then?

I don't know. "Come what may."

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

The subject seemed honest in her answers, except that when she talked about her husband she was so reluctant, that she seemed to be trying to conceal the truth.

She was very reluctant in answering the "ladder" question.

No. AGR 34

QUESTIONNAIRE II
For Refugees

1. Name of interviewer [redacted]
2. Name of subject [redacted]
3. Time and date of interview :
   From 10:40 AM to 11:50 AM on Sept [redacted] 196 5
   From 2:00 PM to 3:10 PM on - 196 5
   From _____ to _____ on _____ 196___
   Total time 2 hours 20 minutes

   Interview based on : tape ( ) hand written notes (X)
4. Place of interview : [redacted]
5. Sex of subject : Male ( ) Female (X)
6. Age of subject : 32
7. Ethnic background : Vietnamese
8. Place of birth :
   hamlet _____
   village [redacted]
   district Ben Cat
   province Binh Duong
9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :
   hamlet _____
   village [redacted]
   district Ben Cat
   province Binh Duong
10. (a) Length of residence in last location : More than ten years
    (b) Who controlled the place of residence:
        GVN ( ) VC (X) Contested ( ) How long? More than one year
    (c) Since when controlled or contested ? _____

11. Number of brothers (1) and sisters (3)

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : 1 (30-year-old)

13. Marital status : Married

14. Number of children : six

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age : none

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Husband with subject (X) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject( ) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject(6) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion : Ancestor worship

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : Farmer tilling 40 sào of rented land

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation Poor
(b) Landowner ? _____ How much land _____

20. Education :
illiterate (X) can read a little vietnamese
literate ( )
schooling completed : _____

21. Any relatives in VC : one cousin (since Resistance)

22. Any relatives in GVN : an uncle served with ARVN in [redacted]

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by :
(a) French
(b) GVN
(c) VC

24. When became a refugee : Sept. [redacted] 1965

25. Where took refuge first _____

26. Present residence _____

AGR

INTERVIEW

35

THE RAND CORPORATION

[redacted]

STUDIES OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT
OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR- 35

Date of Interview : September [redacted] 1965

Subject's Category : Refugee - May [redacted] 1965

Area of Residence : [redacted] village
Chau Thanh district
Binh Duong province

1. How long have you been here?

   Five days.

2. Where did you come from?

   I came from [redacted] village, Ben Cat district (Binh Duong province).

3. How did you get here?

   I got here on foot.

4. How large was your family?

   My wife and my four children.

5. Did all the members of your family live together before you came here or were some living apart?

   All the members of my family lived together.

6. How big was your village? How many hamlets?

   My village had [redacted] hamlets. The VC also divided my village into [redacted] hamlets: [redacted]

7. How many people were there in your village?

   I don't know.

8. How many people were there in your hamlet?

   I don't know.

9. How long have you lived there?

   Nine years.

10. Where did you live previously?

    [redacted] village. Recently I took refuge in this village before coming here.

11. How long did you take refuge in [redacted] village?

    Two months. I slept in [redacted] but I came back to [redacted] everyday to till my ricefields there.

12. In whose house did you take refuge in [redacted]

    In a friend's house.

13. With your whole family?

    Yes.

14. How many families or persons have left your hamlet?

All the people in my hamlet have left.

15. Did they leave your hamlet recently or earlier?

Some people left earlier and the rest left recently.

16. How many families have left at each time?

Six to seven families left first, then nineteen to twenty families left afterwards.

17. Why did they leave and where did they go?

The first group went to Saigon under the Diem regime. At that time these persons left the village because they were afraid of the bombings.

18. Why did the people leave recently?

Because of the bombings.

19. What did most the people in your village do to earn a living?

They were farmers.

20. Was your village prosperous or poor?

Poor.

21. Were there any rich people?

Yes, but they left the village long ago.

22. Were most people rich, medium, or poor?

Most people were poor. In my hamlet, there were only two or three rich people.

23. How much land did a farmer have to own to be called a rich farmer?

Seven to ten mau of ricefields.

24. Did the rich farmers stay behind?

No. They all left.

25. What did you do to earn your living?

I farmed my land.

26. How much land did you own?

I didn't have any land of my own. I rented one mau of ricefields.

27. Did you and your family have enough to eat?

Yes. But when the crop was bad because of its destruction by the insects and also by the artillery shells, we were sometimes short of food.

28. Were there any changes in your or your family's economic conditions in the past years?

My family was always poor because my children were often sick. Before coming here, my wife had an accident : her face was burned by the cooking fire and she fainted.

29. How much education have you had?

I was illiterate.

30. Did the VC organize the popular adult education in your village during their two years' control?

Yes. But I didn't attend this course because of my old age.

31. Can you read and write?

No, I'm old, so it's impossible for me to study.

32. Did your children go to school?

My 13-year-old daughter went to school, but she stopped three years ago. The other children of mine are still very young.

33. Do you plan to send your children to school here?

Yes, indeed!

34. Are there any refugees' children going to school here?

No. Only some children of the former refugees (He meant the refugees from Dong Xoai who had taken refuge in [redacted] four or five months ago.)

35. Was your hamlet a Strategic Hamlet?

Yes. It was a Strategic Hamlet under Mr. Diem's regime.

36. How was it organized?

Fences were constructed and trenches were dug around the village.

37. Was it destroyed by the VC?

Yes, twice. But only the fences at the remotest part of the village were destroyed. At that time the VC didn't dare approach the part of the village close to the GVN post for fear that the GVN troops might shoot at them!
(The subject burst out laughing.)

38. How did living in a Strategic Hamlet affect your life and earnings?

It didn't affect my life and earnings at all.

39. How did the GVN village and hamlet authorities behave?

They behaved well.

40. Did anyone oppress the people?

No.

41. Who controlled your village a year ago?

The VC. They have controlled my village for two years. My village was under VC control when the GVN forces withdrew.

42. Why did the GVN forces withdraw?

I don't know.

43. What GVN forces were stationed in the post near your village? Were they the SDCs?

At first, the troops of the 5th or 7th Division, then the Civil Guards and the SDCs were also stationed in the post.

44. How strong were they?

I don't know.

45. Before the VC came, had your village been a contested area, or a GVN-controlled area?

It had been a GVN-controlled area.

46. When the VC came, was there any fighting in your village?

A small fighting took place, but the VC withdrew because the GVN aircraft bombed the battlefield.

47. When did the fighting took place?

At that time, the GVN forces were still stationed in the [redacted] posts on Route No. 14.

48. Do you remember when your Strategic Hamlet was destroyed by the VC?

I forget.

49. If your hamlet was under Front control, did the Front set up any organizations?

Yes. They organized the militia (dân quân) and the sabotage team.

50. Did you participate in these organizations?

I participated in sabotage acts.

51. How often?

Twice.

52. Did the Front set up a Civil Affairs Committee yet?

Yes. I belonged to the sabotage team. The VC ordered me to carry out sabotage acts.

53. Had a Farmers' Association been set up yet?

Yes.

54. How about the Youth Association, the Women's Association, etc.?

These organizations weren't set up yet. The VC were going to set them up when the recent bombings disrupted their preparations.

55. How many persons were members of the Civil Affairs Committee?

Three or four persons were members of this committee.

56. Were these persons native of your village?

Three members were native of my village, and the fourth member came from another place.

57. Was this man a North Vietnamese?

Yes.

58. How did the members of the Civil Affairs Committee behave toward the people? Did the people like them?

Some people liked them, and others didn't.

59. What was the percentage of those who liked them and those who didn't?

I don't know.

60. How did the villagers feel about them?

The members of the Civil Affairs Committee tried to persuade the people to join them. Once they called on me to persuade me to go sabotage the roads. But I refused on the ground that I was sick, and they left without saying anything.

61. How often did you sabotage the roads?

Twice.

52. Did they ask you to do anything else?

No.

53. How many persons were members of the Farmers' Association?

The Farmers' Association was going to be set up when the bombings occurred.

54. You've just said that the Farmers' Association was set up while the Youth and Women's Associations weren't yet.

Oh! Yes, some VC came somewhere to organize it.

55. How many people in your village participated in it?

I don't know. At that time, some twenty to thirty people were forced to mount sentry, and to sabotage the roads.

56. Did you belong to the Farmers' Association?

No.

57. What have you heard about the Front's aims?

I have heard about them, but now I forget.

58. Did the Front people came to your village to control it automatically after the withdrawal of the GVN forces?

Yes.

59. Did any fighting take place at that time?

No.

70. Did the VC carry out any terroristic acts in your village or kill any of the people?

Yes, but I have learned about it from hearsay.

71. How many people were killed?

Two or three people.

72. Why?

I don't know why they were killed.

73. Did the villagers think the killing was justified or not?

I don't know. The people didn't know how to judge these acts.

74. If your hamlet was under Front control, were the people satisfied with it?

They were dissatisfied with it.

75. Why?

They were afraid of the bombs and shells, and the presence of the VC in the village might lead the GVN to attack the village.

76. Let us put aside the question of bombardments. Were the people dissatisfied with the Front administration for any other reason?

They were also dissatisfied with it, because the VC forced them to carry out acts of sabotage.

77. If your village was under Front control, was it a Combat Village?

Yes.

78. How did life in a Front Combat Village differ from life in a GVN Strategic Hamlet?

There was security in a GVN Strategic Hamlet while a Combat Village might be the target of bombardments, so the people living in a Combat Village were dissatisfied. The people want peace, they are afraid of the killings and bombardments.

79. How many young men 18 years old or more were recruited for military duty in your hamlet?

Two or three youths were recruited by force, and the others dodged the VC draft.

80. How many draft dodgers?

Seven to eight youths.

81. How many joined the Front of their own will?

Three to four people.

82. How many joined the ARVN?

Four people.

83. Did the Front recruit people for military duty through propaganda, or did it order people to serve in the military forces?

It ordered people to serve in the military forces.

84. How did the villagers feel about the recruiting?

I don't know. It's difficult to know the feelings of others. Being afraid of the killings due to the war, the parents allow their children to dodge the Front draft by letting them go to Saigon to take refuge there.

85. Has it happened that the Front people arrested the youths in their houses?

Yes. They came at night to arrest the youths to take them away.

86. Did anyone escape?

No. But I was told that some youths in An-Dien village could escape to come back home after serving in the military forces for some time.

87. How many people?

Two people.

88. Were you or any members of your family taken by the Front for " re-education" ?

No.

89. Were any people in your hamlet taken by the Front for " re-education " ?

About seven people.

90. How long were they away?

I don't know. I think that they were away for ten days or for half a month.

91. Did you ever talk with any people who had been taken by the Front for "re-education" ?

No. I don't dare talk with these people.

92. Do you know why they were taken?

No.

93. Were you afraid of being taken by the Front for " re-education " ?

Yes.

94. Did the Front hold meetings with the villagers in your hamlet?

Yes.

95. How often?

Meetings were frequently held in 1952-53, but because of the bombings they were seldom held at the present time. Before 1954, they were always held every ten days or every month.

96. How often did you attend these meetings this year?

Just once.

97. When?

Last January or February. I don't remember exactly when.

98. What did the Front people say on this occasion?

I don't remember it.

99. Please recall what they said at this meeting.

I can't -- I'm illiterate ...

100. What was the occasion for this meeting?

I don't remember it. Perhaps it was held on the occasion of the Tet Festival (Vietnamese New Year).

101. Were there many people attending the meeting?

Yes.

102. How many people?

About one hundred people.

103. For how long?

From 6:00 to 12:00 PM.

104. Were there GVN air activities that day?

No. It was quite calm.

105. What did the villagers think about what the Front people said at the meeting?

I don't know. The village didn't speak out.

106. Were there any high ranking cadres at the meeting?

Yes.

107. What was their rank?

I don't know. Some cadres came from other areas to attend the meeting.

108. Did a huyen-uy (chief of district chapter) attend the meeting?

I don't know.

109. Were these cadres the political cadres?

Yes. They said they were the members of the Front Committee.

110. Was there a Front Committee in your village?

I overheard that there was a Front Committee there.

111. Do you know many people who were members of this Committee?

No.

112. Did the Front people say anything about the bombing of North Vietnam?

No.

113. Have you heard about it?

No. But three days ago I listened to Radio Saigon here and I heard about the bombings of North Vietnam. I had not heard anything about it before.

114. What have you heard about the air attacks on North Vietnam?

I have heard that bombs were dropped into North Vietnam, causing the destruction of some bridges.

115. Do you think that the population in your village was completely unaware of the bombings of North Vietnam?

Yes.

116. Have you heard about American combat forces landing in Danang and other places of South Vietnam?

No.

117. Did the Front people say anything about their military successes and defeats?

No.

118. Was there an Information Hall in your village?

No.

119. In the village, did the VC paste their leaflets on the walls?

Yes.

120. Did you ever see any newspapers or wall newspapers?

I was told that there were wall newspapers at a place in the village, but I didn't dare pass through this place.

121. Where?

At [redacted]

123. How far from your house?

[redacted] kilometers. [redacted] is located in [redacted] (Hamlet [redacted]) of my village. It was the location of the Strategic Hamlet before.

124. Did you see leaflets pasted on the trunks of trees?

Yes.

125. Did you pick up any leaflets?

No.

126. Have you seen more or fewer aircraft during the past six months than before?

More than before.

127. What kind?

I can't identify the aircraft. I saw the airplanes that strafed (fighter-bombers), the jets, and the aircraft that bombed my area recently.

128. Have you heard about the B-52's?

Yes.

129. Did you hear about the B-52's while still staying in your village?

Yes.

130. Did you see this kind of aircraft last year?

No. I saw it this year.

131. When?

I don't know because I haven't paid attention to it.

132. When did you see the B-52's?

About half a month ago.

133. How often did the B-52's bomb your area?

I forget.

134. Do you know any differences between these aircraft and the ones you have seen in the past?

They fly very high in the sky far away at the horizon and at a twinkle of the eye, they drop bombs.

135. Who told you that these aircraft were the B-52's?

Radio-Saigon to which I listened to here said so.

136. Have you heard about the B-52's before?

No. (This answer contradicts answers Nos. 128-129 above)

137. Did you take cover in the shelter during the bombings?

Yes.

138. Were the explosions much more heavy than the ones you have seen in the past?

Yes. They were very heavy.

139. How many times were the explosions more heavy than the ones you have seen before?

Say 10 to 6. They caused the earth to quake.

140. Were the bombs dropped at night or in daytime?

The first bombings took place in daytime, and the recent bombings took place at night.

141. Did any bombings take place at night last week?

I forget.

142. At what time did the first bombings take place?

I forget.

143. How far was the bombed area from your shelter?

I was already in [redacted] during the bombings. The bombed area was about [redacted] km. from [redacted]

144. Has it happened that you were still in your village during the bombings?

No.

145. Did many people in your village take refuge in [redacted] at that time?

Yes. [redacted] is under the GVN control, it is near Road No. 13.

146. How many people stayed behind?

About 70 percent of the population stayed behind in the village.

147. Were the bombs dropped into your village?

Yes, indeed! But I was already in [redacted]!

148. Did the villagers say anything about the bombings by the B-52's?

The people said that they were very afraid of these bombs!

149. To your knowledge, how many people in your hamlet were killed?

Four to five people. They were killed because the bombs caused their shelters to fall in.

150. Was it because of the pressure of the gas from the bombs?

Yes. I was told that three to four persons had been killed by the pressure of the bombs.

151. Where?

In [redacted] village. Two or three persons were killed likewise in [redacted] The bombs also hit the children of a couple of farmers who were tilling the ricefields.

152. Do you know about the VC casualties because of the bombings?

Yes. I learned from hearsay that some VC were killed: about three VC were hit by the bombs at [redacted] The villagers told me so.

153. How big was an explosion from a bomb dropped by a B-52 as compared with an explosion from an artillery shell?

Ten times more heavy.

154. Have you seen any increase of VC activity in your village in the past few months?

I don't know. Last year when I was still living in my village, the VC were active, especially after the withdrawal of GVN forces from the Strategic Hamlet.

155. How about this year?

I don't know.

156. Describe VC installations in the area.

Their installations in [redacted] (?) in the vicinity of Road No. 14 were razed by the bombs. They were located in [redacted] and [redacted]

157. Describe the terrain and vegetation in the area.

[redacted] and [redacted] have a dense jungle, while in [redacted] there's only a sparve vegetation with thickets here and there.

158. The whole area was attacked by the B-52's, wasn't it?

Yes.

159. Which part of the area was seriously hit?

[redacted]

160. Do you know what VC units were located in this area?

No.

161. What VC units had been stationed there before?

I was told by the people that Unit 61 or 62 had been stationed there before.

162. Was it a battalion or a regiment?

I don't know. A civilian like me cannot know this matter.

163. Did your village have underground passages or tunnels?

Yes.

164. What damage was done to the tunnels by the B-52's?

I haven't heard about it yet. The B-52's caused the shelters to fall in. Are these shelters the tunnels you mean?

165. What damage was done to the civilian personnel and properties by the B-52's?

In [redacted] 3 children were killed (See Q. 151) and many houses were destroyed.

166. What type of damage was there in the bombed area -- fire, fragmentation or blast?

Blast.

167. Do you know the sizes of craters?

No. The villagers told me the craters were very large, but I don't know the sizes.

168. What damage was done to the vegetation?

All the trees were cut down. The villagers said that all the shelters and trenches were affected. No underground structure could stand up to the effects of the bombs. All the people have evacuated the area, and nobody dares stay behind.

169. Did you yourself see the damage?

No. I stood far away to see my village, separated from my place [redacted] by a river.

170. How far?

About one kilometer and a half.

171. To your knowledge, were the VC informed in advance of the strike so they could escape?

I don't know.

172. Were there indications of prior knowledge of the strike?

I don't know.

173. Did the VC ever tell you about the evasive or protective techniques to be used during the strike?

No.

174. What was the psychological effect of the strike on the VC?

I don't know.

175. What was the psychological effect of the strike on the population?

The people were terribly afraid.

176. Have any VC rallied because of the strike?

I don't know.

177. Did any civilians evacuate the area during the strike?

Yes. Some peddlars of chicken and ducks walking on Road No. 14 near the bombed area rushed to safer places. Road No. 14 itself was not hit by the bombs.

178. Before the strikes by the B-52's, was your village bombarded by artillery and aircraft?

Yes.

179. How often?

I don't remember. Over a month ago, four fighter-bombers attacked my village, causing two dead among the civilians.

180. How about the artillery attacks?

My God! Cannon shells pounded my village so many times!

181. Did you stay in your village during the attacks?

No. I was already in [redacted].

182. Do you know the casualties due to these attacks?

Some civilians were killed and one seriously wounded man has been transported to the hospital here.

183. Did the VC suffer any casualties?

Yes. The villagers said that some had been killed.

184. In your opinion, which was more effective, the artillery attack or the bombardment by aircraft?

Bombings were more effective. Blast damaged the shelters.

185. What were the effects of these attacks on the VC?

I don't know.

186. Was your village attacked by napalm bombs?

Yes.

187. How often?

I forget.

188. Did the napalm bombs hit the jungle-covered area or the people's houses?

They hit both.

189. What damage was inflicted on the civilians?

I don't know.

190. Which of the air weapons -- the napalm bombs or the large bombs dropped by the B-52's -- did you fear most?

I feared most the large bombs and the artillery shells.

191. Before the B-52 strikes, did the GVN tell the people to evacuate the village?

Yes. More than a month ago, the GVN broadcast from its aircraft that the civilian population must evacuate the village. Many villagers came to [redacted] to take refuge, but seeing that the people's houses were very crowded, they came back home immediately.

192. Have you heard about or seen the spraying of trees and bushes with chemicals to kill the leaves and to prevent the VC from hiding in them?

No.

193. Before the VC came to your village, had you and the other people in the village received American Aid?

Yes. We received paddy seedlings when the Strategic Hamlet was being built.

194. How often did you receive this aid?

I forget.

195. What did the villagers think about this aid?

They approved of the GVN policy.

196. Did the GVN authorities distribute pigs to the people?

No. They distributed aid in money and rice.

197. How much money did you receive?

My family got 500 piasters.

198. When did the GVN district chief last visit your village?

He visited my village in 1962-63, but not afterwards.

199. Did the village chief stay in the village at that time?

No. He moved to Ben Cat to live in 1961.

200. Why did he move to Ben Cat?

He and some rich people in the village were afraid of the war destructions, so they moved to safer areas well in advance.

201. Do you think that the village chief's move to Ben Cat let the door open to VC activity?

Yes. The VC became active since 1961-62 and their activity increased even more each day.

202. Did the GVN troops conduct military operations in your village at that time?

Yes. Mopping up operations were conducted by the GVN forces, and in 1963-64 the Strategic Hamlet was constructed.

203. For how long could the Strategic Hamlet last before the VC completely controlled your village?

For over one year.

204. Is it true that the VC have completely controlled your village for two years?

Yes. My village has been under complete VC control for two years. (The subject had no exact notion of time.) Their control was complete since the withdrawal of the GVN forces from the [redacted] post.

205. When the November 1, 1963 Revolution broke out in Saigon, did you know it?

Yes.

206. Were the VC active at that time?

Yes, but their number was still small. The Village Committee had already moved to Ben-Cat.

207. How could you learn about the fall of the Diem regime?

A GVN loudspeaker car announced the news.

208. What did you think of the fall of the Diem regime?

I had no opinion.

209. What did the people in your village think of it?

I don't know.

210. Were there any GVN authorities who behaved very badly toward the people in your village under the Diem regime?

No.

211. What did the Front cadres tell the villagers about the fall of the Diem regime?

They said that Mr. Diem had oppressed the people ... therefore he had been overthrown... (The subject hesitated in answering.) The villagers also said that Mr. Diem had oppressed the people, and the National Revolutionary Committee was supported by the people.

212. Do you know who heads up the present government?

Mr. Nguyen Cao Ky.

213. What is his title?

(The subject burst out laughing) He heads up the government, but I don't know his real title.

214. What have you heard about the policies of the present government?

I don't know. I have learned that the present government will draw up a program of aid to the anti-communist refugees.

215. How could you learn about this aid?

Recently, the GVN made the appeal from the aircraft flying over [redacted]

216. I wonder why you don't stay in [redacted] which is still under GVN control?

I took refuge in [redacted] but I came back to [redacted] to till my ricefields. At [redacted] I lived in the house of a friend of mine, who gave me his hospitality temporarily. As it was impossible to stay in his house longer, and since the Government invites the population to come here, I just came here to live.

217. What help do you expect from the Government?

I hope the Government will distribute rice to the refugees.

218. How much help did you receive from the GVN authorities here?

I haven't received any help so far.

219. Did other refugees receive any help?

Yes. Some people in my village have received rice in the pagoda here.

220. How much did each refugee receive?

I don't know. The aid depends on the size of each refugee's family.

221. What did the GVN authorities tell you they will do for you and your family?

They told the refugees at the pagoda that while waiting for the construction of lodgings for them, the refugees should take refuge temporarily in their relatives' or friends' houses.

222. What do you and the other refugees think about what they said?

We refugees rely entirely on the Government's generosity.

223. Have you thought of moving to this city before?

Yes. I thought of it nearly a month ago.

224. Why didn't you leave earlier?

Because the GVN hadn't yet called for the villagers to leave.

225. When the VC came to your village, were they welcomed by the villagers?

The people were not happy when the VC came to my village about two years ago, but they didn't act unfriendly to them.

226. How did the people feel one year ago?

They weren't happy. They were continually afraid of the bombs and shells.

227. What did you feel about the outcome of the war one year ago?

I don't know.

228. What did you feel about it two months ago? Were your views changed?

I don't know.

229. Who do you think will win?

The GVN.

230. Why?

I think so because the GVN has many bombs, shells, aircraft, cannons, etc.

231. Do you think that the people in your village have the same opinion as you?

Yes.

232. How many people think like you?

While still living in my village, I talked with the people of four to five families, and they all said that the GVN would win the war.

233. What do you think of the VC guerrilla tactics?

The VC cannot win over the GVN with their guerrilla tactics.

234. Did the VC troops often pass through your village?

Yes.

235. How many people each time?

Thirty to fifty, sometimes more than one hundred men, but usually five to seven guerrillas.

236. How often?

I don't know. I was told by other villagers, but I didn't see them. I didn't pay any attention to this matter. The VC passed through my hamlet every thirty or fifty days.

237. Did you see the VC troops pass through your hamlet?

I saw them once last year.

238. How strong were they?

70 to 80 men.

239. Did you see any new weapons carried by these troops?

I didn't dare ask them. A civilian never dared ask the troops about this !

240. How did the people in your village feel when the VC troops passed through your village?

Nobody knows what others think. As far as I am concerned, I was sad at that time.

241. Why?

The arrival of numerous troops might lead the GVN to attack the village.

242. Was your village attacked that day?

Yes. It was shelled by mortar once or twice.

How about the VC casualties?

I don't know. My hamlet, which is in the lower part of the village, wasn't hit.

243. To your knowledge, can the VC continue the war?

I don't know. (The subject burst out laughing.) The VC always hide and attack suddenly, but they can't meet the ARVN in real battles.

244. Do you think the guerrilla tactics are effective?

I don't know.

245. Do you know how many guerrillas there were in your village?

I saw them, but I don't exactly know how many they were. I saw five to seven guerrillas.

246. Did the VC ever ask you to join their guerrilla force?

No. I'm old, so they didn't ask me to join them. Moreover, I had heart attacks.

247. Did they ask you to carry out any other jobs?

Yes. They asked me to go and sabotage the roads two or three times.

248. Did you have to dig underground passages?

Yes.

249. How often?

Over ten times.

250. How many people were recruited to dig underground passages?

I don't know.

251. When were the underground passages dug?

In 1962 or 1963.

252. Do you know the methods of digging an underground passage from the viewpoint of soil and position?

I don't know.

253. Did you dig the tunnels at night or in daytime?

Sometimes at night and sometimes in daytime. Digging at night was safer.

254. How long did you dig in the earth each time?

(The subject didn't directly answer the question)
The able-bodied men came down the tunnel to dig, and the weak ones just stood near the opening of the tunnel to haul up the earth. I was among the latter.

255. How big a team was charged with digging a tunnel?

Twenty to thirty men.

256. Did you dig the tunnels everyday at that time?

No. I rested for one day after three days' work.

257. Do you know anyone digging the tunnels for a whole year?

I don't know.

258. Was there any VC showing you how deep a tunnel must be dug?

Yes. Generally, a tunnel is 3 meters deep at the opening.

259. Did you receive food while digging the tunnels for the VC?

No. I came back home to eat.

260. How about the ages of the diggers?

Men from 18 to 55 years of age had to dig tunnels. Of these, the older men stood above the holes to haul up the earth.

261. Did women dig tunnels?

Yes. Women were also obliged to dig tunnels.

262. Did the VC carry out any terroristic acts in your village or kill any of the people at that time for refusing to dig tunnels?

I don't know.

263. Do you know how many tunnels there were in your village?

I don't know. You only know the tunnels you've dug.

264. How many tunnels did you dig?

I dug two tunnels.

265. How did you get rid of the dirt you dug up from the hole?

The dirt was thrown to the sides of the hole.

266. Were the tunnels camouflaged?

They were camouflaged with tree branches and leaves.

267. Were there ventilation pipes in the tunnels?

I didn't see them. The VC never let the people know anything about the tunnels that were secretly dug.

268. Did any villager enter a tunnel out of curiosity?

No.

269. Did the VC forbid the people from entering the tunnels?

Yes. A VC cadre forbade the people from entering the tunnels.

270. Was this VC cadre a native of your village?

Yes.

271. Were there any returnees in your village? Were there any infiltrators from North Vietnam?

I don't know. I only know that the VC called themselves the Front cadres.

272. Did you see any cadres or the Front regular troops passing through your village?

No.

273. Did the villagers ever have to carry the VC dead off from the battlefield?

Yes. Some youths in my village had to do this job. They were from 18 to 35 years old.

274. How many young men were recruited to carry out this task?

I don't know.

275. Do you know what battles there had been before?

No.

276. Do you know why the VC carry off its dead from the battlefield?

No.

277. Was there a Front memorial in your village?

No.

278. Did the Front people organize ceremonies for their dead in your village?

Yes. They organized them last year.

279. How often?

I don't know.

280. Did the GVN troops often pass through your hamlet before?

Yes.

281. Did they pass through your hamlet last year?

Last year, they mopped up the area once.

282. Where did you take refuge each time?

In [redacted]

283. Were you informed in advance of the GVN mopping-up operations?

No. When artillery explosions were heard and the villagers from [redacted] moved southward by passing through my village, I immediately took refuge in [redacted] with my family.

284. Do you know whether the GVN troops arrested any suspects in your village?

No.

285. How often did the GVN troops mop up your village during the past seven or eight months?

Once in July. A large operation took place at that time.

286. How did they behave toward the villagers?

They behaved well. They didn't steal chicken and pigs. Some gave money to the children.

287. What did the villagers think of the guerrillas' activities?

They hated them, because the guerrillas fired at random, causing the GVN to bomb and to strife their village. They didn't dare speak out, for fear they might be arrested.

288. What did the villagers think of the VC troops passing through your village?

I don't know. I lived in the "plains" of the village, while each time the VC passed through my village, they always passed through the " highlands."

289. How far are the " plains " from the " highlands"?

About one kilometer.

290. What is the difference between the two areas?

The guerrillas never dare to live in the "plains," because

their presence is easily detected by the GVN. Also, they have no solid shelters to hide in while in the "highlands" they have plenty of shelters.

291. Why are the shelters in the plains not solid?

The terrain in the plains is water-soaked.

292. Do you hear anything about the living conditions of the Front troops?

No.

293. Have the VC troops passing through your hamlet ever waged propaganda about their victories?

No.

294. Did you hear about the Ap-Bac battle two years ago?

No.

295. Have you seen any Americans?

I've seen them very often, but I don't remember when.

296. What do you think they are doing in Vietnam?

I don't know exactly what they are doing in Vietnam. I find that they've given the GVN trucks, tanks, cannons, etc.

297. You mean they only give the GVN war materiel...?

I only see these things...They've also handed out aid to the anti-communist refugees.

298. Do you have any close friends serving in Front military units?

No.

299. Were you acquainted with any youths recruited by the Front for military duty?

No. I know a few youths who have escaped the Front military service by going to Saigon to find any job, or by transporting timber on sampans here.

300. How many?

Six to seven youths in my hamlet.

301. When did they escape?

About half a month ago.

302. Does the Front now recruit more people for military duty than before?

Yes.

303. Did any member of your family suggest you move earlier?

Yes. Some friends of mine who had come back from the GVN-controlled areas.

304. What did they say?

They said that it was impossible to stay in the village any longer because the bombings would force us to go to safer places.

305. When the area called Ho-Bo was bombed by the B-52's, did you know it?

I didn't know what target was hit by the bombs.

306. Is your village near Ho-Bo?

No. Ho-Bo is far from my village.

307. Was [redacted] village hit by the bombs?

Yes. This morning (September [redacted] 1965), it was bombed again by the B-52's.

308. How do you know it?

I was in [redacted] this morning before coming here. The explosions were terrific!

309. When did you leave your village to live in [redacted]?

About half a month ago. My family had taken refuge in [redacted] before. I returned to [redacted] everyday to till my ricefields from 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM.

310. Do you intend now to come back to till your ricefields?

No, because I have already finished the harvest, so it isn't necessary to come back to my ricefields now.

311. Do you expect to stay here permanently?

Yes.

312. Why? You want to stay in [redacted] permanently, don't you?

When the next crop comes, if the Government allows me to come back to harvest, I'll come back.

313. When will be the next crop?

In two months. But if the Government hasn't built the houses for the refugees yet, I'll have to return to [redacted] to live there temporarily.

314. Is [redacted] a safe area?

It's a contested area.

315. How far is [redacted] from here?

About 8 kilometers.

316. Are the GVN troops stationed there?

Yes, but I've seen some guerrillas too.

317. What do the people of [redacted] think of the bombings by the B-52's?

They're very afraid of them.

318. Do they evacuate the village?

Yes, they've left the village, but many still stay behind.

319. What percentage?

Thirty to forty percent have left.

320. How about [redacted] village?

At the time when I left the village, about seventy percent of the people in the village left. And I think that now everyone has left.

321. Did any fighting take place in [redacted]?

No. From time to time, two or three guerrillas passed through the village and fired some shots, but as the GVN troops outnumbered them, they ran away like rats.

322. Is there a GVN post nearby?

Yes. There's the [redacted] post nearby.

323. How many men were there?

I don't know.

324. Was [redacted] shelled by mortar fire?

Yes. [redacted] was once bombarded by artillery and two farmers were killed.

325. How did the villagers feel about the attack? Did they resent it?

They resented the Viet Cong instead. It was because of the VC's presence in the village that the GVN bombarded it by artillery, killing two by mistake.

326. Did any people in your village join the Front because they resented the GVN attacks?

I don't know.

327. Which attacks and air weapons were the villagers most afraid of?

Large bombs and artillery shells. They were very afraid of the large bombs dropped by the B-52's.

328. Did you take cover in trenches when your village was attacked by artillery or aircraft?

Yes.

329. How often did the people leave your village to take refuge in the GVN- controlled areas after the B-52 attacks?

I don't remember.

330. Did the attacks interfere with your work and your earnings?

Yes. I was afraid and had to give up my work to come back home.

331. Was your house in [redacted] damaged by the bombs?

Before I left [redacted] it hadn't been damaged, but I don't know what happened to it after I left.

332. Do you know how many people in [redacted] village were killed by the bombs from the B-52's?

One man and three children.

333. How?

Their trenches fell in from the pressure of the bombs.

334. Did the GVN warn your hamlet it would be attacked by the B-52's?

Yes. The GVN warned the villagers one day in advance that their village would be attacked.

335. What did the GVN tell the villagers?

"The people must evacuate". That's what the GVN broadcasts from aircraft said. "Bombs will be dropped, and then we cannot protect your properties any longer. If you leave your village to take refuge in the GVN-controlled areas, the Government will assist you."

336. Did the GVN explain the reasons for the attack?

I didn't hear that.

337. What did you think about the GVN's appeal?

I thought if bombs were dropped everything would be destroyed

and the villagers would be homeless, so that once they've left the village they'll never return to it.

338. What did you and the other villagers do?

We left the village to take refuge in [redacted]. But some villagers still stayed behind. After the second bombings, though, I think everyone has left.

339. How did you and the villagers get news about what was going on? Were there any newspapers in your village?

No. The VC didn't allow Saigon newspapers in the village.

340. When did they start this ban?

About five months ago.

341. Did anyone secretly bring Saigon newspapers into the village?

I don't know.

342. Did you see any VC newspapers? Did you see the paper "Giai-Phong"?

I'm illiterate, so I didn't know anything at all.

343. Had you or your family thought of moving to a GVN-controlled area before?

Yes. More than a year ago, right after the withdrawal of the GVN forces from the outpost near the Strategic Hamlet, I already thought of moving to a GVN-controlled area. That is why my wife and my children have been taking refuge in Tan-An for over three months.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

The subject was not well informed on the B-52's strikes, since he had been taking refuge in another village during the bombings of his village. He seemed intelligent, with a faulty memory, but sincere and cooperative.

NO. AGR 35

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

1. Name of interviewer [redacted]

2. Name of subject [redacted]

3. Time and date of interview :

   From 10:10 AM to 12:00 [redacted]on Sept [redacted] 1965

   From 2:40 PM to 5:00 PMon " 19 65

   From _____ to _____ on _____ 19___

4. Place of interview :

   [redacted] Binh Duong province

5. Sex of subject : Male (X) Female ( )

6. Age of subject : 50

7. Ethnic background : Vietnamese

8. Place of birth :

   hamlet [redacted]

   village [redacted]

   district Ben-Cat

   province Binh Duong

9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :

   hamlet _____

   village [redacted]

   district Chau Thanh

   province Binh Duong

10. (a) Length of residence in last location : 2 months

    (b) Who controlled the place of residence :

    GVN ( ) VC (X) Contested ( ) How long? 2 years

NO. AGR 35

11. Number of brothers (0) and sisters (2)

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : _____

13. Marital status : married

14. Number of children : 4

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age : 0

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject ( ) deceased
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject( ) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject (X) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject(X) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion : Buddhist

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : Farming

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation Poor farmer
(b) Landowner? _____

20. Education :
illiterate (X)
literate ( )
schooling completed : _____

21. Any relatives in VC : No

22. Any relatives in GVN : 2 sisters

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by :
(a) French No
(b) GVN ''
(c) VC ''

24. When became a refugee : May [redacted] 1965

AGR

INTERVIEW

36

THE RAND CORPORATION

[redacted]

STUDIES OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT
OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR-36

Date of Interview : September [redacted] 1965

Subject's Category : Refugee

Area : [redacted] Village
Ben-Cat District
Binh-Duong Province

COMMENTS : Worth noting are subject's remarks on civilian casualties and damages sustained in B-52 raids (Q. 29-35,49), villagers' attitudes toward the VC (Q. 79-81, 161-171), VC taxes (Q.103-105), and VC land reform (Q.109-112). Included in the final Interviewer's Comments is a translation of a GVN leaflet warning of air attacks.

[redacted]

1. How long have you been here?
   I have been here for two weeks.

2. Was your village bombed when you came here?
   Yes.

3. When? How long before your coming here?
   Two days before I came here

4. Where were bombs dropped?
   Bombs were dropped on the borders of An-Tay and An-Dien.

5. How far from your house?
   About 1 km.

6. How often was your village bombed?
   In all, three times.

7. Could you remember the dates of these bombings?
   I was so afraid that I couldn't remember anything.

8. At what time did the last bombing take place?
   About seven or eight o'clock in the morning.

9. Were you at home during the bombing?
   Yes. I was going to my ricefields. I rushed home to take cover in my shelter.

10. At what time did the two previous bombings take place?
    The first one at 10 AM and the second one at 5 AM.

11. Did all these bombings take place this month or last month?
    All these bombings took place during the eighth month of the lunar calendar (September).

12. Did any bombings take place last month?
    Artillery attacks took place last month.

13. What damage was inflicted?
    A house of mine was destroyed by an artillery shell.

14. Was anyone killed?
    No. I was in [redacted] village and in Binh-Duong (she meant [redacted] city) at that time.

15. Was your younger daughter at home during the bombardment?

No. She came to see her sister.

16. Did her sister live in the village?

Yes. She lived in the village with her husband.

17. What damage was inflicted by artillery bombardments to other villagers' properties?

Many houses were destroyed. All the areca and durion trees in my garden were damaged.

18. Concerning the air attacks, what kind of aircraft did the bombings? Did you see them?

I was very afraid, so I went down into the shelter immediately. I didn't dare look at the aircraft flying overhead.

19. Were you told that they were the jets or the fighter-bombers?

No. Nor were they the helicopters which flew lower. The kind of aircraft which did the bombings couldn't be seen: they flew too high and too fast.

20. Have you been told that these aircraft were the B-52's?

Yes.

21. Who told you so?

After I came here, I learned that these aircraft were the B-52's.

22. While still staying in your village, did you know it?

No.

23. Did the B-52's drop bombs on the civilian population's area in your village?

No, but bombs were dropped along the roads.

24. How far was your house from these roads?

Less than 2 km.

25. Did you know any difference between the B-52's and the aircraft you have seen in the past?

The explosions were heavier, making the earth quake and my lungs hurt.

25. Did you see the craters? How big were they?

Some were small, but others were as big as this room (the Conference Room of Binh Duong Province, where the interview was made.) I saw the big craters along the roads.

27. How deep were these craters?

Eight to ten meters deep.

28. Were these craters in your village or in the neighboring villages?

In my village, but in the other hamlets -- not in mine.

29. What damage was inflicted?

The damage to the fruit trees was great.

30. Could you describe the damage.

The trees were cut off. There were also many killed among the civilians in the village.

31. How many people were killed?

Over ten people of different ages.

32. Were they killed from burns, shrapnel, or blast?

Because they didn't take cover in time.

33. Did the blasts affect the shelters?

Yes. The explosions caused the shelters to quiver as strongly as an earthquake does.

34. Did you take cover during the previous bombings?

Yes. I took cover as soon as I heard any noise or whizzing from an aircraft.

35. Did the VC still stay in your village during the bombings?

I don't know. A few days after coming here, I came back home to get some personal effects, and I saw that my village was like a desert. I was very frightened so that I immediately came back here.

36. Did the GVN give you any warning about leaving your village?

Yes. An aircraft broadcast appeals to the villagers to temporarily take refuge in the GVN-controlled areas.

37. How often did the aircraft make the appeals? Did it make the appeals before the first bombing?

Appeals were made only after the first two bombings.

38. How many people have left your village?

I don't know.

39. How many people have left your hamlet?

Several dozen families.

40. How big was your hamlet? How many people?

My hamlet was populated, but as I seldom called on my neighbors, I don't know how many people lived in my hamlet. I estimate that my hamlet had about forty to fifty families, but I don't know whether all these families have left.

41. How many hamlets did your village have?

[redacted] hamlets: [redacted] which borders [redacted]

42. How did you get here?

I walked to [redacted], then I sailed on a boat to get here. I took the boat at 2:30 PM and I arrived here at 4:00 PM.

43. Do you know any difference between these aircraft and the ones you have seen in the past?

The B-52's dropped more bombs than the ones I have seen in the past. The explosions were so much heavier they deafened my ears during the bombings.

44. How did you feel during the bombings?

I was very afraid.

45. How did the attacks differ from the ones you have experienced in the past?

No difference, except that more bombs were dropped than before.

46. Could you tell me the location of the bombed area?

[redacted] and [redacted]

47. Did you know about the attack of Ho-Bo?

No. Ho-Bo is far away.

48. Do you know anything about the damage caused by the bombings of the B-52's to the VC tunnels?

No.

49. How about the effects of the bombings on the civilian population?

In my village of [redacted] the casualties suffered by the civilian population were nearly twenty killed and wounded. In Hamlet 2, two straw huts were burned and a brick house fell in; in Hamlet 1, about ten straw huts were reduced to ashes. The gardens planted with durion trees were very much damaged. Concerning the animals, about ten pigs were killed. Many chicken were also killed.

50. Were there many refugees on the boat?

Yes.

51. How many people in your village took the same boat as you to take refuge here?

Few people in my village were seen aboard the boat, but I saw other villagers from [redacted] and [redacted]. The boat made many trips each day, and it transported about fifty persons per trip.

52. Did all the members of your family live together before you came here or were some living apart?

They were living apart except for my daughter who lived with me. My elder brother and my younger brother were in Ben-Cat. I have a younger sister who now lives in [redacted] which is still a GVN-controlled area. My elder sister is carrying on business in Saigon.

53. Did you go to Saigon sometimes?

I went to Saigon for a short stay there, and I returned to my village to work, because my family was poor.

54. How much land did you own?

I owned one mau of ricefields left by my father as a heritage But since I was a weak woman, I couldn't till this land which has been left uncultivated for a long time -- about two years.

55. What did you do to earn a living?

I was hired by other villagers to do some light jobs and I cultivated some vegetables and sweet potatoes in my garden. I was poor.

56. What category did the VC assign to your family: rich, medium, poor, very poor or others?

Middle farmers.

57. Why so?

Because they based it on the fact that I owned one mau of land.

58. Were there any changes in your or your family's economic conditions in the past years?

No. My living conditions were always bad.

59. How about your living conditions before your husband's death?

They were a little better, but since my husband's death they have become worse and worse.

60. What are your plans and prospects now?

I entirely depend on the Government's generosity in helping the refugees.

61. Do you expect to stay here for a long or a short time?

I now live temporarily in the house of a friend at Chanh Hiep just near the Police Station at the entrance of this city. I don't expect to live there for a long time, and I think that the place where I expect to live for a long time will be at [redacted]

62. Do you have any relatives in [redacted]?

Yes. My husband's aunt.

63. Do you expect to move back to your village?

I'll move back to my village only when it becomes safe.

64. Was your village a Strategic Hamlet?

Yes.

65. When was it organized?

In 1963. The Strategic Hamlet of [redacted] was organized at the same time as the Strategic Hamlet of [redacted]. The latter was given up by the GVN, then the former was in turn given up in the same year.

66. Do you know why the GVN gave up the Strategic Hamlet of [redacted]

I don't know. It seemed that the GVN gave up [redacted] to move to [redacted] which it again abandoned.

67. How long did the two Strategic Hamlets exist before the GVN gave them up?

Not even a year. The people in [redacted] also moved to [redacted] to live there for some time.

68. Was it because the VC were very active in [redacted] that the GVN abandoned the Strategic Hamlet there?

I don't know.

69. Was it destroyed by the VC?

No.

70. Did any fighting take place in your village at that time?

No At that time, the Government made an appeal to the villagers to move to [redacted] to take refuge there, but because [redacted] is located near [redacted] which was then given up by the GVN for unknown reasons, the villagers of [redacted] preferred to take refuge in [redacted] while the people of [redacted] moved to the Strategic Hamlet of Phu-Thu.

71. Did all the villagers of [redacted] move to [redacted] at that time?

I don't know.

72. How long did you take refuge in [redacted]?

Five to six months.

73. What do you think of the Strategic Hamlet Program?

Any place where one can farm is a good place for me. But as I had no land in [redacted] I still prefer to live in my village where I had a piece of land on which I depended on the fruit trees to live.

74. So, you disliked the Strategic Hamlet of [redacted] because it affected your earnings from growing fruit trees, didn't you?

Yes.

75. Did you receive any aid in money from the GVN for leaving your village to live in the Strategic Hamlet of [redacted]?

I was a late-comer, so I haven't received any aid yet.

76. How about the " first-comers " ?

They received aid in money and rice

77. What was the last location of your residence before you came here?

[redacted] I came back to [redacted] soon after the Strategic Hamlet of [redacted] was given up.

78. Were the VC active in [redacted] when you came back there to live?

The VC didn't live in [redacted] but they came at night. They just passed through my village to call on some villagers.

79. What was the villagers' attitude toward the VC?

I don't know. The people, squeezed in the middle, were afraid of both sides. They feared that they might be arrested by the VC for the slightest mistake, and they might be put in jail by the GVN for committing any fault toward it.

80. Did the VC carry out any program to help the villagers?

No.

81. What did you think of them?

I don't know. I was afraid of both sides, so were the people in my village.

82. Did the VC carry out any terroristic acts in your village or kill any of the people?

I didn't see anyone killed by them, but I saw some people arrested by them passing through my hamlet.

83. How many young men in your hamlet were recruited by them for military duty?

I don't know.

84. Did the VC recruit people in your village for hard labor?

Yes.

85. How many people were recruited for hard labor?

I don't know.

86. Were women recruited for hard labor?

I don't know. I think that men are recruited for hard labor, not women -- who are physically weak.

87. Did you know that the people recruited for hard labor had to dig shelters, trenches, and tunnels for the VC?

I don't know.

88. Did you see any tunnels?

No. The VC never let other people know it.

89. Did you know that there were tunnels in your village?

I learned from hearsay that there were tunnels in my village but I didn't know where.

90. Had the VC already organized a Women's Association in your village?

No.

91. Did you attend any meetings?

Nobody invited me to attend them. Before the construction of the Strategic Hamlets, I attended some meetings.

92. How often?

I don't remember how many times the meetings were held at that time.

93. What did the VC say on each occasion?

I don't remember.

94. How many young men 16 years old or more in your village joined the VC army as new recruits?

I don't know.

95. How many joined the ARVN?

Two or three youths in my hamlet joined the ARVN.

96. Were you or any members of your family taken by the Front for "re-education"?

No.

97. Did the VC organize a Farmers' Association in your village?

I don't know.

98. Did you pay taxes or contributions to the VC?

No. A VC called on me to collect taxes, but I didn't pay him any contributions just because I didn't farm my land.

99. How much did you have to pay if you tilled your land?

Five "gia" of paddy.

100. Did you pay taxes to the GVN?

No.

101. Were there rich farmers in your hamlet?

Nobody in my hamlet owned more than ten mau of ricefields. At most, two people owned six to seven mau each. They have also left the village at the same time the other refugees here did.

102. Did anyone in your hamlet leave earlier?

No.

103. Do you know how much the other people in your hamlet had to pay to the VC in taxes?

Only those who owned large gardens planted with fruit trees had to pay what the VC demanded. My garden was very small, so I didn't pay the contributions.

104. Did you contribute rice to feed the troops?

A VC asked me to do this, but I always forgot to keep out one handful of rice each time I cooked.

105. Who asked you to do so?

A guerrilla.

106. How many guerrillas did your village have?

I don't know. Some hamlets had two or three guerrillas each, and others five or six. I saw six guerrillas in my hamlet.

107. Did they fight against the GVN forces?

I don't know.

108. Did your village have a Civil Affairs Committee?

I learned from hearsay that this Committee existed, but I never saw it. I moved freely from one village to another without applying for authorization to anyone.

109. Did the VC carry out land distribution in your hamlet?

Yes. But only the extremely poor people benefitted from the land given them by the Front.

110. Did you receive any land?

No.

111. How many people benefitted from land distribution?

I don't know. In my hamlet, I only saw two people who had received 50 "sao" each (in this area, one mau equals 100 "sao")

112. Whose ricefields did the VC confiscate to distribute them to these people?

I don't know to whom the ricefields had belonged. The VC said that they were public land.

113. Besides the guerrillas, did you know there were any returnees from North Vietnam in your village?

I don't know, because all the VC I saw were strangers.

114. Were there any infiltrators from North Vietnam?

I don't know. I saw strangers passing through my hamlet but I never talked with them.

115. Did they often pass through your hamlet?

Yes.

116. Were they the VC soldiers?

I don't know. They wore ordinary clothes.

117. Did they carry any weapons?

No. They each carried a bag of clothes.

118. Did the VC troops pass through your area?

Yes.

119. How often did you see them passing through your hamlet this year?

Before the bombings (by the B-52's), they passed through my hamlet very often. Since then, I didn't see them any longer.

120. Could you tell me when you last saw them pass through your hamlet?

Two days after the first bombing, they passed through my hamlet at night. I only heard them march by: "Rap! rap! rap!" I don't know how many there were.

121. How many troops had passed through your village previously (before the bombings)?

They were extremely numerous!

122. How many?

I don't know. It was impossible to count them.

123. Do you know the names of these units?

No.

124. Did you see their weapons? What kind of weapons?

I saw a big gun which a soldier carried on his shoulders

125. Was it a 60 mm. mortar?

I don't know. Three to four soldiers were in charge of this big gun. The whole unit had three such big guns.

126. Did you see any anti-aircraft machine gun?

No. I saw only three tripods for these big guns.

127. Was the barrel of one of these guns small or large?

Small.

128. How strong was this unit?

About one hundred men or more.

129. Have you seen more aircraft during the past six months than before?

More than before.

130. What kind?

I don't know. The choppers have been seen more often.

131. How about the fighter-bombers?

Four to five such planes flew each time.

132. Did you see more fighter-bombers during the past six months than before?

Yes. More than before.

133. What about the aircraft that bombed your village? Have you seen them before?

They flew very nigh in the sky. I have not seen them before.

134. Were there indications of prior knowledge of the strikes? Did the VC evacuate the area prior to the strikes?

I don't know.

135. What evasive or protective techniques were employed by the VC during the strikes?

I don't know.

136. How many families left the village at about the time you did? How many stayed behind?

In my hamlet, only two or three families stayed behind because they were numerous and poor; they were anxious about earning a living elsewhere. Each of these families had three to six children. But I saw them here yesterday.

137. Have you heard about the attacks on North Vietnam?

I didn't hear about them while still staying in my village, but after coming here I have heard that bombs were dropped on North Vietnam.

138. What have you heard about them?

The villagers going to market said; "Bombs were dropped on North Vietnam." They just said so and didn't comment at all.

139. What effects do you think the attacks had or may have on the population's morale?

I don't know.

140. What do you think of the attacks on North Vietnam?

As far as I am concerned, I like to live in any safe place. I don't care about the attacks on North Vietnam.

141. Have you heard about American combat forces in South Vietnam?

(No answer)

142. Have you seen any Americans?

Yes. I have seen one or two Americans.

143. Where?

At the market of [redacted]

144. What do you think the Americans are doing in Vietnam?

I don't know. I have been told that the Americans come here in large numbers.

145. Who told you so?

The villagers.

146. Under the Diem regime, did you receive any American aid?

Yes. I received a pick and a shovel.

147. Were you satisfied with this aid?

Yes.

148. Did you hear any VC propaganda about the Americans?

No.

149. Did you read any newspapers?

No. I am illiterate.

150. Did you ever see any VC newspapers or wall newspapers?

I saw VC leaflets on the walls and trees, but I couldn't read them.

151. Did the VC use megaphones to wage propaganda to the villagers?

For a long time I didn't hear them speak over the megaphone. Last year, they used the megaphone to call the villagers to do hard labor. Old people were exempted from doing hard labor.

152. Did the VC become active in your village in 1960?

No. They became active in 1962-63. At first, I took them for the people working for the GVN, and later I ascertained that they were the VC. They wore black clothes.

153. What propaganda did they wage at that time?

(No answer)

154. Did they say anything about the National Front of Liberation of South Vietnam?

I heard about it, but I didn't know what the Front meant.

155. Did you hear anything about the Front's aims. Did the VC explain the Front's aims?

No.

156. Did the VC set up a Front Committee in your village? Did you hear about it?

No.

157. Was your village a Combat Village?

I didn't hear about it.

158. Did the VC troops passing through your village ever sleep in the people's houses?

No. They didn't sleep in the people's houses because the villagers had told them that their houses were very small.

159. Where did they sleep?

They probably slept on the hammocks in the jungle.

160. Is your hamlet partly covered with jungle?

Yes. The jungle is about 200-300m from my hamlet.

161. Did you ever enter the jungle? Did you see the VC there?

Since the artillery bombardments, I didn't dare venture there.

162. How long?

Since five or six months ago.

163. Did you see the VC in the jungle before?

Yes. I saw some VC pass through the jungle, but I didn't see them set up camp there.

164. Were the villagers afraid that the presence of VC troops in the village might lead the GVN to attack the village?

Yes. The villagers were afraid that the presence of numerous VC troops might lead the GVN aircraft to attack the village.

165. Did the villagers ask the VC troops to leave the village?

Yes.

166. What did they say?

They said: "Be careful! The aircraft may come to kill us!"

167. What did the VC answer?

"No."

168. Who were the spokesmen of the villagers?

Some old women in the village. In face of the unfriendly attitude of the population, the VC troops left without saying anything.

169. Did anyone in your village join the VC because of attacks on your village?

Nobody in my hamlet.

170. How do you know?

Because I found that in my hamlet those who were farmers always continued to till their ricefields.

171. When your village was still under the GVN control, what was the attitude of the GVN authorities toward the villagers?

They behaved well. The village chief was correct toward the people in the village. He moved to Ben Cat long ago and from time to time he came back to [redacted]. He is now in Ben-Cat.

172. What is [redacted]

[redacted] is Hamlet [redacted] of my village. It was a safe area and there was a GVN post there. I think that [redacted] is still under GVN control.

173. Did the village chief visit your hamlet?

No. He didn't dare come to my hamlet.

174. How about the hamlet chief?

He also moved to Ben-Cat.

175. Why didn't you leave earlier?

I didn't want to give up the small piece of land left by my parents. Only when the bombardments became so fearful did I decide to leave.

176. What have you heard about conditions in GVN-controlled areas before you left?

The broadcasts from aircraft made appeals to the villagers to evacuate, and said that the refugees would be given money and rice.

177. Did you pick up any GVN leaflets?

Yes. I picked this leaflet (The subject handed over to the interviewer a leaflet, a translation of which is included in Interviewer's Comments.)

178. Did you read this leaflet?

No. I cannot read.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

Though subject was fairly well informed about the B-52 strikes, she was not intelligent and her conversation was dull. She was cooperative and sincere however.

The pamphlet that she gave the interviewer showed on one side a B-52 dropping a string of 32 bombs. On the other side was the following appeal:

Dear VC cadres and fighters!

You have just lived through terrifying moments. You have just witnessed the blackest and the most distressing state of what the Communists call "The Revolution for the Liberation of South Vietnam," a name designed to deceive you.

The operations of the B-52 jet fighters, which you have just witnessed, will become more extensive and will continue either until the puppet Communist government in Hanoi has no choice but to take part in peace negotiations to end the war in Vietnam, or until their insurgency in the South is annihilated.

Dear friends, think this over.

The Chinese Communists only make empty promises. As for the Communists in North Vietnam, every day they have to endure the continuous air attacks by the US and GVN Air Forces. They cannot help you. They only force you to sacrifice your lives, endure starvation, wear ragged clothes, serve as their cannon fodder, and endure the air attacks like the one you have just gone through. You are being deceived by the Communists who use you as their cannon fodder. You should return to the Government. The Army of the Republic of Vietnam and the people are waiting for you with their arms wide open, ready to welcome you and to take you back among them.

Note: Take this leaflet with you and go and present yourself at the nearest office or post. The people there have been ordered to welcome and assist you.

No. AGR 36

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

MASTER COPY

1. Name of interviewer [redacted]

2. Name of subject [redacted]

3. Time and date of interview :

From 9:40 AM to 12:00 AM on Sept. [redacted] 1965

From _____ to _____ on _____ 196__

From _____ to _____ on _____ 196__

Total time 2:20

Interview based on : tape ( ) hand written notes ( )

4. Place of interview :

[redacted] Binh Duong province

5. Sex of subject : Male ( ) Female (X)

6. Age of subject : 51

7. Ethnic background : _____

8. Place of birth :

hamlet [redacted] (Hamlet [redacted]

village [redacted]

district Ben-Cat

province Binh-Duong

9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :

hamlet [redacted] (Hamlet [redacted]

village [redacted]

district Ben-Cat

province Binh-Duong

10. (a) Length of residence in last location : 33 years

(b) Who controlled the place of residence:

GVN ( ) VC ( ) Contested (X)

(c) Since when controlled or contested ? 1 1/2 years

11. Number of brothers (2) and sisters (1)

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : 2

13. Marital status : Married (Widow)

14. Number of children : 3 daughters

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age : _____

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject (X) deceased
Brothers with subject( ) or not with subject (X)
Wife with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
1 daughter Children with subject(X) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion : Ancestors worship

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : hired laborer and farmer

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation _____
(b) Landowner ? Middle farmer How much land _____

20. Education :
illiterate (x)
literate ( )
schooling completed : _____

21. Any relatives in VC : No

22. Any relatives in GVN : 1 sister in Saigon
~~2 brothers in Ben Cat town~~

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by :
X(a) French Her husband killed by French mortar in 1951
(b) GVN
(c) VC

24. When became a refugee : September 1965

25. Where took refuge first _____

26. Present residence _____

INTERVIEW #AGR-37 MISSING—

INTERVIEW NOT COMPLETED

INTERVIEW #AGR-38 MISSING—

INTERVIEW NOT COMPLETED

AGR

INTERVIEW

39

THE RAND CORPORATION

[redacted]

STUDIES OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT
OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR-39

Date of Interview : September [redacted] 1965

Subject's Category : Refugee: September [redacted] 1965

Area of residence : [redacted] hamlet, [redacted] village, Ben Cat district, Binh Duong province.

Comments: Subject, a 25-year-old poor farmer, spoke freely about the Strategic Hamlet (Q.22-28) and the Combat Hamlet (Q. 43-58) village attitudes toward the VC (Q.31-36, 86, 145-146), the VC draft (Q. 41-42), taxes (Q. 59-65), and land distribution (66-73), effects of bombing (Q. 99-107), GVN psywar (Q. 111-112, 116-118, 123-124, 128-133), and Government aid to refugees (Q.147-149),

1. When did you come here?

I came here 3 days ago.

2. Where did you come from?

From [redacted] hamlet, [redacted] village.

3. How did you come?

I had to walk from my hamlet to the road in the safe zone, from there I took the scooter bus to come here. The distance between the hamlet and the road was 2 hours walking.

4. What is your plan now?

I hope that the government will give me some work. Meanwhile, I wish that they would feed me.

5. How many members are there in your family?

I have a wife and 3 children.

6. Did you live together before coming here?

Yes, we were all together. But since we came here, we have to live with our friends. Since none of our friends has a big enough house for all of us, we have to stay in 2 different houses.

7. Are your parents living? Do you have any sisters and brothers? Where do they live?

Yes, my parents are living. I have 4 brothers and 3 sisters. They lived in the same hamlet with me but not in the same house. Besides, they all have come here.

8. How big was your village? How many inhabitants?

My village had [redacted] hamlets. I don't know the number of inhabitants.

9. Do you know the number of inhabitants, or the number of families in your hamlet?

I don't know either one.

10. Did you always stay in your hamlet before coming here?

Yes, we always stayed in our hamlet.

11. Were there any families who had left the hamlet during the last 6 months?

I think that all the families in my hamlet had left. There were some families who left before me, some at the same time with me. The exodus began a month ago.

12. How did the inhabitants of your hamlet live?

Everybody in my hamlet lived off the ricefields. Some grew potatoes. Some were well-off, others were poor.

13. How did your family live?

We also lived off the land. We grew rice and some potatoes. But we had no land of our own; we had to rent it.

14. How were you classified by the VC cadres?

According to them, I belonged to the poor farmer class.

15. Have your economic conditions changed in the last few years?

In the last few years my income has gone down. From lack of fertilizers, the field has yielded less and less paddy.

16. What do you think about that?

I think that if things go on like that, some day my family won't have enough to eat. So it's better if I left the hamlet to come here.

17. This is the picture of a ladder of which the top step is step No. 1 and the bottom step No. 10. Suppose that step No. 1 represents the best kind of life you could think of, and step No. 10 the worst. Which would be your life in your hamlet?

Step No. 9.

18. Describe the best life you could think of for yourself.

There would be lots of ricefields, lots of rice, enough money for all the expenses, and enough freedom to go wherever I please.

19. Describe the worst life you could think of for yourself in the hamlet.

There wouldn't be enough rice and clothing, and one would have to eat potatoes and vegetables all the time instead of rice.

20. What do you want your son to be?

I want him to have a well-paying job later, and live and work in peace.

21. Did you go to school?

I did, but not for too long. I only learned how to read and write.

22. Was your hamlet a Strategic Hamlet?

It used to be a Strategic Hamlet a year and a half ago.

23. Please tell when and how the Strategic Hamlets were built?

The GVN built them in 1963, in which they grouped all the families of my hamlet who lived in scattered places. But at the end of the same year the GVN left our hamlet suddenly. Then the VC came and made people go back to their old places.

24. Did the VC destroy the Strategic Hamlet?

No. They only ordered the people to leave it.

25. How was life in the Strategic Hamlets? Did your income go up or down, from living in the hamlet?

The Strategic Hamlet was built at the time when the land had to be cultivated. A certain number of inhabitants had to work on the building of the hamlet, so they could not till their land. Therefore some land stayed idle

that year. The GVN authorities distributed rice to the villagers several times after the construction of the Strategic Hamlet, but the rice was not enough, and lots of families were short of rice that year.

26. What did you like most in the Strategic Hamlet?

That was to be able to move around freely without fear of being stopped.

27. What did you like least about the Strategic Hamlet?

The lack of rice, as I've told you.

28. How did the hamlet officials behave? What did the people say about them?

The officials were correct. I don't know what the others think about them. As for me, I had nothing to complain about.

29. Since when did the VC control your hamlet?

As I've told you, the VC came to my hamlet shortly after the GVN authorities left. It's been more than a year-and-half since the VC got control of my hamlet.

30. Did the VC also have control of the other hamlets in your village since?

Yes.

31. Since the VC came after the departure of the GVN officials, how were they received by the hamlet inhabitants?

Nobody did anything to welcome them. They came and went as they liked, nobody said a thing.

32. What did the people think of the arrival of the VC? Were they glad about it or not?

Some were unhappy because they had to remove the newly-built shelters in the hamlet to rebuild in their old place. That took lots of time and work. But there were others who were glad because they owned large properties outside the hamlet and now they could go back and live there.

33. After the VC got control of your hamlet, did they mistreat the people? Did they kill anyone?

No. They did not do anything to the inhabitants. They did not kill anyone.

34. How did the VC cadres behave?

Like I've told you, they did not do anything to the people.

35. What did the people think of the VC cadres?

I don't know.

36. What do you think of them?

I had nothing to complain against them. I neither liked them nor hated them.

37. How did the VC cadres organize your hamlet administration?

I don't know. I only know that all the men from 16 to 50 years of age were enlisted into the hamlet's Militia Corps. I myself had to join the Militia.

38. How many men from 16 to 50 years of age were in your hamlet?

I don't know the number. I only know that there weren't many of them.

39. Were there many men serving the VC regular force?

There were none from my hamlet. I don't know if there were any from other hamlets.

40. Were there many men serving in the ARVN?

None.

41. Didn't the VC cadres ask the people to join their regular forces?

More than once, they had asked the men of my hamlet to join their forces, but nobody did. I think it was because everybody was married and a father of a family.

42. Did the VC do anything to those who refused to join their forces?

No. They didn't do anything. They only said that those people were dodging their duties.

43. Was your hamlet turned into a Combat Hamlet?

Yes. The VC made the people build fences, put up spikes, and dig trenches.

44. How was life in the Combat Hamlet?

Life was harder in the Combat Hamlet than in the Strategic Hamlet. In the Strategic Hamlet we could move around more freely without fear of airplanes. In the Combat Hamlet we could not go out at night, and we were afraid of the airplanes in the daytime.

45. Were the inhabitants obliged to do certain works for the VC?

All the healthy men once a month had to go and destroy Route 14 by digging trenches across the route. I myself was compelled to do that 4 times. There were a few dozen people working each time. It was always at night, from 7 to 11 o'clock.

46. Was there any member of your family who had to attend the educational sessions?

My father was compelled to attend an educational session for one day.

47. Do you know why?

Because 2 of my brothers worked for the GVN. One was a policeman, the other worked for the Public Works Service.

48. Were there any other men compelled to take the course?

I don't know.

49. What did the cadres say during the educational sessions

I don't know. I didn't ask my father about that.

50. Were the people afraid to attend those educational courses?

Everybody was afraid of having to attend those course. Nobody could foresee what would happen to them once they were invited to take the course. They might be suspected of having done something against the VC. They might have to be criticized or be led away.

51. Was there anybody who was led away by the VC?

Nobody.

52. Did the VC often call meetings in the hamlet?

The VC gathered the people 3 or 4 times. The first time was to ask the people to evacuate from the Strategic Hamlet, and return to their former places. In the other times, they were trying to form the hamlet's Militia Corps, or to get the men to enlist into their forces.

53. Did the VC organize certain groups in your hamlet?

There was the Nong Hoi (Farmers' Association).

54. Were you and your father members of the Nong Hoi?

No. The members of the Nong Hoi must be of certain age. My father had passed the maximum age required, and I hadn't reached the minimum age.

55. Do you know what were the aims of the Nong Hoi?

I don't know.

56. Did you join any organization or group?

I belonged to the Youth Group.

57. What were the aims of the Youth Group?

I don't know. I only know that I had to pay a monthly fee of 1 piaster.

58. Were you sometimes assigned certain jobs for the Youth Group?

No. They never asked me to do anything for the Group.

59. Did the hamlet inhabitants have to pay taxes or contributions to the VC?

Besides the monthly fees paid to various groups, each inhabitant had to make contribution in paddy. The contribution varried from 1 to 10 bushels according to the amount of paddy each person earned each year.

60. Did you have to make paddy contribution?

I had to contribute one bushel a year.

61. Did the poor people who didn't have enough rice to feed themselves for the whole year, have to pay contributions also?

Everybody had to contribute. No one was exempted. Take my case for instance, I only produced 25 bushels a year, which were not enough to feed my family all year, yet I had to contribute 1 bushel!

62. Was there anybody who refused to pay?

No. Nobody refused to pay.

63. Did the cadres give any reason why the people had to pay contributions to them?

No. They did not give any reason.

64. Since the VC controlled your hamlet, did the contributions increase or decrease?

The contributions depended upon the amount of paddy obtained from each crop. My contribution was always one bushel.

65. Before the arrival of the VC, did the people of your hamlet pay taxes to the GVN?

I don't know whether the others had to pay taxes to the GVN. As for me, I did not pay anything.

66. Did the VC organize the land distribution in your hamlet?

There was no land distribution in my hamlet. In 1959 the GVN authorities gave land to the poor people in my hamlet. Since the VC got control of my hamlet, they'd made the inventory of properties, and except for some minor changes, they left the people's properties as they were.

67. Did your family receive any land allotment in 1959?

At that time, I was still living with my parents. It was they who received 2 "cong".

68. You have just talked of minor changes made by the VC. What were they?

When the families were grouped into the Strategic Hamlet, my parents could not work on the 2 "cong" of ricefield which they had gotten from the GVN in 1959. When the VC came, my parents wanted to get back to their 2 cong of land. But the VC had taken it to give to another villager, because my parents were able to rent 7 cong of land from a landowner.

69. Why didn't the VC allot land to you since you didn't possess any?

I didn't have land, but I was able to rent some rice-field which yielded from 25 to 30 bushels annually. For that reason I wasn't given any other land.

70. Did the owner of the land you rented live in your hamlet?

No. He lived in another village.

71. Did you pay rent to him regularly?

He came regularly at each crop to collect his share of paddy.

72. What did the cadres say? Did they allow the landowners who lived in another village to come to this hamlet to collect their shares of paddy?

The VC didn't have any objection to landowners from another village coming to the hamlet for their shares of paddy. They only requested those landowners to contribute each time they came.

73. Were there any cases in which the inhabitants did not pay their land rent?

No. All the landowners were properly paid.

74. Would you tell me the history of your hamlet from the time of the Resistance?

I don't remember much. At the time of the Resistance I was too young. My family left the hamlet to settle in a safer region. Then, when the Viet Minh left my hamlet, my family came back there and worked on the ricefield that my parents were able to rent in the hamlet. Later on, the GVN authorities came to construct the Strategic Hamlet, and we had a few peaceful years. Finally the GVN authorities left my hamlet, and the VC came. The period of insecurity began with all the bombs and shells. It forced us to leave our hamlet to come here.

75. Do you know why the GVN authorities left the Strategic Hamlet? Who were those authorities?

Those authorities were the hamlet officials and the soldiers who were stationed in the hamlet outpost. One evening they left the hamlet without warning the people. Nobody knew why. Then a few days later the VC came.

76. Do you know who were the district and province chiefs? Did they come to your village often?

I don't know who they were. They only come to the hamlet once, after the Strategic Hamlet had been built, to distribute money, rice, and "nam" to the people. I've never seen them again since.

77. Did you hear about the downfall of the Diem Regime?

When I was still in the Strategic Hamlet, I heard that Mr. Diem had lost his position, and was replaced by someone else.

78. What did the people say?

They only said what I've just told you.

79. What do you think of the downfall of Mr. Diem?

I don't think anything. I remember that after the downfall of Mr. Diem the authorities distributed rice to the people once more.

80. What did the VC say about the downfall of Mr. Diem?

They said that under the Diem regime the people had no freedom and that nobody liked Mr. Diem.

81. Do you know who actually is the head of the Government?

No. I don't know.

82. Did the VC tell the people anything about the GVN?

No.

83. Under VC control, were there any VC soldiers stationed in your hamlet? Were there many of them?

The VC soldiers were not stationed in my hamlet. They only passed by once in every one or two months. Each time, they stayed one day, or one night. Their number was never the same -- it varied from 50 to 200 men.

84. How were they armed? Did they have any heavy weapons?

Each soldier had a gun. I did not see any heavy weapons.

85. Do you know what units they belonged to?

I don't know exactly the names of their units. I only heard that most of them belonged to Unit C-61. I have no idea what C-61 meant.

86. How did the VC soldiers behave?

They all were correct. They called the elderly folks "fathers" and "mothers," and the younger ones "brothers" and "sisters." Sometimes they asked the people for something to eat. They were usually given potatoes and gourds.

87. Did the ARVN pass by your hamlet often?

Yes, the ARVN also passed by my hamlet once in every 4 or 5 months.

88. Were there many of them? What did they do each time? How did they behave?

There were lots of them each time. I don't know their number. They only passed by. They all were correct. They did not disturb anybody. Each time, they told the people to stay in the houses and not to run haphazardly at the risk of being hit by bullets.

89. What was the reaction of the VC each time the ARVN passed by your hamlet?

Each time the Government came, all the VC disappeared. Nobody knew where they hid themselves.

90. What do you know about the aims of the Front?

I know nothing about the aims of the Front.

91. Did the VC talk about the Front to the people?

They only said that the Liberation Front was going to liberate the people of South Vietnam. I don't know anything else.

92. Did the VC tell the people often of the failures or successes of their forces?

Sometimes the VC told the people about the fights between the VC and the ARVN. But I've forgotten them all. I only recall that they talked just about their successes and never about their failures.

93. Did the people believe what they were told?

Nobody said anything, but I don't think the people believed all that the VC told them. In every battle, where people fire guns at each other, there's bound to be some dead on both sides. It was impossible that no VC soldier was killed.

94. Do you have friends serving the Front forces, or working as civil cadres for the Front?

No.

95. You said a while ago that you have 2 brothers working for the GVN, did they ever come to the hamlet to see you?

One of my brothers who works for the Public Works Service came to see us once in 1963 -- we were still in the Strategic Hamlet then. My other brother, the policeman, had never come back to the hamlet.

96. Besides your two brothers, do you have other relatives working for the GVN?

I have 2 cousins on my mother's side who joined the ARVN several years ago. But I've never seen them again since they left.

97. Since your hamlet came under the control of the VC, did the fights between the VC soldiers and the ARVN ever take place in your hamlet or close to your hamlet?

Several times, when the Government soldiers passed by my hamlet, I heard the noises of gunfire. I don't know whether they were fighting. I didn't see any wounded or dead among the Government soldiers, or among the VC.

98. Did the Government soldiers fire sometimes in your hamlet?

No. Never.

99. Was your hamlet sometimes bombed by the planes?

Since last year my hamlet was constantly bombed by the airplanes.

100. What were the damages?

The houses were destroyed. Once or twice there were some wounded or dead. I don't know the number.

101. How were the bombings of last year? How were those of this year?

Last year there was a bombing every 10 or 15 days. But this year, they bombed everyday. If my hamlet was spared one day, then on that same day another hamlet was bombed. Often even the forests near my village were bombed, sometimes in the day, sometimes at night.

102. Was it the same type of aircraft that carried out the bombings last year as well as this year?

Last year there were more ordinary airplanes than jet airplanes. This year the number of airplanes has increased, specially the "bats" (B-57s). Last year there were only little bombs. This year, especially in the last 2 months, there were huge bombs. The bombs dropped in the Ho-Bo Forest, 11 km from my hamlet, were very large. One night, the bombing of Ho-Bo shook all our houses. Someone who passed by Ho-Bo after the bombing, reported that several spots in the forest were completely destroyed, that even the biggest trees had collapsed, that there were many large craters on the ground made by the bombs. Some of the craters were 3 or 4 m deep, with diameters from 11 to 12 m.

103. Do you know what kind of aircraft bombed Ho-Bo?

Ho-Bo was bombed several times, day and night. I heard that each time from 10 to 20 airplanes came to bomb. They were jet planes, much bigger than the "bats".

104. In your opinion, why were the forests bombed?

I don't know. I think perhaps there were units of VC in those forests. I don't know if it was true.

105. Were there sometimes napalm bombs?

I've heard that once several houses in a village not too far from my hamlet were burnt by napalm bombs. Many men and children were also burnt to death. I don't know the details.

106. What did the people say about these bombings?

Everybody was frightened, but nobody said anything.

107. Did the people blame the GVN for their bombings of the hamlets?

No. Nobody blamed the GVN. It's only natural that the GVN authorities bombed the VC-controlled areas.

108. Was there anyone joining the VC out of disgust for the bombings?

No.

109. Was your hamlet sometimes shelled by artillery?

Yes. My hamlet was often shelled by artillery.

110. What were the damages? What did the people say?

There were some wounded. Two or three houses were destroyed. Many potato and rice fields were also ruined. I don't know what the people were thinking, because nobody talked about it. Some complained of the damages, but blamed nobody.

111. Did the GVN authorities warn the people in advance of the bombings?

No, never. Shortly before I left the hamlet, a "dragonfly" airplane (L-19) and a helicopter came to speak to the people. They said that the GVN asked everybody to evacuate the village so that the Government could destroy the VC. They invited the people to come live in the GVN-controlled areas. They added that the people might come back to the village when all the VC were eliminated. It was right after this appeal that all the inhabitants, like myself, left the village to come here.

112. Could you hear them clearly?

We could hear the voice from the helicopter clearly. But we couldn't hear what they said from the "dragonfly" airplane because it flew too high.

113. Did the bombings disturb the people in their works?

Because of the bombings, there were men and women who didn't dare work in their fields. Most of them couldn't work their ricefields properly. Therefore the revenues were very much affected.

114. What did the people say about that?

Nobody said anything.

115. What did the VC say about that?

The VC didn't say anything either.

116. In your hamlet, how were the people informed of the news?

A number of inhabitants read the GVN newspapers to learn the news.

117. Didn't the VC forbid the people to read GVN newspapers? Were there any Front papers in your hamlet?

No. The VC didn't forbid the people to read GVN newspapers. There was no paper from the Front in my hamlet.

118. Were there radio sets in your hamlet?

Only 2 families owned radio sets. But since the VC didn't allow the people to listen to radios, the radio set owners had to listen in secret. Sometimes I could come to one of the owners' houses to listen to the songs of "cai luong" over Radio Saigon.

119. Have you ever heard of the bombings of North Vietnam?

Yes, we could read the news of the bombings in the GVN newspapers. We also listened several times to the news broadcast by the Saigon station.

120. What did the people say about that?

The people said that the VC were attacked in the South, and that they were also attacked in the North. How could they stand all that?

121. What did the VC say?

The VC said that the GVN papers lied, that in the North the damage by the bombings was insignificant, that on the contrary lots of planes were shot down.

122. What do you think of what the VC said?

Having seen the damage done by the bombings in the South, we could guess what kind of damage they did in the North. As for the shot-down planes I don't know if the VC were telling the truth. I only think that it would be very hard to shoot down the planes.

123. Before your decision to come here, did you have any plan to move to another GVN-controlled area?

No. Right after I heard the planes call for the people to leave the hamlet, I packed up and went.

124. Did you yourself make the decision to go, or were you pushed by someone?

I made the decision to go away myself. There were some neighbors who suggested that we go together.

125. Before coming here, did you know what life was like, under GVN control?

The neighbors who suggested that I go with them told me that in the GVN-controlled areas we didn't have to be afraid of starving to death because all the refugees could get aid from the GVN authorities.

126. How were your neighbors informed of that?

One of them had already come here. Then they came back to the hamlet to get their families, and persuaded the other villagers to go away with them.

127. Why did you believe what your neighbors said?

With their own eyes they'd seen the refugees receive aid from the GVN authorities. They had no reason to cheat me. Besides they took their families along.

128. Did the planes come to drop leaflets in your hamlets?

The planes came to drop leaflets 3 or 4 times last month.

129. What did the leaflets say?

They called for the VC to rally to the GVN.

130. Did the VC read those leaflets? What did they say about them?

I didn't see the VC pick up those leaflets, but I suppose they must have read them. They didn't say anything.

131. Have your heard of the Chieu Hoi program?

It was exactly the Chieu Hoi leaflets that were dropped in my hamlet by the planes.

132. Do you know anything about the Chieu Hoi program?

I don't know. I only know that it was the Chieu-Hoi program that called to the VC to rally.

133. How long are you going to stay here before going back to your hamlet?

The planes said that the people might come back to the village when all the VC were eliminated. So I have to wait until the authorities allow us to go back.

134. Why did you choose to come here?

All the inhabitants of my hamlet had come here, so I did the same.

135. What were you able to take along with you?

We were able to take along some clothes.

136. Aren't you afraid that something is going to happen to all the things that you left behind? Did you leave your property with anybody?

I certainly am afraid that somebody might take my things away. But I didn't leave my house with anyone.

137. If you have the means, what would you like to take along?

I'd like very much to take the rice that I still had at the time I left. I'd also like to remove my house and bring it up here.

138. When the people prepared to go away, what did the VC say about that?

The VC told the people that after spending some time in the GVN-controlled areas they should come back to the hamlet to till their ricefields. If they didn't, they wouldn't have enough rice to eat.

139. Didn't the VC try to stop anyone from going away?

No. They didn't stop anybody. I know that, because I was among the last ones who left the hamlet.

140. Was there anyone staying behind in the hamlet?

There were 4 or 5 young men who stayed behind.

141. Do you know why those young men didn't leave the hamlet with the others?

When the Strategic Hamlet was build, the GVN authorities asked all the people to come live in the Strategic Hamlet. These young people refused to come. That's why they didn't dare come here.

142. Having refused to live in the Strategic Hamlet, where did they live? What did they do outside?

I don't know. I only know that they came back to live in the Strategic Hamlet as soon as the VC arrived.

143. If you come back to your hamlet now, would you be afraid that something might happen to you?

I wouldn't dare come back now to my hamlet. The VC might suspect that I'd worked for the GVN. They might ask me embarassing questions. They might even arrest and kill me.

144. Did the VC tell the people how life was in the GVN-controlled areas?

No. They didn't say anything about life in the GVN-controlled areas.

145. You've had to abandon all you have to come here as a refugee. Do you blame anyone who caused you troubles?

It was because the VC were in my hamlet that it was shelled and bombed -- that I couldn't live and work in peace -- that I had to give up everything to come here. I blame the VC very much.

146. Did the people of your hamlet have the same opinion?

I don't know.

147. Since you came here, did you receive any aid from the GVN authorities?

I've only been here 3 days. I haven't received anything from the authorities.

148. Did the authorities promise you anything?

The authorities promised to give allowances in the form of money and rice.

149. Do you think that the authorities will keep their promises?

I'm sure the authorities will keep their promises. Those who came here before me have received money and rice. There's no reason why I shouldn't get any.

150. Do you have any intention of going to another GVN-controlled areas?

Not now. That depends on whether I can find a job here or not.

151. Since you've been here, have you gotten news from your hamlet?

No.

152. Did anyone advise you to return to your hamlet?

No.

153. Did you see anybody return to the hamlet?

No.

154. Before coming here, did you meet any American?

No.

155. Did you hear anything about the Americans?

I've heard people say that there were Americans in the GVN areas. I don't know anything else.

156. Did the VC tell the people about the Americans?

The VC said that the Americans were helping the GVN to fight against the Front. They also said that the Americans wanted to take over Vietnam.

157. Did the people believe them?

I don't know. I suppose that there were some who believed and some didn't.

158. Why did some believe in what the VC said, and some didn't?

I don't know. Each one has his own idea.

159. Did you yourself believe them?

I didn't know anything about the Americans. I can't tell you if I believed or not.

160. In your opinion, what did the Americans come to Vietnam for?

I don't know.

161. Did you see any other foreigners?

No.

162. Who do you think will win the war, the Front or the GVN?

I think that the GVN is going to win.

163. Please tell me why.

The planes have been bombing the North every day. I think that the North won't be able to stand it any longer, and will have to surrender.

164. Before the bombings started, did you have the same opinion?

Before the bombings, each side stayed home in peace. I couldn't tell who was going to win. But now the people of the North can no longer stay home in peace. The situation has changed.

165. Did the people from your hamlet have the same opinion?

I don't know.

166. Have you heard of defoliation by chemical products?

I've heard that in An Nhon and Ho Bo the planes sprayed some kind of chemical product in the forests and destroyed several parts of those forests.

167. Were the destroyed areas large?

They said that all the destroyed areas added up to some one hundred hectares.

168. Who told you about that?

The people from my hamlet.

169. Were the villages located near the An Nhon and Ho Bo forests, also victims of those chemical products?

No. Only a few of rubber trees were ruined by those products.

170. What did the people say about that?

They didn't say anything.

171. Didn't the VC say anything about the destruction of the trees?

They said the GVN authorities destroyed the forests so that Front people wouldn't be able to live in there.

172. Didn't they say anything about the destruction of rubber trees?

No.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

Subject is a man of above-average intelligence. He knew very little about the VC. He talked with a sad and monotonous voice, and seemed to be sleepy throughout the whole interview. He only seemed to wake up when he talked about the damages inflicted by the bombings. The craters made by the bombs were described with lots of gestures. He made many efforts to be cooperative.

No. AGR 39

QUESTIONNAIRE II
For Refugees

1. Name of interviewer [redacted]
2. Name of subject [redacted]
3. Time and date of interview :
   From 10:15 a.m to 12:00 a.m on Sept. [redacted] 1965
   From 2:30 p.m to 4:30 p.m on Sept. [redacted] 1965
   From _____ to _____ on _____ 196___
   Total time 3 hours and 45 minutes
   Interview based on : tape (X) hand written notes ( )
4. Place of interview :
   Province office in Phu Cuong (Binh Duong)
5. Sex of subject : Male (X) Female ( )
6. Age of subject : 25
7. Ethnic background : Vietnamese
8. Place of birth :
   hamlet [redacted]
   village [redacted]
   district Ben Cat
   province Binh Duong
9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :
   hamlet [redacted]
   village [redacted]
   district Ben Cat
   province Binh Duong
10. (a) Length of residence in last location : _____
    (b) Who controlled the place of residence:
        GVN ( ) VC (X) Contested ( )
    (c) Since when controlled or contested ? One year and half

11. Number of brothers (4) and sisters (3)

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : 3

13. Marital status : Married

14. Number of children : 3

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age : _____

16. Parents with subject (X) or not with subject ( )
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject( ) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject (X) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject(X) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion : None

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : Farmer

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation Poor farmer
(b) Landowner ? _____ How much land _____

20. Education :
illiterate ( )
literate (X)
schooling completed : _____

21. Any relatives in VC : None

22. Any relatives in GVN : One brother work for Public Works in Saigon - another, for Police service in

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) Killed by [redacted] District
(a) French
(b) GVN
(c) VC

24. When became a refugee : [redacted] days ago

25. Where took refuge first _____

26. Present residence Phu Cuong

AGR

INTERVIEW

40

THE RAND CORPORATION

[redacted]

STUDIES OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT
OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR-40

Date of Interview : September [redacted] 1965
Subject's Category : Refugee: September [redacted] 1965
Former Residence : [redacted] Hamlet
[redacted] Village
Ben Cat District
Binh Duong Province

Comments: Subject, a 55 year-old widow, was very limited in military and political knowledge. Worth noting however, were her remarks concerning GVN policy in her village (Q. 21-28, 65-71), behavior of the VC in her village (Q. 29-45), VC taxes (Q. 46-56), land reform (Q. 56-63), and propaganda (Q.79-85), GVN and American air attacks (Q. 91-100), psywar (Q. 101-114, 127) defoliation and crop spraying (Q. 114-119), her motivations for leaving her village (Q.123-126,128), and GVN aid to regugees (Q. 135-137).

1. When did you come here?

I came here twelve days ago.

2. Where did you come from?

I came straight from my hamlet of [redacted] village.

3. How did you come over here?

My hamlet was near forests. From my hamlet I walked across fields as far as the pier. The walk took two hours. From the pier, I boarded a launch to come over here. The trip's fare was 15 piasters.

4. Have you any plans? What do you hope in coming here?

I have no projects. I simply hope that the GVN authorities will help me make a living here.

5. What are the members of your family?

I've still got with me my old mother, aged 78, and my four children. I've besides them, five nephews whose father - my own brother - was killed by GVN artillery shelling from Ben Cat.

6. Before coming here, did you live with all the members of your family?

Before coming here, I had lived at [redacted] with my mother and my five nephews, while my four children were then living at [redacted] They are still living there.

7. Why didn't your children live with you?

My late husband used to live at [redacted] Since his death, my children, already fairly grown up, remained there to work. As for me, I had to go back to my hamlet to take care of my old mother and my orphaned nephews.

8. Did your children know you came here?

Yes.

9. How large was your village? How many inhabitants?

My village had [redacted] hamlets, [redacted] I don't

know the number of villagers.

10. Do you know the number of people and of families in your hamlet?

No, I don't.

11. During last year, did any families leave your village? How many of them?

No family left my village before I left the hamlet. Some twenty from my hamlet came here at the same time as I did. All the other families came here also, but after me.

12. How did the people of your hamlet make their living?

Nearly all the people in my hamlet lived on rice cultivation. A small number of them lived on the sugar cane plantation. A certain number were rich enough, where the others, more numerous, were poor. The rich helped the poor, and the poor worked for the rich, so that everyone could earn a living.

13. How did your family make a living?

We also lived by growing rice and sugar cane. I had four 'mau' of ricefields and two 'mau' of sugar cane. I looked after them with the help of my acquaintances in the hamlet. Besides, I was a co-owner, with my brother, of six 'mau' of rubber plantation.

14. What category did the VC assign to you?

I don't know.

15. Were there any changes in your economic condition during the last few years?

For the last two years -- that is, since I started to grow sugar cane -- my economic condition had improved a little. In my hamlet, sugar cane yields more than rice.

16. What do you think of this improvement?

I'm sad to have to leave my hamlet. If I had stayed in my hamlet, my economic condition might have improved further.

17. Here's a picture of a ladder whose top rung is numbered 1 and bottom rung is numbered 10. Let's say the top rung stands for the best life you can imagine, and the bottom rung stands for the worst life you can imagine. Here on this ladder would you say your hamlet life was?

On the 7th or 8th rung.

18. Will you describe the best life in your hamlet you can imagine for yourself?

It would mean having a lot of ricefields, having more rice than one needs, having large brick houses.

19. Describe the worst life you can imagine.

It's what I'm living now: that is, having to beg to the authorities for something to live on.

20. Did you go to school?

No, never. Yet, I learned to read. I can read but not write.

21. Was your hamlet a Strategic Hamlet?

Yes.

22. When was it built? Was it destroyed by the VC?

It was built long ago. I forget the exact date. I believe some four or five years ago. A few years after the construction GVN troops and officials left the hamlet. So the VC turned up. They didn't destroy the Strategic Hamlet.

23. What did the VC do once they were there?

I don't know what they were doing. They came and remained there.

24. How was life in the Strategic Hamlet?

Life was easy there.

25. Why was life easy there?

One wasn't afraid of being troubled by the VC, or of being bombed by planes.

26. What did you like most in the Strategic Hamlet?

It was safe from bombings.

27. What did you dislike in the Strategic Hamlet?

There was nothing I disliked.

28. How did GVN officials behave there?

GVN officials were very correct and kind. The villagers had a lot of sympathy for them.

29. When the VC came, how were they received?

One night they came in great number, some of them were armed with rifles. Nobody received them. They came as they pleased, then they went away as they liked.

30. Were the villagers pleased or displeased with their arrival?

How do you think we could be pleased with their arrival? They'd never done anything for the villagers. Now could we be displeased: they were armed with rifles.

31. How did they behave? What did the villagers think of them?

They came. Some of them asked the villagers for food. They were given fruits, chickens. They weren't liked. They were hated. People were afraid of reprisals.

32. Did the VC handle anyone roughly? Did they kill anyone?

No, they didn't handle anybody roughly. Then killed nobody.

33. Did they force the villagers to do something for them? Did they ask them to dig trenches, to destroy roads?

No, the villagers didn't have to do anything for them. Nobody had to destroy roads or dig trenches for them.

34. Was your hamlet turned into a Combat Hamlet?

No.

35. Do you know what a Combat Hamlet means?

No.

36. Were there many young men over 16 in your hamlet?

No, there weren't any.

37. Why weren't there any young men in your hamlet?

All the young men had gone to work elsewhere. They didn't dare stay in the hamlet. They were afraid of being arrested by the VC. There were only old people in my hamlet.

38. Why were the young people afraid of being arrested by the VC?

I heard they were afraid of being arrested by the VC, but nobody explained why.

39. Where did those young people go?

I don't know.

40. Did the VC force the people of your hamlet to serve in their military forces?

I don't know if the VC had talked the people into joining their forces. I do know that nobody in my hamlet served in their forces. Nobody worked for them.

41. Did the VC persuade some people to follow their re-education courses?

I don't know what re-education means.

42. Did the VC ever arrest anyone and take him someplace else?

No.

43. Did the VC sometimes hold meetings with the villagers?

No, never.

44. Did the VC organise groups or associations in your hamlet?

No.

45. Did they organise the Nong doi or Youth group?

No.

46. Did the people have to pay taxes to them?

No.

47. Have you never given anything to the VC?

I give them 10 "gia" of paddy each year. When they demand it, one has to give it to them. If you refused to obey their request, how do you think you could work in peace?

48. Did the other villagers also give them paddy? Willingly?

All the other villagers had to give them paddy like me, but I don't know the quantity each gave to the VC. Nobody was willing to give, but you had to in order to work in peace.

49. Did the quantity of paddy you had to give to the VC increase or dicrease during these years?

At first I was to give five "gia." This year it was ten "gia." Their demand has increased day by day.

50. What do you think of it?

I wasn't happy about it, but I had to give all the same. Sometimes I was so angry that I wanted to sell all my lands and do nothing at all.

51. What did the other inhabitants think about it?

I don't know. But I'm sure nobody was pleased with it.

52. When you were still living in the Strategic Hamlet, did the people have to pay taxes to the GVN?

Yes, all those who owned ricefields had to pay taxes to the GVN -- some hundred piasters per "mau." The GVN, nevertheless, lent money to a great number of people so

they could till their lands. Each of them got 5000 piasters. These were loans without interest.

53. How did these taxes compare with those the people had to pay to the VC?

Certainly what we had to give to the VC went far past the taxes paid to the GVN.

54. Did the VC explain to the people why they demanded paddy from them?

They never explained why.

55. Did they explain why their demand for rice went up continously?

It was simply they were short of rice.

56. Was land distribution carried out in your hamlet?

No, there was no land distribution.

57. Didn't the VC take ricefields from the rich and give them to the poor?

No. The poor worked on the ricefields of the rich, and at harvest-time, the yield of paddy was shared out.

58. Were these landlords who didn't live in the hamlet?

Yes, there were two or three of them. For instance my aunt owns ricefields in the hamlet, but she didn't done stay there. She was afraid of the VC.

59. Who looked after ricefields belonging to absentees?

A part of them was seized by the VC, who then looked after them themselves. Another part was cultivated by the villagers who had rented them from the landlords.

60. Did the villagers pay rentals to the landlords?

I don't know, but I don't think the landlords were **patdi**, because they never returned to the hamlet.

61. What did those people, who hadn't paid rent to the absentees, say about it?

They said nothing.

62. Did the VC explain why they had taken ricefields from the absentees?

No, they didn't.

63. What did the people in the hamlet say about it?

Nobody said anything.

64. Will you tell me something about the history of your hamlet since the Resistance?

I don't remember much, except that in the Viet Minh day each person had to pay from five to ten "gia" of paddy each year. Then, when the Viet Minh went away, the GVN authorities came to replace them. They lent money to the poor, 5000 piasters each, so the latter could buy buffaloes and other things necessary to rice cultivation. After that, the GVN authorities and forces left. The VC came. They burned the house belonging to my father, formerly occupied by GVN troops, and asked the/for paddy. people

65. Hadn't you ever seen the district and province chiefs? Did they come to the hamlet sometimes?

No, they never came to the hamlet. I'd never seen them.

66. Did you know of the fall of the Diem regime?

I heard that Mr. Diem had lost his place.

67. What did you hear about the fall of Mr. Diem? What did the people say about it?

I only heard that Mr. Diem had lost his place. Nobody said anything else. The people in my hamlet only looked after their ricefields. They only talked about their work and never about other things.

68. Did the VC cadres say anything about Mr. Diem?

No.

69. Do you know who is at present the head of government?

No, I don't.

70. Did the VC say anything about the present government?

No, they said nothing.

71. You said the GVN authorities had lent money to the people. Besides these loans, did they give other things to the people, or did they do something else for them?

No. They only lent money to the inhabitants.

72. Were VC soldiers stationed in your hamlet?

No. I believe they lived in forests. They only came to the hamlet occasionally.

73. How many of them came each time? Do you know to which units they belonged?

Each time they came to the hamlet, there were some twenty or thirty of them. They were always armed with rifles. I don't know which units they belonged to.

74. What did they do each time they came to the hamlet?

I don't know. Sometimes they asked for food. That's all.

75. Were these VC soldiers, guerrillas, or elements of the Regular Forces?

I don't know.

76. Did GVN troops pass through your hamlet sometimes?

No, never.

77. Do you know the aims of the Liberation front?

No.

78. Didn't the VC ever talk to the inhabitants about the Liberation front?

No.

79. Did the VC tell the villagers sometimes of the battles between VC and GVN forces?

Yes, they mainly told about the battles between VC and GVN forces.

80. Do you recall something about what they said?

I still remember what they said about the battle at Dan Tieng over a month ago. They said that more than one hundred GVN soldiers had been killed in that battle and that two Americans were killed also.

81. Did they mention the losses suffered by the VC forces?

They said only some VC soldiers had been wounded. Besides, they never talked about their own losses. Instead, they only talked about their successes. They talked only of the losses suffered by the GVN forces.

82. Did the inhabitants believe what the VC said?

I don't know.

83. Did you yourself believe it?

By no means, because I knew the VC had lied. My children working at [redacted] told me there had been a lot killed on both sides. They didn't know the exact number of VC soldiers killed, or that of GVN soldiers killed. But they saw the VC seizing two trucks of the [redacted] company (Rubber Plantation company) to carry away bodies (VC).

84. Did your children or the people of [redacted] know where those bodies were taken?

No, nobody knew.

85. Did your children see the two Americans killed as the VC said?

They only told me there were also dead and wounded among the GVN forces. But they didn't mention the Americans.

86. Have you any friends or acquaintances serving in the VC forces or working as civilian cadres?

No.

87. Have you relatives or friends working for the GVN?

A nephew of mine is now an officer at Can Tho.

3. Did he sometimes come to see you in your hamlet?

No.

4. When did your last see him?

He came to see me here at [redacted] a week ago. Then he left to rejoin his post at Can Tho.

5. Was there any fighting in your hamlet or near your hamlet?

No, there wasn't any.

6. Were your hamlet and the others of your village sometimes bombed by aircraft?

My hamlet was bombed twice, but there wasn't much damage. There were neither dead nor wounded. But the hamlet Ap Mot of my village was bombed several times, and on each occasion, many houses and vegetable gardens were destroy Fifteen days ago, planes dropped incendiary bombs. A l of houses had been burnt, and there were many dead and wounded. I don't know their exact number. I only know that six people of the same family, including several children, had been all killed, burned to ashes in their trench.

7. What type of planes? How many of them?

They were jet planes, about three or four.

93. Were other places bombed?

Yes, the forest, 2 km from my hamlet, was once bombed at night. The bomb explosions were very loud and shook all the houses in my hamlet.

94. What kind of planes were those that carried out that bombing raid? How many of them?

I heard the people of my hamlet say that they were very big jet planes, that there was close to twenty of them.

95. Since the bombardment took place at night, how could the people see them?

I don't know. I suppose some people might have seen them.

96. What was there in that forest? How was the damage caused by the bombing?

I don't know how much damage there was. But I know that VC soldiers lived in that forest.

97. How do you know that VC soldiers lived in that forest? How many of them?

Where do you think the VC soldiers, who often came to my hamlet in groups, lived if not in that forest? I don't know how many they were, but I'm sure they lived in that forest.

98. Did you hear about the damage then suffered?

No.

99. What did the inhabitants say about these bombings?

If the bombardments could drive away all the VC, the people would be happy.

100. What did the inhabitants think of the bombing raids over their hamlets?

Planes had dropped leaflets over the hamlets asking the people to leave their hamlets. It was because they hadn't left the hamlets that they had to suffer damage. It was their fault. What do you want them to have said about it? It was after these bombings that they all decided to go.

101. How often did the planes drop leaflets?

Three of four times.

102. What did these leaflets say?

The leaflets advised the people to leave, so the authorities might drop bombs to kill the VC. They said that it would be so much the worse for those who lived there, and that those who moved to GVN regions would be helped by the authorities.

103. Did the VC forbid the people to read leaflets?

No.

104. What did the VC say about these leaflets?

They said nothing.

105. Were there planes that made broadcasts to the inhabitants?

Yes. Planes came to make broadcast twice. They said nearly the same things as the leaflets.

106. What did the VC say?

They said nothing.

107. Did the VC try to prevent the people from leaving?

No. They said the people could go or stay -- it didn't make any difference to them.

108. Were there still VC in the hamlets after the inhabitants had gone?

No. They were all gone too.

109. Did the VC still remain in the forest?

I believe they must have left the forest. If they persisted in staying on there, they would all be killed by much bombardments.

110. When you were still living in the hamlet, did you hear about American and GVN bombing raids on North Vietnam?

No, I didn't.

111. Did the inhabitants of your hamlet read newspapers?

No. There were no newspapers in my hamlet.

112. Were there radios in your hamlet?

Some people had radios and the VC too.

113. Did the radio -owners learn about air strikes on the North?

Perhaps they did. But I never heard them talk about those strikes.

114. And the VC, did they say anything about these air strikes?

No, they didn't say anything either.

115. Did you hear of the destruction of trees by chemicals?

I heard that many trees had been destroyed in the forest of Ho Ba, of An Nhan Tay. The woods bordering the river at Luc Hung, Trang Bang, Ben Chua and Bach Chap, about 20 km long, had also been destroyed.

116. Were there any vegetable gardens or ricefields also destroyed by chemicals?

The few vegetable gardens on the riverside at Trang Bang and Ben Chua, had also been destroyed.

117. Do you know when the chemicals were dropped?

I heard that the chemicals were dropped during June of last year.

118. Do you know why these chemicals were dropped?

I don't know why. People said the GVN authorities had dropped these chemicals to prevent the VC from growing rice or sweet potatoes and manioc in the forest.

119. What was said by those who had their vegetable gardens damaged by the chemicals?

They were certainly sad, but said nothing. Everyone knew that the GVN authorities had no intention of destroying vegetable gardens, but that the wind had blown the chemicals on them.

120. Before coming here, had you thought of going to another region under GVN control?

No. All my ricefields and vegetable gardens are in my hamlet. I must be there to take care of them. Besides, my two orphaned nephews were also in my hamlet, and I ought to bring them up for their parents. From time to time, I went to [redacted] to see my children. On each occasion, I stayed there only a few days, then I returned to the hamlet.

121. Before coming here, did you know how life in GVN-controlled regions was like?

I knew that life in GVN regions was easy?

122. How did you know it?

I noticed it myself. My children lived at [redacted], a GVN region. I often went there.

123. What reason led you to come here?

I was afraid of bombardments.

124. There had been bombings for a long time. Why did you wait until this month to leave your hamlet?

The authorities had said nothing to the people before. It was only at the beginning of this month that they asked them to go. Besides, the authorities said that refugees could get help for living. With this promise, nobody was afraid of being starved to death when they came here. My old mother didn't want to leave the hamlet. She told me it wouldn't be long before she died. She wanted to die in the hamlet. She didn't want to take the risk of being hungry by coming here. I told her the GVN authorities had asked everyone to go, that it was therefore impossible to stay behind in the hamlet. I added that the authorities had promised to give us rice, that there would be no risk of hunger, and if any chance she would die here, I would take her back to be buried in the hamlet.

125. Besides the appeal of GVN authorities, was there anyone who had induced you to go?

Nobody asked me to go. Everyone agreed to leave the hamlet.

126. Were there any families staying behind in the hamlet?

No, all the families had gone.

127. Have you heard of Chieu Hoi?

No.

128. How long do you plan to stay here?

I'm going to stay here until there's peace. I'll go back to the hamlet when there are no more VC, no more bombs.

129. What were you able to bring with you when you came here?

I was able to sell a pig to the passengers on board the launches at the pier. So I was able to bring with me some money and clothes.

130. What would you have liked to bring along with you if you had been able to?

I still had at my home in the hamlet 30 "gia" of rice. I decided to leave them behind. Even if I'd had the means to carry them, I wouldn't have done it. The authorities only need to give me enough food each day; I don't want anything else.

131. Did the VC talk to the people about conditions in GVN-controlled areas?

No. Besides they'd already left long before us.

132. When did they go?

The moment the planes came to make broadcasts.

133. If you returned to the hamlet now, what do you think might happen to you?

I don't want to go back to the hamlet. If I went back now, I'd risk being killed by bombs.

134. Do you blame anyone for causing you to abandon everything to come here?

No. I blame nobody. We are in a time of war -- we can't blame anyone. Besides, if I have something to live on here, it's as though I was living in my hamlet. As for my lands, they'll be there in the hamlet; nobody can take them from me. When the war is over, I'll go back to my hamlet and look after them again. There's nothing to lose.

135. Since you came here, have you gotten help from the authorities?

No, I haven't received anything yet.

136. Have the authorities promised to give you anything?

No, the authorities haven't made any promises. Yesterday, I called at the Social office. But there were many refugees all pushing one another and the officials got angry and sent everyone away. Nobody could get anything.

137. Have you seen refugees who have gotten help from the authorities?

Many of them have already gotten help. Some received 500 or 600 piasters, other 20 or 25 liters of rice.

138. Do you plan to do something later on to earn a living?

As I told you, I don't know what to do. My old mother got sick after coming here. She is now in the hospital at Bung. An old friend of mine living near the hospital, has let me and my nephews stay in her house. I can only rely now on the help of the authorities.

139. Since you came here, have you gotten news from your hamlet?

No.

140. Did anyone try to talk you into going back to your hamlet?

No.

141. Has anyone returned to the hamlet?

No.

142. Before coming here, did you see any Americans?

No.

143. Have you heard anything about the Americans?

No. Nobody in my hamlet had talked about the Americans.

144. Did the VC talk about the Americans?

No.

145. Have you seen people from other countries, such as Filippin or Koreans?

No, never.

146. Do you know why the GVN is fighting the VC?

No, I don't.

147. In your opinion, who will win this war?

Certainly the GVN will. The GVN has aircraft and many other things. The VC have nothing, not even enough food to eat.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

The subject is a simple and rather dull woman. She understood only with difficulty the questions put to her, and her knowledge was very limited.
She seemed sincere and cooperative, however.

No. AGR 40

QUESTIONNAIRE II
For Refugees

1. Name of interviewer [redacted]
2. Name of subject [redacted]
3. Time and date of interview :
   From 9:50 AM to 12:00 AM on Sept [redacted] 1965
   From 3:00 PM to 5:00 PM on Sept [redacted] 1965
   From _____ to _____ on _____ 196___
   Total time 4 hours and 10 minutes

   Interview based on : tape (X) hand written notes ( )
4. Place of interview :
   Province Office - Phu Cuong (Binh Duong)
5. Sex of subject : Male ( ) Female (X)
6. Age of subject : 55
7. Ethnic background : Vietnamese
8. Place of birth :
   hamlet [redacted]
   village [redacted]
   district Ben Cat
   province Binh Duong
9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :
   hamlet [redacted]
   village [redacted]
   district Ben Cat
   province Binh Duong
10. (a) Length of residence in last location : _____
    (b) Who controlled the place of residence:
        GVN ( ) VC (X) Contested ( )
    (c) Since when controlled or contested ? 3 years

11. Number of brothers (1) and sisters (1)

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : 1

13. Marital status : Widow

14. Number of children : 4

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age : 1

16. ~~Parents~~ Mother with subject (X) or not with subject ( )
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject( ) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
~~Children~~ Five nephews with subject(X) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion : Buddhism

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : Farmer

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation Don't know
(b) Landowner ? Yes How much land _____

20. Education :
illiterate ( ) Can read Vietnamese only
literate ( )
schooling completed : _____

21. Any relatives in VC : _____

22. Any relatives in GVN : A nephew who is ARVN officer

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by :
(a) French
(b) GVN 1 brother killed by artillery shell 5 years ago.
(c) VC

24. When became a refugee : Twelve days ago

25. Where took refuge first _____

26. Present residence _____

AGR

INTERVIEW

41

THE RAND CORPORATION

[redacted]

STUDIES OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT
OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR-41

Date of Interview : September [redacted] 1965

Subject's Category : Refugee: September [redacted] 1965

Former Residence : [redacted] Hamlet, [redacted] Village, Ben Cat District, Binh Duong Province

COMMENTS: Subject, a 54-year-old farmer, gave little specific information concerning military or political matters. Of interest, however, were her attitudes about VC behavior (Q: 27-29, 61-62), taxes (Q: 30-32), draft (Q: 34-37), and land reform (Q: 42-47), GVN policy in her village (Q: 17, 22-26), ARVN behavior (Q: 57-60), artillery (Q: 72-73), air bombing (Q: 74-84), GVN psywar (Q: 85-89, 96-98, 101) and aid to refugees (Q: 108-111), and her motives for leaving the village (Q:100).

1. When did you come here?

I came here on September [redacted] 1965.

2. Where did you come from?

I came from [redacted] Hamlet ([redacted] Village).

3. How did you come here?

From my hamlet, I travelled on foot with my kin as far as the [redacted] bridge, which is [redacted] km from there. From this bridge we took a horse-drawn passenger cart to come here. This stage of the journey lasted one hour and cost ten piasters per person.

4. What do you plan to do here?

At present I don't know what to do. I want to do any kind of work, but I haven't been able to find any. I hope the authorities will provide me with some rice and money, so that my family can live until we can find some work.

5. What are the members of your family?

I have my husband and seven children.

6. Were you living together before coming here?

I live only with my husband and four of my children.

7. Where are the other children?

My two eldest boys are already married. Each is living with his small family in his house. But they are both in the hamlet. Besides, my eldest daughter is also married and has lived at Lai Thieu with her husband for four years now.

8. Did you come here with your husband and four children?

I came with my children. As to my husband, he also left the hamlet, but he was unable to come here since he had to look after our buffalo. He had taken them to a friend's near the [redacted] of [redacted] village, 2.5 km from my hamlet.

9. Did your husband intend to rejoin you later?

Yes. Of the three buffalo he is keeping at present, only one belongs to us. (Before, we owned two buffalo, but one of them was killed by the splinters of a shell.) The other two had been loaned to us by a friend who is staying in another village. My husband must wait for him to come and take back his buffalo. Then he will have to trust ours with someone before coming here to join us.

10. How large was your village? How many people?

My village comprises [redacted] hamlets: [redacted] and [redacted] I don't know the number of people in the village. I only know there are some hundred families in my hamlet.

11. How long did you live in your hamlet before coming here?

I was born in [redacted] Hamlet. When I got married, thirty-six years ago, I went to live with my husband in [redacted] Hamlet.

12. In six months, how many families have left the hamlet?

Nearly all the families left the hamlet at about the time I did. Before that, there weren't any.

13. How did the people of your hamlet do to earn a living?

All the people in my hamlet lived by growing rice. Nearly all of them had enough to live on. A very small number were short of rice.

14. How did your family make a living? Have you got any ricefields?

We also live by growing rice, but we haven't any ricefields. We worked on one "mau" we hired from a landlord. We had to tighten our belt to make do.

15. What category did the Front cadres assign to you?

The class of poor farmer.

16. Were there any changes in your family's economic conditions in the past years?

Yes. Since the last two years, we've had more and more troubles in earning our daily subsistence. We gradually have become poorer and poorer.

17. Will you tell me why?

Previously we lived in a Strategic Hamlet. There were neither VC nor planes nor bombs. We were able to live and work in peace. So we had more profits. But since the withdrawal of GVN troops, and then the coming of the VC, the latter took to destroying the Strategic Hamlet and forced the inhabitants to return to their former homes. We've been constantly disturbed by them and by GVN aircraft so much that we were no longer able to work seriously.

18. Here is the picture of a ladder whose top rung is numbered 1 and bottom rung is numbered 10. Let's say the top rung represents the best life you can imagine, and the bottom rung represents the worst life you can imagine. Where on this ladder would you say your hamlet life was?

On rung 9.

19. Will you describe the worst life you can imagine for yourself in the village?

To have a lot of kids who are hungry because you can't work properly to feed them as a result of bombardments and the VC.

20. Describe the best life you can imagine for yourself?

To have a lot of ricefields, to be able to work and live in peace, to know nothing about, and suffer nothing from, the war.

21. Have you been to school?

In my childhood, my parents were so poor that I was obliged to look after buffalo. I had never been to school. I can't read or write.

22. You said you had lived in a Strategic Hamlet that was later destroyed by the VC. Tell me when and how it was built, and when and how it was destroyed.

In 1962, the authorities (GVN) built the Strategic Hamlet and asked all the families who were then scattered, to come and live there. But in June 1963, the troops who had settled there until that date, left it suddenly. So, the VC turned up, about 200 of them, most of them armed with rifles. They destroyed the hamlet and forced all the families to go back to their former homes.

23. What do you think of life in the Strategic Hamlet?

As I've said, life in the Strategic Hamlet was easy. One could make one's living there easily.

24. What did you like best in that Strategic Hamlet?

What I liked most in the Strategic Hamlet was that there were no air bombardments.

25. What did you dislike in the Strategic Hamlet?

There was nothing I disliked.

26. How did GVN officials behave in the Strategic Hamlet? What did the inhabitants think of them?

Our former hamlet chief was a very demanding man. When we wanted to bring our paddy to a house equipped with a threshing-machine located at the pier, he demanded a written request to that effect. When we wanted to return to our vegetable gardens outside the Strategic Hamlet to grow sweet potatoes, we were also asked to turn in a written application. As we couldn't read or write, we were forced to ask him to make the requests for us, for five piasters each. Everyone was displeased.

27. When did the VC effectively control your hamlet?

Since they destroyed the Strategic Hamlet -- that is, since 1963.

28. Did the VC cadres roughly handle the inhabitants of your hamlet? Did they kill anyone?

No, the VC cadres didn't mistreat anybody. They killed nobody. Only the hamlet chief was arrested and taken elsewhere.

29. What did the people think of this arrest? Did they find it fair?

I don't know if this arrest was just. I only know that the people of the hamlet had a lot of sympathy for his wife and children. But he was a difficult man, a drinker. Happily, he was set free after three months' detention.

30? What did the people think of the VC cadres?

Nobody had any complaints about them. They did nobody any harm. They simply asked each family for some "gia" of paddy and one piaster each month.

31. Has this contribution increased during the last six months?

The amount of rice demanded from each family has remained the same since the beginning. As regards money, the VC hasn't taxed for five or six months.

32. What do you think of these contributions?

What do you expect us to do? When rifle-armed men come to ask you for some paddy, or some chickens and ducks -- whether they're VC or GVN soldiers -- we have to give what they want.

33. Did the VC transform your hamlet into a Combat Hamlet?

They only asked us to put up fences and bulwarks around the hamlet. Inside, we dug, of our own will, trenches to serve as air-raid shelters.

34. Were there many young men over 16 in your hamlet?

All the unmarried young men of more than 16 had already gone. In the hamlet, there were only some of them, but they were all married and heads of families.

35. Where did they go, those youths?

They had become VC or GVN soldiers.

36. Do you know why those youths became VC soldiers? When did they set out? Were there more of them than those who became GVN soldiers?

I don't know why some of them joined the VC forces and others joined the GVN. All of them had gone sometime before the destruction of the Strategic Hamlet. I don't know if there were more who joined the VC or more who joined the GVN.

37. After your hamlet came under VC control, did they recruit men for their forces?

The VC had more than once asked the people to join the VC forces, but none agreed to do so. All the men who stayed in the hamlet, were married and heards of families.

38. Were you or some member of your family obliged to follow a re-education course?

I never heard about a re-education course.

39. Did the VC hold meetings with the people?

Once every 3 or 4 months.

40. What did they say to them each time?

I never attended those meetings. I don't know what the VC said to them.

41. Did the VC organize certain groups or associations in your hamlet? Did you belong to any organization?

I heard they were going to set up the Nong Hoi in my hamlet. But after that, they did nothing about it. There was no organization in my hamlet.

42. Was land distribution carried out in your hamlet?

The VC took a portion of ricefields from landlords to be distributed to the poor, about two "sao" each. But this wasn't a true distribution. Those who were helped by land distribution had to pay rentals to the landlords.

43. Do you know why the VC launched that distribution? What did the people say about it?

It was because there were people who could rent a lot of ricefields, while the others were unable to do so. The inhabitants said nothing about it.

44. Did you benefit from this distribution of ricefields?

No, I already was able to rent one "mau".

45. Was your landlord living in your hamlet?

No, that landlord lived in [redacted] hamlet, 8 km from my home. He had rented his ricefields to me for the past ten years.

46. Did you sometimes happen not to pay him rentals?

No, I always paid him regularly. At each harvest, he came to collect his share of paddy. A great part of the ricefields that were looked after by the people of my hamlet had landlords who lived in other villages. At harvest-time, they came for their shares.

47. Did these landlords have any difficulties in coming for their shares on account of the VC presence?

No. The VC did nothing to prevent these landlords from coming to collect their shares of paddy.

48. Will you tell me about your village since the Resistance?

I remember nearly nothing about the Resistance, except that we had to pay money every month. After several years, the Viet Minh cadres gave way to GVN authorities. The latter named the officials of the village, built the Strategic Hamlet.

As a result, we enjoyed security for some years. Then the GVN troops suddenly left the village, and the VC came to destroy the Strategic Hamlet. Since that day, there have been bombings. I know nothing else.

49. Did you know the district chief and the province chief? Did they sometimes come to the village?

I don't know the district chief and the province chief. I remember that they came once to the village to distribute rice to us. It was one month after the construction of the Strategic Hamlet.

50. Did they talk to the people on that occasion? What did they say?

Yes, they talked to the people, but I don't recall what they said?

51. Did you hear of the fall of Mr. Diem's regime?

I heard that Mr. Diem had been replaced by someone else. I know nothing more.

52. What did the people say about it? What did you think of it yourself?

The people said nothing. It concerned the Government, It was its business. The population had nothing to say about it.

53. Do you know who is the present head of the Government?

No, I don't.

54. What did you hear about the present Government?

No, nobody talked about the Government.

55. Did the VC cadres say anything about the Government?

No, they said nothing.

56. What do you know about the Government's aid program for the people of your village? Did you benefit from this aid?

After the Strategic Hamlet was built, the authorities helped the people rebuild their homes in the hamlet. Then they gave them money and rice. My family received 500 piasters and 40 kilos of rice.

57. You've said there were GVN troops stationed in the Strategic Hamlet. What was their strength? How did they behave?

During the construction of the Strategic Hamlet, men of the 5th Division came to settle in the village. Then they were replaced by the Rangers, who were more than 200 strong, stationed in a post. GVN soldiers were very correct. There never was any complaint about them. The inhabitants liked them. They spent one year in the hamlet. Then one night the VC appeared and shouting and making a lot of noise, and fired on the post. GVN soldiers fired back. For three straight nights both sides fired at each other. On the day following the third night, GVN troops left the post. So the VC soldiers turned up and destroyed the Strategic Hamlet. But they didn't stay in the hamlet.

58. Since then, did the GVN forces return to your hamlet?

Last year, GVN troops twice passed through my hamlet. I forget the date of their passage. On the second occasion, some soldiers called at my house for water. I could recognize some among them who had been in the post of the hamlet. I asked them if there were many of them. They said 10,000.

59. What did the people say about the GVN soldiers passing through the hamlet?

All the people were afraid of GVN soldiers, and of VC soldiers, too.

60. Why were they afraid of GVN soldiers?

I don't know why.

61. Did the VC soldiers also pass through your hamlet?

They passed once in March this year.

62. How many of them? How did they behave? What did the inhabitants say about them?

They were in very great number. I couldn't know their exact strength. They were also correct. They simply passed through, and the people said nothing

63. Did you know to which Front unit they belonged?

No.

64. Do you know the aims of the Front?

No, I don't.

65. Do you know why the Front is fighting against the GVN?

No, I don't.

66. Did you hear about failures or successes of the Front units?

No.

67. Have you heard about failures or successes of the ARVN?

No.

68. Have you any friends or acquaintances serving in the Front ranks as soldiers or cadres? You needn't give their names.

No, I have none.

69. Have you any relatives working for the GVN as civil servants or soldiers of the ARVN?

I've two cousins -- one is a soldier of the ARVN, the other is working in the agricultural office in Saigon.

70. Did they come to see you sometimes?

No, never. Before, whenever I went to the market at Binh Duong to sell sweet potatoes, I called to see the wife and children of that civil servant who was then living alone in Saigon. As for the soldier, I don't even know where he is now.

71. How often did engagements between GVN and VC forces take place in your village or in the vicinity of your village?

Apart from the three nights during which the VC forces and the GVN troops in the post fired at one another, the three nights I've told you about, there weren't any other battles, either in or near my hamlet.

72. Was your hamlet sometimes hit by GVN artillery?

GVN artillery pounded my hamlet two straight months, every day uninterruptedly, during March and April this year. Four or five inhabitants were wounded. A nephew of mine had one leg broken by the splinters of a shell. The shelling sometimes took place in the morning, or in the afternoon, or in the evening. At night, all the people were to sleep down in the trenches. They took their meals on the brink of these trenches and sometimes they could have only one meal for the whole day.

73. What did the inhabitants say about it?

They complained a lot. At the first shelling, all the VC left the hamlet, so that the inhabitants were the only victims. Never had I seen a VC killed or wounded by shells or bombs.

74. How often was your hamlet bombed by planes?

Throughout last month (August, 1965) my village [redacted] village) and [redacted] and [redacted] villages were constantly bombed. A great number of vegetable gardens and houses were destroyed. There were also dead and wounded, but how many of them there were I don't know.

75. Were there incendiary bombs?

Once the village of [redacted] was hit by incendiary bombs. Damage was very important that time. Many children, including a 16-year-old nephew of mine, were killed. They were completely burned up.

76. Apart from these three villages, did you hear of any other places having been bombed?

Forests not very far from my village were also bombed, sometimes during the day or at night. On each bombardment all the houses of my hamlet shook. I believe that Front units took shelter in those forests.

77. Who told you that?

Some people of my hamlet told me so. They said that several places in those forests had been completely destroyed. Even big trees were knocked down.

78. What types of planes did you see carrying out these bombing raids?

They were jet planes. Those bombing the villages were sometimes three, or five, or six. I heard that there were more bombing the forests. But since they flew very high, nobody was able to guess their exact number.

79. What did the people say about these bombardments?

They complained a lot. By the way, here's something I've just heard. This morning at 7, when I was at the market, I heard that planes with the name of B-52 just carried out a bombing mission over the regions near my village on this very day.

80. Who gave you that information?

I heard men talking about it among themselves. I don't know them.

81. Did they say how they came across that information?

No.

82. In your opinion why was your village bombed?

I believe that the GVN wanted to kill the VC in the village. But as I've told you, these bombardments didn't kill the VC because they were already gone. Only the people were killed.

83. Were there any villagers who followed the VC as a result of these bombardments?

No.

84. Did the bombardments affect the daily work of the inhabitants?

Everyone was frightened. We didn't dare go out into the vegetable gardens. We could no longer work.

85. Did the GVN authorities warn the people that their village would be bombed?

During the last month, the GVN authorities said nothing to the people. Only on the [redacted] of this month (Sept' 65), did planes fly over to make broadcasts. They said that on the [redacted], all the inhabitants must leave the village. But the deadline wasn't reached yet, when on the next day, that is on the [redacted], planes appeared and dropped bombs.

86. What was the reaction of the people?

Immediately after the bombing on the [redacted], all the families of my hamlet hurriedly left the hamlet to come here.

87. How could the people in your hamlet learn about what was going on elsewhere?

A great number of them read GVN newspapers.

88. What did the VC cadres say about it?

The VC said nothing. They didn't forbid the people to read GVN newspapers.

89. Were there many radios in your hamlet?

No, there were none.

90. Did you learn about American and GVN air strikes on the North?

No, I know nothing about the air strikes you mentioned.

91. Have you heard of the landings of American troops in South Vietnam?

No.

92. Before coming here, had you thought of seeking refuge in another GVN-controlled region?

Since the beginning of this year, I had already wanted to seek refuge in a GVN-controlled region with my family. But we didn't dare give up the ricefields we had rented in our village, for we weren't sure we'd be able to rent some in another region. That's why, in the end, we decided to stay.

93. Before coming over here, had you known about life in GVN-controlled regions?

I heard that everything was expensive in GVN-controlled regions, that it was very difficult to find a job.

94. Who told you so?

Some people in my hamlet who often travelled to GVN regions.

95. Did the VC cadres say the same thing about life in GVN regions?

No, they said nothing.

96. Did you know how you would be received by the GVN authorities?

I learned that the GVN authorities had reserved a warm welcome for the refugees and helped them to make a living by granting aid and finding work for them.

97. Who told you so?

Three times planes flew over and dropped leaflets over my village. These leaflets said that the GVN asked the people to go and live in regions under its control in the neighborhood of posts, and that those who moved there could get aid.

98. Did the VC cadres allow the inhabitants to read these leaflets?

The VC didn't do anything to prevent the people from reading these leaflets.

99. Was there anyone who had talked to you about coming over here?

No, nobody. We ourselves decided to come here.

100. You said that in GVN regions, everything was expensive and it was hard to get a job. So why did you come out, after all?

It was because of bombardments. Besides, the GVN had said the refugees would get help.

101. Have you heard of the Chieu Hoi program?

No, I don't know what the Chieu Hoi program means.

102. What were you able to bring with you when you came here?

After the bombardment on the [redacted], we were very scared. We hurried to go before the planes came back. So we had no time to bring along with us other things than some clothes.

103. Were you then afraid that something might happen to what you left behind in the hamlet? Did you trust someone with everything?

Nothing could happen to what we left in my hamlet, because all the families had gone. Yet we had even asked an old man to take a look at my house from time to time. He was an 80-year-old man who lived next to our house. All his family had gone. As he was too old and too weak to go, he preferred to stay behind. There was a trench in his house. He could take cover there each time he heard planes coming.

104. What would you have liked to bring with you if you had had the means?

If I had been able to, I would have liked to bring with me all our buffalo and all the paddy we still had in the house.

105. When the inhabitants of the hamlet decided to go, what did the VC cadres say?

All the VC had already left the village at the beginning of the last month, when the planes began bombing.

106. In your opinion, what do you think might happen to you if now you returned to your hamlet?

If I returned to the hamlet now, I might be killed by the bombardments.

107. Do you blame anyone for causing you to leave your hamlet and all the property behind to take refuge here?

No, I blame nobody. In wartime, everyone must have his share of suffering in one way or another. You yourself have to ask questions all day, are you then feeling happy?

108. Since you came here, have you got help from the GVN authorities?

I received five liters of rice, one pull-over, a pair of gloves, and a pair of socks.

109. Have the authorities promised to do other things for you?

The authorities didn't make any promises. I know that those refugees who came here at about the time I did each got, besides rice, 7 piasters per day. As two of my children had stayed on our way here, it took two days to find them. Some of my acquaintances told me that my name was called during the distribution of money while I was absent. So I came to the Social Service to ask for it. I've been waiting for five days but I still haven't got anything.

110. Do you think you can get money like everyone else?

I wasn't here when they gave out money. It was my fault. But I think that I'm going to get money too, like the others.

111. Are you satisfied with the help from the authorities?

Yes.

112. Do you plan to stay here, or are you thinking of moving to another place?

I want to stay here. As I've told you, I hope to find some work here to feed my children.

113. Since you came here, have you gotten news from your hamlet?

Since I've been here, there have been some people who went back to the hamlet. They stayed there only for a short while. They told me that since we left my hamlet had been pounded by artillery, but there was no damage. None of the old people who stayed in the hamlet had been wounded.

114. Was there anyone who had tried to persuade you to go back to your hamlet?

None.

115. Before coming here, had you seen any Americans?

When the Strategic Hamlet was completed, some "American gentlemen" came with the province chief..

116. Have you heard anything about the Americans?

When the "American gentlemen" arrived at the hamlet, the people talked me into coming to "see the American gentlemen arrive." But nobody said anything else. The kids in the hamlet were very happy to see "the American gentlemen."

117. Have you seen people from other countries, such as Filippinos, Koreans?

No.

118. Do you think the present war will go on?

I don't know.

119. In your opinion who will will this war, the VC or the GVN?

I don't know.

120. Who do you hope will win?

Anyone --- just so we can live and work in peace.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

The subject was a cooperative but uneducated and unintelligent woman. Her knowledge was very limited.
The interviewer thinks she remained always afraid of the VC --- even after having left her hamlet to take refuge here --- for he notes that in her answers she never said anything that might prove prejudicial to the VC.

No. AGR -41

QUESTIONNAIRE II
For Refugees

1. Name of interviewer [redacted]
2. Name of subject [redacted]
3. Time and date of interview :
   From 10:10 AM to 11:40 AM on Sept [redacted] 1965
   From 2:00 PM to 4:30 PM on Sept [redacted] 1965
   From _____ to _____ on _____ 196___
   Total time 4 hours
   Interview based on : tape ( ) hand written notes (X)
4. Place of interview :
   Phu Cuong Province Office (Binh Duong)
5. Sex of subject : Male ( ) Female (XXX)
6. Age of subject : 54
7. Ethnic background : Vietnamese
8. Place of birth :
   hamlet [redacted]
   village [redacted]
   district Ben Cat
   province Binh Duong
9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :
   hamlet [redacted]
   village [redacted]
   district Ben Cat
   province Binh Duong
10. (a) Length of residence in last location : 36 years
    (b) Who controlled the place of residence:
    GVN ( ) VC (XX) Contested ( )
    (c) Since when controlled or contested ? 2 years ago

11. Number of brothers ( ) and sisters (2)

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : _____

13. Marital status : Married

14. Number of children : Seven (four sons, three daughters)

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age : 2

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject (X)
Brothers with subject( ) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject(X) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion : No

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : Farmer

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation Very poor
(b) Landowner ? _____ How much land _____

20. Education :
illiterate (XX)
literate ( )
schooling completed : _____

21. Any relatives in VC : None

22. Any relatives in GVN : 1 cousin serves in ARVN, 1 cousin is civil servant

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by :
(a) French None
(b) GVN None
(c) VC None

24. When became a refugee : September [redacted] 1965

25. Where took refuge first _____

26. Present residence _____

AGR

INTERVIEW

42

MASTER COPY

THE RAND CORPORATION

[redacted]

STUDIES OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT
OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR-42

Date of Interview : September [redacted] 1965
Subject's Category : Refugee, September [redacted] 1965
Area of Residence : Hamlet [redacted] Village,
Ben Cat District,
Binh Duong Province

MASTER COPY

1. Were most of the people of your village farmers?

   Yes.

2. What else did the people do besides farming?

   Nothing else. Everybody worked on the land.

3. Generally speaking were the people of your village well off, average, or poor?

   They had enough to eat.

4. How were the majority of the people?

   The majority were poor. They owned no land and had to rent the land they were working on.

5. How much land do you own?

   I have no land. I rented half a mau to work on.

6. Are you married?

   Yes, I have a wife.

7. How many members of your family were working on the land?

   Nobody else but me. My child is still too young to help, he's only twelve.

8. How could you manage all by yourself?

   It took me three or four months to plant the rice.

9. How many harvests did you have a year?

   Just one.

10. How many bushels of paddy did you earn a year?

    I got about forty bushels a year.

11. How much did you have to pay to the landowner?

The rate was twenty-five bushels a year for each mau of ricefield rented. I rented only half a mau, so I paid twelve and a half bushels.

12. How much did the VC get from you?

I only paid the owner. The owner then in turn paid the VC.

13. Did other villagers complain that they had to pay both the landowner and the VC?

Yes.

14. How many bushels did the VC get from you?

Out of my half a mau of land, they collected two or three bushels from the landowners.

15. Why did others tell me that the VC collected directly from the tenant?

I don't know about other people. They probably earned more than they needed.

16. Where did you live?

[redacted] Hamlet, [redacted] Village, Ben Cat District.

17. How many hamlets were there in [redacted] Village? and how many people were there in each hamlet?

There were [redacted] hamlets. Each had about a hundred families.

18. How many members were there in each family?

About five.

19. Then each hamlet had about five hundred people, and the whole village about [redacted]. Is that right?

Right.

20. Did you spend all your life in the village?

Yes.

21. Had you ever moved to other places during the war?

I moved to [redacted] Village for some time to live in a New Life Hamlet. But I went back to my old place when they (the GVN) withdrew from that hamlet.

22. When did the GVN withdraw?

Some time in June last year. It's been over a year now.

23. Did you go back to [redacted] Village?

Yes, I went back to my orchard in [redacted]

24. How long did you stay in the New Life Hamlet?

About four months.

25. Are your parents living?

My mother is still living.

26. Did all your family come here?

Yes.

27. How many children do you have?

Five. Two boys and three girls.

28. How old are you?

I'm forty-two.

29. How many young people between sixteen and thirty years of age were there in your village.

There were about twenty young people in my hamlet. I think it's the same with other hamlets.

30. How many brothers and sisters do you have?

One sister and one brother.

31. Where is your wife?

She remains in [redacted]

32. How did you get here?

I took the motor-sampan.

33. How much was the fare?

Fifteen piasters per person, one way.

34. What did you take along with you?

I've given up my house and everything else to run for my life, there were too much bombings back home. One day the planes came to broadcasts over the village. They told the people to leave the village by the eighth or the ninth (of September 1965). But the people didn't take their words seriously -- I myself didn't. The next morning the "52" planes (B-52's) came and showered the village with bombs. Everybody was frightened.

35. How did you know it was the B-52 aircraft that bombed?

I learned it from the leaflets.

36. Did you pick up any of those leaflets?

I did.

37. Do you know how to read?

Yes.

38. Did you go to schol?

I went to school up to the fourth grade. But I've fogotten everything. I can hardly write now.

39. Where did you go to school?

In the village. My parents were poor and couldn't afford to send me to school too long. As soon as I grew up, I had to herd the buffaloes.

40. Did you send all five of your children to school?

Only one of them went to school.

41. Do you plan to send him to school out here?

If I can find a place to live, I'll send him back to school.

42. What is your religion?

I worship my ancestors.

43. What do you plan to do out here?

I haven't found a job yet.

44. What did you take along with you?

Nothing except some clothes.

45. Didn't you take along livestock?

There are some at home. I wanted to go back for them but I wouldn't dare, because the bombings have been too intensive. I don't know if they're still there.

46. Did you take along some rice?

No, I still have five or six bushels at home.

47. How long did it take to prepare to leave?

Immediately after the bombing everybody ran away. We barely had enough time to gather some clothes and pick up the children and make for the motor sampans.

48. Were the planes still overhead when you ran away?

No, they'd left.

49. Had the village ever been bombed?

Yes, but not so heavily as at this particular time.

50. Did you find that there have been more aircraft in the last five or six months than ever before?

Yes.

51. Did they bomb your village often ?

Yes. Lately they bombed every other day. Before, they used to bomb once every five or six days.

52. Did you see any difference between the planes of some time ago and those of today?

Recently the planes dropped more bombs, and the bombs were deadlier.

53. What do you mean?

Everything was shaken up. We were all shaken, even in the trenches. We'd lose our minds if we were somewhere near where the bomb hit. Death was always by our side.

54. How big were the holes dug by those bombs?

They were about 10 m deep and over 20 m wide.

55. Did any of the bombs explode near your house?

No bomb exploded there, but there were lots of shellings.

56. Did they drop big bombs in the village too?

Yes.

57. Did they bomb the edge of the forest?

They did.

58. Which place got more bombings, the village or the forests?

The forest usually got more bombings.

59. Were there many VC in the bombed forest?

I don't know. The "923" forest was immense. I wouldn't know.

60. Were there VC troops in your village at the time of the bombing?

There were some guerrillas.

61. Were there regular troops in the village then?

They wouldn't dare stay there. They usually passed by, that's all.

62. When did the VC get control of your village?

Since the GVN withdrew from the posts, last year.

63. How long ago was it exactly?

It must be a year ago. Before, there was a GVN post in An-Thuan. The VC couldn't do anything. But as soon as the GVN abandoned this post, the VC moved in.

64. Where do you live now?

I stay temporarily in a little temple.

65. Had aircraft ever dropped such big bombs before?

The only time they dropped big bombs was right before I left the village.

66. Had they dropped smaller bombs before then?

Yes.

67. What damage did the last bombing inflict upon your village?

About half of the houses in the village were destroyed.

68. Was your house damaged?

The trees around the house were hit by shrapnel. There was some minor damage.

69. What did those whose properties were destroyed say?

They were disappointed but they didn't say anything.

70. Why do you think your village was bombed?

It was because of the VC that the village was bombed.

71. How were you classified by the VC?

I belong to the Very Poor Farmer class.

72. Did they distribute land to you?

No, because I was able to rent some land.

73. Did they distribute land only to those who had no land at all to work on?

That's right.

74. Where did they get the land to distribute to the people?

They took land from absentee landowners.

75. Were the recipients of this Land Distribution program afraid of losing their land to the former landowners later on?

They grasped what they were given, but I don't know how they felt. I was able to rent a piece of land, so I worked and minded my own business.

76. Did the planes bomb the ricefield? Or did they bomb only the orchards?

They didn't bomb the villagers' ricefields.

77. Did the planes strafe while people were working on the field?

No. They might've seen us, but they didn't strafe.

78. Were the explosions of the big bombs deafening?

Yes. The explosions of the big bombs were terribly deafening. One could drop unconscious.

79. Did any bomb explode near your house?

One exploded in the hamlet, about 500 m away.

80. Did you see the explosion?

I was in the trench. There were trenches that collapsed from these explosions.

81. How many casualties resulted from these bombings?

There were over ten dead, and over ten wounded.

82. Whom did the people blame for all this?

They didn't dare say anything. They were sad in their hearts, though.

83. Did the planes spray chemical products over your village?

They haven't done so yet.

84. Did you see B-52 aircraft with your own eyes?

I could only see them when it wasn't cloudy, because they flew very high. I don't know how high it was, but they looked so tiny from the ground.

34. How many times did you see them?

Only once, right before I left.

86. Were they different from other kinds of planes?

The difference was immense. I'd never seen so many bombs being dropped by other aircraft before.

87. Were these planes bigger than other kinds of aircraft?

I don't know how big they were, for they flew too high. All I could see were little dots the size of a part of my finger. Other planes flew much lower.

88. What kind of aircraft did you see more often before, the jet airplanes or the prop-planes?

I used to see the prop-planes a long time ago.

89. What kind of planes did you see most often during the last few years?

During the last few years I've seen both jet planes and prop-planes.

90. What kind of planes made broadcasts over your village?

It was two "dragonflies" (helicopters) that made broadcasts over the village that day.

91. How long after the broadcast did the bombing take place?

The broadcast was on the afternoon of the seventh (of September). They told the people that by the seventh or the eighth they had to move away from the area -- An Son area. The bombing took place the next morning, on the eighth.

92. What time on the eighth did they bomb?

About 7 AM.

93. When did you leave the village?

I left on the same day, right after the bombing.

94. How long did the bombing last?

It lasted about an hour.

95. What did the people do at the time of the bombing?

The people were cooking breakfast. They had to run for the trenches.

96. Were the trenches dug by the people or by the VC?

They were dug by the people. Since they feared the planes, they had to dig trenches.

97. Do you plan to stay here just for a few days?

I've planted the rice on my field. I expect to go back when the rice is ripe.

98. When you left the village, did you think you would come back?

At the time of my departure, I thought I was going away for good because it was practically impossible to do anything in the village.

99. Will you go back after the war?

I'd go back if the Government lets me. Otherwise, I wouldn't dare. If the bombings continue, I wouldn't go back.

100. Since you've been here, did anyone advise you to go home?

No. And I'm going to stay anyway.

101. How many people left at the same time as you?

Twenty or thirty people from the hamlet went to [redacted] to take the sampans while the planes circled overhead.

102. There were some thousand people in your village, yet only some thirty of them left?

Each went a different way. Not everybody went to the same place. The bombing was simply unbearable, I don't think anybody would stay behind.

103. Did everybody leave?

There probably were some who were too attached to their properties to leave.

104. Were they really attached to their properties, or did they stay behind for some other reasons?

I guess some were too attached to their properties and others were afraid of the uncertainty of life once they left their own village.

105. Did some stay behind because they were afraid that their connection with the VC at one time or another might cause them trouble in the GVN areas?

There might be some who didn't dare come here.

106. If you had the means, what would you bring along with you?

If I had a choice, I'd take along some foodstuffs, such as rice.

107. Is your whole family here now -- your mother, wife and children?

Yes.

108. Did anyone stay behind to watch your house?

Everybody has gone. I guess the rats have eaten everything.

109. Did you see leaflets dropped in your village?

Leaflets were dropped during those days. They called to the people to move to the GVN areas. They also called on the VC cadres to rally.

110. Was B-52 aircraft also mentioned in those leaflets?

No. Leaflets about B-52's were dropped three days later.

111. How often were leaflets dropped?

They were dropped once every other day or so.

112. Would you have left your village had the planes only made broadcasts and dropped leaflets?

It's too hard to earn enough money as a hire-laborer here. Back home, I could work on the land and gain something. I ran away because of too much bombing.

113. Are you planning to stay right here, or move on to another place?

I don't know yet. I haven't found a job yet.

114. Have you gotten any assistance from the Government?

Not yet.

115. How long have you been here?

I've been here thirteen days. I came on the [redacted] (Sept).

116. Has the government promised any aid?

I've heard that the Government promised to give rice and money to regugees.

117. How much rice and money did it promise?

I have no idea about the rice, but I think they give seven piasters a day.

118. Has anyone received money and rice?

Yes. A great many people have received them. I've been here for some time, but I've never had a chance. The day they distributed things at Go Nau, I fell sick and couldn't make it.

119. When did the Village Council leave your village?

I don't know of any village council.

120. When did the VC take over the control of your village?

It's been a long time ago. At first the ARVN set up a post, the VC withdrew, and the Village Council moved to Ben Cat.

121. When did the ARVN set up the post?

They stayed there for about one year.

122. Do you mean they withdrew after one year; and the VC moved in right after?

Yes.

123. Had the VC ever been in the village before?

Yes, but it's been too long ago. I can't remember.

124. Was there a Village Council during the time the ARVN kept a post in your village?

No. If the people wanted something, they'd have to go to Ben Cat District. The Village Council moved to Ben Cat three or four years ago. It used to be in [redacted] for some time.

125. How did the ARVN treat the people when they stayed in the village post?

They behaved properly. It was the Fifth Division.

126. Did they take things away from the people?

No.

127. How did the VC troops behave towards the people?

They didn't do anything to the people. They'd arrest only those who committed crimes against them.

128. Did they arrest anybody in your village?

No. Everybody in the village was an honest worker. The people didn't do anything to be arrested.

129. Did they send anyone to attend re-education sessions?

What re-education session? All the people in the village were too busy making a living to do anything else.

130. Did the VC often call mass meetings?

They did once a month. In those meetings, they told the people to keep on working and not to let any piece of land stay idle and so on.

131. Have they ever told the people about the bombings of the North?

They did. They said the GVN planes bombed the North. I've forgotten what else they said.

132. How many VC were there in the village?

There were some guerrillas and some militiamen.

133. How many militiamen were there?

About twenty.

134. You've said that there were about twenty young people in the village, were they all forced to join the guerrillas?

Nobody was forced to join.

135. How did the VC recruit their guerrillas?

They used propaganda. They talked people into joining them.

136. How did they talk the people into joining them?

I don't know what they talked on the young people. Old folks like myself didn't hear anything.

137. How did the militiamen behave towards the people?

They were correct.

138. How did the guerrillas behave?

They didn't do anything wrong

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

In view of the time available for this last interview of the day, the interview was not complete. Only the essential points of a regular interview were covered.
The subject was an old, short and clumsy man.
His speech was slow.
He was rather fearful, polite, and sincere but was not knowledgeable.

No. AGR 42

MASTER COPY

QUESTIONNAIRE II
For Refugees

1. Name of interviewer [redacted]
2. Name of subject [redacted]
3. Time and date of interview :
   From 4:15 Pm to 5:00 PM on Sept [redacted] 196__
   From _____ to _____ on _____ 196__
   From _____ to _____ on _____ 196__
   Total time 45 minutes

   Interview based on : tape (x) hand written notes ( )
4. Place of interview :
   Binh Duong
5. Sex of subject : Male (x) Female ( )
6. Age of subject : 42
7. Ethnic background : Viet-Nam
8. Place of birth :
   hamlet Hamlet [redacted]
   village [redacted]
   district Ben-Cat
   province Binh-Duong
9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :
   hamlet Hamlet [redacted]
   village [redacted]
   district Ben-Cat
   province Binh Duong
10. (a) Length of residence in last location : since birth
    (b) Who controlled the place of residence:
        GVN ( ) VC (x) Contested ( )
    (c) Since when controlled or contested ? Sept 1964

11. Number of brothers (1) and sisters (?)

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : _____

13. Marital status : Married

14. Number of children : 5

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age : _____

16. ~~Parents~~ Mother with subject (x) or not with subject ( )
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject( ) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject(x) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion : Ancestral worship

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : Farmer

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation Very Poor farmer
(b) Landowner ? no How much land _____

20. Education :
illiterate ( )
literate (x)
schooling completed : 4th form

21. Any relatives in VC : _____

22. Any relatives in GVN : _____

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by :
(a) French
(b) GVN
(c) VC

24. When became a refugee : Sept [redacted] 1965

25. Where took refuge first _____

26. Present residence _____

AGR

INTERVIEW

43

THE RAND CORPORATION

[redacted]

STUDIES OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT
OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR. 43

Date of Interview: September [redacted] 1965

Subject's Category: Refugee: September [redacted] 1965

Former Residence: [redacted] Village, Ben Cat District, Binh Duong Province

COMMENTS: Subject was an illiterate old widow who knew little about political and military affairs and communicated even less. Her attitudes toward the GVN and toward the VC were equally composed of a fatalistic resignation to power and a frightened impatience with grown men playing with lethal toys. In this regard, note her opinions of Strategic Hamlets (Q. 17-31), the VC (Q. 32- 41), Government aid (Q. 63-65), the relative merits of the VC and GVN (Q. 72-74, 106), military attacks (Q. 81-84, 115, 125), and refugee conditions (Q. 96-108, 124).

1. When did you come out here?

   I came out here as soon as I received the leaflets from the Government urging us to leave the village.

2. When did you receive those leaflets?

   On September [redacted] I received them in the morning, and in the afternoon I left the house.

3. How did you come here?

   I came here by boat.

4. What kind of boat?

   The Thuy Tien boat (commercial).

5. How many people came out here at the same time with you?

   Quite a few of them left at the same time with me but they had scattered here and there. I do not know where they are now.

6. Where had you been before you came out here?

   I had been in [redacted] village.

7. What are your plans and prospects now?

   The Government told us to leave our village and I left. At home I could earn a living by working around the house gathering some vegetables here and catching some fish there. But here, what can I do? I am too old to start anything and, besides, what can I do? I have to live on whatever the Government gives me.

8. How big was your village?

   There were [redacted] hamlets in that village. (How many people live in that village?) I do not know. I only stayed home. (How many families lived in your hamlet?) I do not know. (You lived in that hamlets for dozens of years and you do not know how many families lived there?) I really do not know. I lived there but I did not pay much attention to what was around me.

9. How many young men 18 years old or older were left in your hamlet?

   There were none, for some of them had left to work for the Government out here and others had left to work for the other side.

10. How many families or persons have left your hamlet in the past years?

    Many. First, the Government gathered us all in the Strategic

Hamlet. We lived there peacefully for a while, then the troops withdrew, leaving us unprotected. We then left too. (When did the troops withdraw?) I do not remember, I am too old now and my mind does not function properly any more. (Was it last year or the year before?) Last year I think. (Was it before or after the rainy season?) In the middle of the rainy season.

11. What did most of the people in the village you just left do to earn a living?

Farming. (Did they have enough to live on?) Yes. (Did anyone starve?) Not at all. They had fields and gardens that could support them. (Would you say that the people in your village were happy or very hard up?) They were happy, they were not hungry. They could catch fish for their meals, and on holidays they had meat.

12. Would you compare your economic conditions in the last year with those of the previous years?

The same. I had a garden which I took care of, weeding and pulling grass.

13. Would you compare the economic conditions of the people in your village in the last year with those of the previous years?

There was no change. They had rice after the harvest and the rice lasted until the next harvest came around. Every now and then they went about catching fish. They had fish for meals. Then they grew vegetables and they had vegetables as side dishes.

14. How many Strategic Hamlets were there in your village?

One. (You mean the entire village was included in one Strategic Hamlet?) No, there were two Strategic Hamlets. The village had three hamlets out those three hamlets were enclosed in two Strategic Hamlets.

15. When was it organized?

I do not remember. I am too old to remember the date.

16. Were other people from other villages included in those Strategic Hamlets?

No, only the people from that village.

17. How did living in a Strategic Hamlet affect your life and earnings?

It was the same. We were permitted to go back to our gardens in the morning. Life in or out of the Strategic Hamlet was the same. One had to work hard if one wished to make a living.

18. What did you like about the Strategic Hamlet?

In the Strategic Hamlet the lack of water was one of the problems. We couldn't cultivate vegetables or anything to add to our diet. (Was there anything you liked about the Strategic Hamlet?) Nothing.

19. What did you dislike about it?

Nothing. When we were there, the Government gave us blankets, food, and other things.

20. What did other people think about the Strategic Hamlet?

They said nothing.

21. How did the GVN village and hamlet authorities behave?

There were nice. (Did they arrest people and take bribes?) Nothing like that. When the troops left the Strategic Hamlet the people were furious. They blamed the Government for moving them there and then leaving them.

22. Why did the troops leave?

I knew nothing. (Were the villagers informed about their withdrawal?) No.

23. What was the size of the troops when they were there?

There were many of them but I do not know how many were there.

24. Did they live with the people?

They lived in their camp.

25. How did they behave toward you?

They were nice.

26. When did the people leave their village?

As soon as the troops left, the people went back to their former houses. Since there was no one to protect them, the people got scared and they left also.

27. Does that mean that the people had had to leave their former houses and come live in the house in the Strategic Hamlet?

That's right. In the morning we would go back to our former homes and gardens to take care of them. At noon we came back to the Strategic Hamlet for the noon meal and then we returned to our gardens again in the afternoon.

28. When you had to leave your former homes for the Strategic Hamlet did the Government give you money to build a new home?

Yes. Some took down their houses and reassembled them in the new location.

29. How did the people feel when they had to leave their former homes?

The people only knew one thing and that was to carry out the orders of the Government. (How did you feel then?) Well, that was the order of the Government. There was nothing I could do about it. I would rather have stayed in my former house and look after my garden.

30. According to you, why did the Government organize the Strategic Hamlet?

The Government said that those who lived there would be protected -- they would have security. No one wished to work in an unsafe place, they all prefered to live in peace.

31. Was it destroyed by the Front?

Not at all. When the troops left they burned down their camp. (Who burned down their camp?) The GVN soldiers. (How about the people's houses?) The people left their houses there for their former homes. (How about the barbed wire, the fences, and so on?) They were destroyed. (Who destroyed them?) I don't know. I lived in my hamlet and tended my garden and didn't pay attention to those things.

32. When did the VC begin to come to your hamlet?

I don't know, or rather I don't remember. They used to come at night.

33. What did they do when they came to your hamlet?

I heard their footsteps outside on the road, but that was all. I don't know what they did when they were there.

34. They never came to visit you in your house?

Not at all.

35. Had there been any rumors of their coming before their arrival?

No. Every now and then I would hear footsteps outside. (Did you go out to see where they would go?) No. I wouldn't dare. (Why?) I was afraid. (What were you afraid of?)

I saw them carrying weapons and I hated the sight of guns and weapons. (Why was it that when the GVN troops were there carrying guns and weapons around, you weren't afraid of them, but later you were afraid of the VC?) I was afraid of them both -- GVN as well as VC. (Then why did you complain when the GVN troops left?) They had been there a long time and we got used to them. (Suppose the VC had been there a long time instead of the GVN soldiers: would you have asked them to stay when they left?) The VC never stayed there. I had lived with the GVN soldiers and I knew how they were. I had never been with the VC. So I can't say how I would feel about them.

36. Were you afraid of the VC because they might carry out terroristic acts in your hamlet?

I was afraid of everyone who carried a gun or a weapon.

37. Did the Front carry out any terroristic acts in your village or kill any of the people?

No.

38. Did you hear from other villages?

I didn't go out often. How could I know about other villages? (Didn't you hear gossip from other people in your hamlet?) I was too concerned with earning a living.

39. How did you know what had happened in your hamlet?

What had happened in my hamlet? (Suppose the VC came the night before, did the people comment about their arrival and so on?) No, if they did they would not tell me. I was too old and they would not tell me things. I worked all day looking after the house and the garden. At night I went to bed early so that the next morning I could get up and work again, and that was all.

40. When was the last time the VC come to your hamlet before you left?

I did not see them. (You did not see them, but did you hear them there?) They came at night, and at night I was in bed. They came there often and they always came at night. (When was the last time they were in your village?) They would come. (Was it one or two months before you left?) They would come every now and then. I don't remember when they came and I don't remember when they left. They came and left on their own. I just stayed in my own home. I was too scared.

41. Were there any guerrillas in your village?

Of course. (How many of them were there?) I do not know. (Did they ever come to visit you?) No. (Where did they live?) I don't know where they lived. They would come to the village every now and then. (Were they from your village?) They might be from my village, or from some place else. (What did they do when they came to your village?) I don't know. I saw them walking on the road.

42. Was your hamlet a Combat Hamlet?

No. (Did they string barbed wire around the hamlet?) Not at all.

43. Did the VC come to your village to make propaganda so that people would enlist in their armed forces?

No. (Did they hold meetings when they were there?) No. My village was very sparsely populated -- one house here, another house there.

44. How did the Front recruit people in your village for military duty?

I am too old to know about that.

45. Were any members of your family taken by the Front for re-education?

No. I have few relatives.

46. What did the people in your village say about the VC?

I did not have much chance to listen to gossip. I worked all day at home.

47. Were there any organizations in your village, such as the Farmer's Association, the Youth Association, or the Soldiers' Foster Mothers' Association?

No.

48. What did other people in your village do?

They worked on their land and tended their gardens.

49. To whom did you pay taxes?

I paid taxes to no one.

50. You had one "mau" of land and you didn't pay taxes to the GVN?

Not at all.

51. Did you pay tax to the Front?

Not at all.

52. Did the Front members ever ask you to contribute to them such things as rice, money or fish sauce?

Not at all.

53. How much interest did you have to pay to the landowner for each "mau" of land you rented from them?

Over 20 bushes. I think it was 25.

54. Do you think the interest was too heavy?

The interest rate had always been that way.

55. What did other farmers in your village think?

I didn't hear them say anything.

56. Has the Front taken away land from the rich and given it to the poor farmers?

That hasn't happened.

57. When was your husband killed?

In 1946.

58. How did it happen?

He went to the market, was arrested and stabbed, and he died. (What did he do?) He did not do a thing. We were only storekeepers to earn a living. (How many people were killed at the same time as your husband?) My husband was the only one killed that time. (Why did they kill your husband and not others?) My husband was suspected of getting supplies for the Viet-Minh. (Why was he suspected?) I kept the store while my husband went to the market to buy things for the store. (What did you sell in your store?) Fish sauce, salt, oil, drinks, and so on. (Were they right for suspecting your husband?) They (Viet Minh) lived some place else, they did not live there. (Wasn't [redacted] one of their combat zone?) I did not know where they lived. I saw few of them. They lived in the jungles, not there.

59. Do you know who the district, and province chiefs are?

No. (Did they ever come to visit your village?) Never.

60. Have you heard about the downfall of Mr. Diem?

No. (You didn't hear anything about that?) I was too old. I spent most of my time in the house.

61. Do you know who heads up the present Government?

No. (What did other people say about the present Government?) If they have any comments to make about it they would not tell me because I was too old.

62. You are only 55 -- you are not old yet.

Oh, my God! Since the death of my husband I have not been the same. I became so forgetful. (Didn't your daughter tell you what she had heard?) She had a physical defect and she stayed home with me.

63. Did the GVN carry out any programs in your hamlet to help the villagers?

When we were in the strategic hamlet the Government gave us rice, fish sauce, blankets and seeds, and food. (Did you get other assistance after you had left the Strategic Hamlet?) Nothing at all. The Government stopped giving us assistance and we returned to our former homes to cultivate the garden to live.

64. How was your life after you had left the Strategic Hamlet?

It was the same. I cultivated rice, grew potatoes, vegetables, manioc, and so on. I had enough to live on. Every now and then I went out to look for fish to add to our diet.

65. What is your upermost wish at the present moment?

My wish is to be able to return to my home to tend the garden, so that I can earn a living. Here, somedays the food is adequate, somedays there is not enough to go around. The Government wants to help us, but how can it feed all of us day in and day out. Many people get sick. If only we could go back to our village to grow things. We would not need the Government. We would have enough to support ourselves. Here, we do not know whether we will have food next day or not.

66. After the GVN troops had left, how was your village defended?

There was no one there to defend us. (Was there a GVN post nearby?) After the GVN troops had left, the GVN conducted some operations. (How many operations did the GVN conducted in your village?) Only one. (Do you

remember the date of that operation?) I do not remember. It has been a long time ago. (How strong was the GVN force in that operation?) There were many soldiers, very many. (Did you see any Americans in that operation?) None. (There were you?) I was too scared, I stayed in the trench.

67. Were you informed in advance of the oncoming operation?

Not at all. When they came they fired a lot and we all went down to the trench to keep from being hit by stray bullets.

68. Any casualties among the people during that operation?

No. (Any damages to the people's property?) Yes. The GVN soldiers burned down the houses. (Why did they burn down the houses?) I do not know. (How many houses did they burn down?) I do not know. They would not burn down houses with people inside. But they would burn down empty houses, where the people had left because they were too scared to stay.

69. What did people think about their houses being burned down by the GVN soldiers?

Their houses were burned, so what could they do about that? (Didn't they blame the Government for burning their houses?) They didn't say anything. When they returned and saw their houses had been burned, they built another one to live in.

70. What did you think about the burning of those houses?

Those were small houses. If they were burned down, people would build others to replace them. (Would not that cost them something through?) Surely, that cost them a little, but all the materials were there -- leaves and bamboo trees.

71. Did those people whose houses had been burned, have family members working for the VC?

They either went to the market or went somewhere to earn a living. When they heard that an operation was going on in their village, they got scared and stayed away. The GVN soldiers came, found no one in the houses and burned them down. As for the VC, they needed no houses.

72. What did you think about the VC?

They didn't need houses. (How did you feel about them?) I don't know. I don't know what to think about them. What do you want me to think about them?

73. You shouldn't worry about what you tell me, because I'm not in a position to do you any harm. Tell me what are the good and bad points of the GVN and the VC?

Both are the same. Both claim to help the people.

74. That's true. Both sides claim to help the people. But don't you think that one side has done more for the people than the other?

The Government is rich, so it gives more to the people. The VC is poor so it gives less. (Which side did the people in your village support more?) Neither one. They were in the middle. Both sides had guns and weapons, so we in the middle were afraid of them both.

75. How did the GVN soldiers treat the people during that operation?

We were told to stay in the trenches until they (GVN) left the inside of the village. If not, we might be hit by stray bullets. (Was there any fighting then?) Wherever they (GVN) went, they shot. (Did the VC put up a fight that time?) No.

76. Has your village been the scene of battle?

Never. We were in the trenches when we heard the gunfire. Then they came (GVN) and called on us to come up. We went up and then they left. After they had left, we went back down in the trenches again. (Why?) We were afraid of cannon.

77. How often was your village attacked by cannon?

Once every two or three days. Four or five times a day. The attack was during the day and at night. Days and night the shelling went on and the explosions were deafening.

78. Did you know the reason for those attacks?

How could I know? (Were there any VC there when those attacks occurred?) Not at all.

79. Have there been attacks by cannon more often now than in the previous months, or less often?

There was more shelling during the previous months. (Why?) The pace of shelling has gone down, because it was replaced by the bombing. There is more bombing now than before. There was a rubber factory, but it has been completely destroyed.

80. What other damages were done to your village?

The trees were destroyed. (Any casualties?) No.

81. Did the people blame the Government for causing damages to their trees?

What could they say? The Government has been shelling the village and we didn't know what to do. (Didn't they blame the Government for the attacks?) I didn't hear them say anything.

82. Were there any damages done to your property?

My house was tiny. Some of my trees were killed. (How did you feel about those attacks?) I don't know how I should feel.

83. When did the rate of bombing increase?

I don't know. Before the leaflets were dropped, there had been a few bombings, but after the leaflets were dropped the rate went up greatly.

84. Did those attacks have any effect on your earning a living?

They did. We could not work in peace anymore. (How often did you have to go down to the trench?) Sometimes we stayed down there for the entire day except for cooking the meals. We brought the food down the trench to eat it there too. (Have you had to go hungry?) Yes. When the pounding was too heavy, we stayed in the trench for the entire day.

85. Why did you decide to come out here?

Because the Government dropped leaflets and told us to leave the village.

86. Suppose the Government hadn't dropped leaflets, would you have come out here?

Without leaflets I wouldn't have dared to come out here.

87. Why wouldn't you come out here without leaflets?

Because the VC wouldn't let me go.

88. Didn't the VC stop you when you came out here?

How could they? They'd already dissappeared -- all of them.

89. Have you been stopped by them?

They'd stopped people before. (When was that?) When the cannon attacks had become more frequent. People were afraid -- they wanted to leave but the VC stopped them.

90. Did many people want to leave then?

Yes, many. (Did you, yourself, want to leave too?) Yes. The shelling went from bad to worse and I was afraid I might get killed. (What did the VC tell you when you tried to leave?) They told us to remain in the village and take care of our gardens and land.

91. What did the leafets say?

We were told to leave that area because it would be bombed (Did they say what type of bombs there would be?) They mentioned some kind of airplanes, but I don't remember the name. (Was it the B-52?) Yes, it was.

92. What did the VC say this time?

Nothing. (What did the people say?) They made preparations to leave the area.

93. During the few bombings before the leaflets were dropped, did you see what type of airplanes were there?

No, I was too scared to notice anything.

94. Did anyone from your village leave after that operation you just mentioned?

No.

95. Why did you leave when you received the leaflets?

Because we were promised support from the Government. We wouldn't have dared come out before, because we weren't sure how to keep ourselves alive.

96. Had you thought of moving to a GVN-controlled area before?

Moving out here was such strenous work. (When did you decide to come out here?) How do I know? I will stay here until the Government tells me to return. (Had you thought of moving out here even before you received the leaflets?) I would rather stay in my own home. You don't know how hard it is to be a refugee. One lives with one's relatives and the house is always full of children. Some day there is enough food. Other days, there's no food. In my village I can always go out and gather some vegetables to add to the diet. Life here is so hard.

97. What have you heard about conditions in GVN-controlled areas before you left?

Now that I am here, I hope the GVN will give me food so I can live. (What have you heard about people who lived in the GVN-controlled area?) I heard nothing.

98. What did you expect when you left your village to come out here?

The leaflets said that the Government promised to help. Without the Government's help, one can't hope to stay alive.

99. Have you heard about the Chieu-Hoi program?

No.

100. How long did you expect to be far from your village?

I look forward to the day when I'll return to tend the garden again, but I don't know when that day will come. (Can you make a guess?) I will stay here until the Government tells me to go back. Then I'll go back. I want to go home to earn my own living. The Government will have its hands full, with so many people waiting around to receive assistance. I haven't finished pulling the grass and I have to leave the village. I wish things would hurry up so I could go back.

101. What property did you bring with you here?

I couldn't bring anything with me. (No money?) No. (No rice?) I could only gather some clothes and then I left. I couldn't bring anything with me.

102. Are you worried about the property you left behind?

Of course. I left some paddy back there.

103. Is there anyone in your village who will look after your property?

No, they all left. No one was there.

104. What else would you have liked to take with you, if you had been able to?

Nothing. I'm worried about the coming harvest: no one there to gather the paddy.

105. How long do you think the war will go on?

I don't know, I am too old. (What did the people say

about that?) I didn't hear anything. (What did the VC say?) I didn't hear anything about that. I'm too old. I didn't go around much, so I don't know very many things.

106. Do you blame anyone for causing you to leave your village?

The Government told us to leave, so I left. (It was true that the Government urged you to come out here, but whom did you blame -- the VC or the GVN -- for causing you to leave your home?) How can I know? I will do whatever I am told to do. The Government said it could guarantee our security. So much the better. (But you told me you would rather be staying home. Now that you have to stay here, whom did you blame for that?) I don't know which side to blame. The two sides are fighting and the people in the middle bear all the sufferings.

107. What help has the Government given you since you came out here?

We were given rice and money. (How much per day?) We received rice and money every week. (How many kilogrammes of rice?) I don't know. It was a bag. I took it home and cooked the contents. (Was that amount of rice enough to feed your family for the whole week?) Yes.

108. What did you plan to do when you left your village?

I'm too old to think of doing anything now. I thought then that when I came out here the Government would take care of me.

109. Have any of the villagers who left with you moved back to your hamlet?

I don't know where they are now. We spread out all over: some went to Ben-Cat, others to Binh-Duong or Ben-Co.

110. Did anyone try to persuade you or the other refugees to go back to your hamlet since you came here?

No.

111. Have you seen any Americans?

No. Was the gentleman who was with you an American? Was he? (Yes.)

112. What do you think they are doing in Vietnam?

I don't know. I'm too old to know about that. (What

did other people say about that?) They didn't say anything. If they had any comments, they wouldn't tell me because I'm too old. (What did the Front members say about it?) They didn't say anything. They wouldn't tell me because I'm too old.

113. Who did you think flew the airplanes when you saw them over your village -- Americans or Vietnamese?

I don't know. I saw them overhead, but I don't know who they belong to. (Who do you think they belong to?) Just belong to the Government, who else was there? (When there was bombing, who did you think dropped the bombs?) The Government -- nobody else.

114. Have you heard or seen the defoliation operations being carried out in your area?

No.

115. Which were you most afraid of? Cannons or bombs?

Oh, my God, I was afraid of both of them. They could kill, couldn't they?

116. If you were so afraid of cannon and bombs why didn't you come out here earlier?

But my home and garden were in there. I could earn a living taking care of my garden. If I came out here, how would I live? I'd die of starvation. I came out now because the Government urged us to come out. If it hadn't been for the leaflets I wouldn't have come out. Who would help me if I came out before?

117. Have you ever heard of the term "Zone D"?

Never. The young might know about that, but the old ones like myself wouldn't know anything -- because who was there to tell us about anything?

118. Where had the young ones gone?

They've all dissappeared. Some went to work for the GVN, others for the VC and so on.

119. How many people in your village work for the VC?

That I don't know. Some went here, some went there.

120. In your opinion, why did these people join the VC?

I don't know. I don't care who does what or if he works for whatever side he wants to.

121. Why did some of them work for the VC?

I don't know.

122. In your opinion, which side is winning?

I am too old to know that. (What did other people have to say?) They didn't tell me about their thoughts. They wouldn't talk to the old women. (What did the Front Members have to say?) I didn't hear them saying anything.

123. Who are you living with now?

With my daughter. (Did you rent that house to live in?) It belongs to my relatives and we stay there with them.

124. What would happen to you now if you came back to your village?

If the Government let me return and the bombing and shelling stopped, then I could earn my own living without any help from the Government. I could grow vegetables.

125. In your opinion, why did the Government bomb your village?

Because of the VC. (Were there any VC in your village?) They lived in the jungle. (Then why did the Government bomb your village?) How can I know about that?

126. Have you heard about or from the people who stayed behind in your hamlet?

They've all left. (Didn't any of them come back to find out what had happened to the village?) No.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

Subject looked much older than her age of 53. She was so hard of hearing that each question had to be repeated at least once.

She was illiterate and uninformative. Apparently, she had spent all her time around her home and garden.

She was not altogether cooperative, especially at the end of the interview, which seemed to tax her mind until she became irritated.
Although she did not sound very sincere in giving her vague answers, her continual excuse of "I am too old" was probably accurate.

NO. AGR - 43

MASTER COPY

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

1. Name of interviewer [redacted]

2. Name of subject [redacted]

3. Time and date of interview :

From 10:00 AM to 12:00 on Sept [redacted] 1965

From _____ to _____ on _____ 19 ___

From _____ to _____ on _____ 19___

4. Place of interview :

Binh Duong Conference Hall

5. Sex of subject : Male ( ) Female (XXX)

6. Age of subject : 53

7. Ethnic background : Vietnamese

8. Place of birth :

hamlet _____

village [redacted]

district Ben Cat

province Binh Duong

9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :

hamlet _____

village [redacted]

district Ben Cat

province Binh Duong

10. (a) Length of residence in last location : Since birth

(b) Who controlled the place of residence :

GVN ( ) VC ( ) Contested (XX) How long? _____

NO. AGR - 43

11. Number of brothers (1) and sisters (1)

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : 1

13. Marital status : Widow

14. Number of children : 1

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age : _____

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject( ) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject(XX) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion : No religion

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : Farming

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation Does not know
(b) Landowner? _____

20. Education :
illiterate (XX)
literate ( )
schooling completed : _____

21. Any relatives in VC : None

22. Any relatives in GVN : 2

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by :
(a) French Husband killed by French
(b) GVN None
(c) VC None

24. When became a refugee : September [redacted] 1965

AGR

INTERVIEW

44

THE RAND CORPORATION
[redacted]

STUDIES OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT
OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR-44

Date of Interview : September [redacted] 1965

Subject's Category : Refugee: September [redacted] 1965

Former Residence : [redacted] village, Cu-Chi district, Binh-Duong Province.

Comments: Subject, a 45-year-old illiterate woman, is almost totally apolitical. The war has made mutually contradictory her only two wishes -- to stay alive and to return and tend her own village gardens. From a central government, she asks land pacification (Q. 33-35, 72) and an end to ground combat (Q. 45) and air attacks (Q. 78-97).

1. Is your daughter living with you?

   Yes. Her husband died two years ago and she moved in with me together with her child.

2. Is your husband here with you?

   He has been dead for three or four years. (How did he die?) Of an illness.

3. Are your parents still living?

   My father is still alive and he is now 70 years old. As for my mother, she has been dead a long time.

4. What was your occupation when you were still in your village?

   My father is very old but he worked all day. (How about you?) I worked on the land growing vegetables and potatoes to support ourselves.

5. Did you own any land?

   Very little. About half a "mau" of land.

6. How many bushels of paddy did your land produce each year?

   When it was a good year we might get 30 or 40 bushels. (Was that amount of paddy enough to tide you over till the next harvest?) It was barely enough, but we grew vegetables and potatoes and then sold them to add to our income. We would have enough if there was no sickness in the family. When there was, we had to economize by eating rice mixed with potatoes or manioc.

7. What medical facilities did you have in your village?

   When we were sick we would go to the hospital in Binh Duong.

8. How far was it from your village to here?

   Over [redacted] km. I think [redacted] km.

9. How did you come out here?

We came out here by boat (commercial).

10. How long have you been here?

I have been here for two weeks.

11. Did you attend any school?

Not at all. Years ago, my parents wouldn't let me go to school. That was the tradition of the time. Girls were not permitted to have an education, for fear they would write love letters to the boys.

12. When did the VC first come to your village?

They would come every now and then and suddenly disappear. When they came, they carried their guns around, and we simple people -- minding our own business -- got very scared of them.

13. How big was your village? How many hamlets did it include?

There were [redacted] hamlets in that village. (How many families lived in each hamlet?) I am very ignorant: I don't know. (How about your own hamlet?) I didn't count them because I didn't think it would do me any good. You should ask the village or hamlet chiefs -- they must know.

14. How many young men were left in your hamlet?

Since the [redacted] of this month (September) people scrambled to get out. I don't know who is still left in that village.

15. Did you stay in your village till the time you came out here?

I took refuge in [redacted], which was separated from my village by a river. I didn't dare stay in my village.

16. When did you move to [redacted]?

When the Strategic Hamlet was organized in my village, I left for [redacted] and didn't come back until the Strategic Hamlet had been built. (How long did you stay there that time?) About half a year. I didn't go back to my village until the Strategic Hamlet had been organized. I stayed in my village for about half a year. After the troops had left, I got so nervous, I left again for [redacted]

17. Where did you come from?

I came from [redacted] I had been in [redacted] for a while then I got so scared I came out here.

18. How many people came out here with you?

There were quite a few of them -- the boat was full -- but when we arrived here, they went their way and I went mine.

19. What are your plans and prospects now?

I was too scared in there. I came out here to be alive. Now that I'm here I will accept whatever job there is. We will receive help from the Government and if that is not enough I hope to find myself a job as a hired worker.

20. Did all the members of your family live together before you came here, or were some living apart?

We lived together. When my daughter went out to work, I stayed home and looked after her child. If I went out, then she stayed home.

21. How many families or persons have left your hamlet in the past years?

I don't know. I worked all day and wasn't interested in who was going. I'm ignorant of everything in the village. When I came out here there were others too, but they've scattered here and there. There were some who came out here before us. (Why and when did they come out here?) They came out here during the time the Strategic Hamlet was being built. There was some shelling and they were afraid. They've been out here since.

22. Why was there shelling at that time? Weren't they in the Strategic Hamlet?

At that time we were told to leave the village and stayed away. (Who told you?) The GVN people. They told us to move in with relatives who lived out here so that they could shell the village. We were told to come back when they had finished building the post and the Strategic Hamlet. All the villagers left at that time. Some of them went to [redacted] others went to [redacted] When the Strategic Hamlet was finished, many of them went back, but some remained out here.

23. When did it happen?

It's been a long time ago. It must have been two years ago.

24. In the village you just left, what did most of the people do to earn a living?

Ploughing the field, pulling grass, growing vegetables and potatoes so that they'd have something to feed themselves and their families.

25. How did the people in your village live?

None of them were rich. Some were better off than others because they could save something. For the rest, they just barely had enough to support themselves. The people in my village were not rich. There were also those who were so poor they had no land, so they had to rent it from others to get some rice out of that land. They also grew vegetables, raised pigs and chickens, and sold them to add to their income.

26. How much interest did these poor farmers have to pay to the landowners?

It depended. In a good year a "mau" of land rented would cost 40 or 50 bushels of paddy for interest. There was only one season per year and in the mealtime the farmers would grow potatoes and other plants so they could sell them or add to their diet. (Did you think the interest was too high?) No. In a good year, a "mau" of land could produce over 100 bushels.

27. Here there any changes in your economic conditions in the past years?

I found that I had to work all the time if I wanted to have enough for my family and myself. If I stopped working, we would die of starvation. (Did you find that your life had been better off in the past years?) It has always been the same. When I was sick and could not work, then the food grew scare around the family. But when I was healthy and could go around growing potatoes and vegetables, then we had food in the family. When we were home we could live on what we had planted and grown. It was our food. Here, we are poorer because we can't do anything to support ourselves.

28. How many Strategic Hamlets were included in your village?

There was only one. My hamlet was joined with [redacted] and [redacted] (Why was your hamlet joined with [redacted] and [redacted]) I don't remember what happened then. I lost my memory because I was too scared. I'm just not the same. If you ask me a question now and I give the answer, then if you ask me the same question a little while later I won't remember what I've said. I think it's the fear that's changed me so. I've become so absent-minded. When I came out here, they (GVN) asked me about my birthdate and I couldn't remember it.

29. [redacted] villages and your hamlet were in the same Strategic Hamlet, weren't they?

[redacted], and my village were in the same Strategic Hamlet. They gave it a name, but I don't remember how it was called. (It must have been a big one.) Yes, it was. I don't know why they included all those villages into one Strategic Hamlet.

30. When was it organized?

I don't remember.

31. Were the people forced to leave their former homes for the Strategic Hamlets?

Yes. People weren't permitted to stay in their old homes. They had to move to the Strategic Hamlet.

[redacted]

(Did you?) No. When we were told to stay away from the village until they'd finished building the Strategic Hamlet, I took my family to [redacted]. After it was built, many people moved back, but I remained in [redacted]

32. How did the people feel when they had to leave their former homes for the Strategic Hamlet?

No matter what the Government ordered them to do, they had to obey. (Did they have to build their own homes?) Yes. Of course, they couldn't take care of their gardens as they used to do when they were living in their old houses. They would go back every day to tend their gardens -- every day. Those who remained outside of the Strategic Hamlet and in another place, they would come back every now and then to take a look at their gardens. But if they wanted to do that, they had to get permission from the village authorities. Truthfully speaking, people were not very satisfied. They would rather have stayed in their former homes where they were sure they could scrape together enough for a living. The Government would give them assistance once in a while, but you can't rely on the Government to support everyone till they all die.

33. How long did you stay in [redacted]

I stayed at [redacted] for a year, and every now and then I would come back to my village and get a permit from the village authorities to take a look at my garden. Later I decided that I couldn't go on living like that. I decided to move my family back to the Strategic Hamlet. Just at that time, the troops in the Strategic Hamlet left, and the people who lived there also took their possessions and moved back to their old homes.

34. Why did the troops leave the Strategic Hamlet?

I don't know. The people were very dissappointed. They blamed the Government for bringing them there and then leaving them without any protection. They told the people that they should remain in the Strategic Hamlet. But the people said they wouldn't stay there alone without the troops. They'd rather go back to their former homes to tend their gardens and earn a living. They told the troops that whenever they come back, the people would return to the Strategic Hamlet to live

with them. When the troops were there, the people would get help from the Government. Now with them gone, the people were sure they wouldn't get any help at all. The cannon shellings happened so unexpectedly. When we came to visit our gardens, we were very afraid for fear we might be hit by those shells. I would gather whatever there was and carry it out in a hurry. Those shellings had caused some deaths, and people were really afraid.

35. Then why did they go back and stay at their old houses after the troops had left? Weren't they afraid of cannon shelling anymore?

They had to go back to their gardens to make a living. When the troops were there, people could expect some help from the Government once in a while. Now with those troops gone, the assistance would dry up also. The people were still afraid of the shellings but they would rather be killed by the shelling than by starvation. When the troops left they said goodbye to the people and assured them that their area was secure and they should continue to work and not worry. The people replied that they were afraid the airplanes would drop bombs and the cannon would shell their area. But what was surprising was after the troops had gone there was no more cannon shellings or bombing in that area at all.

36. Why was there shellings when the troops were there and then stopped when the troops had left?

I don't know. There were mortars and cannon shellings while the troops were there. There was no bombing then. I don't know the reason why they did that. I don't know what they were afraid of.

37. Did the VC come at any time while the troops were there?

I was in [redacted] and I don't know if the VC had been there any time or not. Every now and then I would come back, get permission and go to my garden. I would stay for one or two days and hurry back to [redacted] again.

38. How did the village authorities behave toward the people?

They were nice. If you needed a permit, they would give it to you for the asking.

39. You told me that you went back to [redacted] because of the shellings?

Yes. When the shelling became too heavy I moved back to [redacted] (When was that?) I don't remember. I guess two years ago. I remained in [redacted] for the entire year and would go back to my garden once in a while. While I was at [redacted] I worked as a hired worker to earn my living and to support my family. When I had some spare time I would go back to my garden, pull grass and plant vegetables and potatoes, and then leave. When those plants were big enough I would come back again to gather them and hurry back to [redacted]

40. Who controlled your hamlet a year ago?

The shellings were very heavy last year. That was why I had to evacuate. (What I mean is, did the VC come to liberate your village last year?) They would come every now and then and disappear. They would come carrying their weapons, would stay for one or two days, and then leave again. I don't know where they went. During the period where the shellings were heavy, I didn't dare stay at home. I would come back for a quick glance at the garden and then leave again. (Who controlled your village when you left it for here?) I think the Government was still in control of the people there. (How about the VC?) I really don't know for sure. I didn't stay there. I would come back and sometimes I would see them (VC) around, but I don't know if they would stay there or not. When I saw them there (VC), I got so scared I would hurry back to [redacted] There were times when I saw none of them except the people in the village.

41. Did many people in your village go to [redacted]

Some of them remained in [redacted] and travelled back and forth like me. [redacted] was a secure place because it was near the district.

42. When was the last time you saw those VC coming to your village?

I don't know, because I wasn't in the village. (Did you hear other people from your village talking about it?) I didn't hear them mention anything at all.

43. What did the VC do when they came to your village?

I don't know what they did there, because I didn't dare find out. And besides, I had no time for that. I was too poor. I was more concerned about earning a living. (What did the people say?) I didn't hear them saying anything.

44. Did the Front carry out any terroristic acts in your village.

Not in my village. I have heard that the VC arrest people, but that happened in other villages. (What did you hear about that?) I just heard that the VC arrested people in other villages.

45. What did you think about the VC when you saw them?

I would hurry to get out. (Why?) I was scared. (What made you afraid?) I was afraid even though they hadn't done anything to me. When I saw them carrying their weapons I would get so scared, I wouldn't dare go near them. I'd hurry and get out. Sometimes when I was home gathering up some plants, they passed by carrying all kind of weapons. I'd hurry up and leave. (Would you be afraid if the GVN soldiers instead of the VC came to your village?) I'd be afraid too. We were just civilians trying to make a living and working hard to support our families. We'd be afraid of both sides when they came in carrying their weapons about.

46. Were there any Front organizations in your village?

I didn't hear about them.

47. Were there any young men left in your hamlet before you came out here?

Very few. They were all married. There were many children running around, but I didn't see any young men.

48. Where did they all go?

I don't know. My hamlet was nearly empty -- there were very few families around: one family here, one family there.

49. Was your hamlet a combat hamlet?

I don't know. I had a small garden, and since I've been there to pull up the grass, the grass has become so thick and tall. The entire lot is in ruin for having no one to take care of it. The people in the village were so scared they wouldn't dare go to work as usual; they wouldn't care about the land being overrun by grass. They would only work so that there would be enough to feed themselves and their families.

50. Did you hear anyone from your hamlet who had worked for the VC?

I don't know about the other hamlets, but I didn't hear that anyone from my hamlet had left to work for the VC. They were all concerned about earning a living for themselves and their families.

51. Did you hear anyone from your hamlet who had left to work for the GVN?

I think so. (How many of them did?) That I don't know. I know that some worked for the GVN because my own nephews did and I guessed there must be others who worked for the GVN from my hamlet.

52. How did the Front recruit people in your village for military duty?

I haven't heard about that. I don't know if they recruited people from my village or not. (How about from other villages?) I didn't move around much. Therefore, I'm not well informed. I worked to feed my family. When the situation was peaceful I'd stay home, but when it became unbearable with the shellings then I moved out.

53. Were any members of your family taken by the Front for re-education?

No.

54. To whom did you pay taxes during the past three years?

I paid 50 piasters per year to the Government. (Did you have to pay to the VC?) No. Besides, I wasn't in my village

(To whom did the people in your village pay taxes?) I don't know. I didn't hear them say anything about that. (Did the VC ever come to you and ask you for contributions to their fund?) No.

55. Was there any land distribution being carried out in your village or other villages that you've heard of?

No, I didn't hear about that. I stayed with my family all the time. I didn't go around much, so I'm not well-informed.

56. Were you in your village during the Resistance?

No, we moved to [redacted] during that time too. The bombings and shellings were unbearable. (Did the Viet-Minh stay in your village that time?) I just heard that whenever there was an operation, the bombings and shellings were terrible, but I didn't hear if any fighting occurred during that time.

57. You do not remember when the VC first came to your village?

When the shellings became more intense. (When did the shellings become more intense?) Last year. (Was it before, or after the rainy season?) I don't remember.

58. Do you know who the district and province chiefs are?

When I needed some papers, then I would go to their offices and meet them. (Did they ever come to your village?) They might have come to visit the Strategic Hamlet, but since I wasn't there I'm not sure how many times they'd been there.

59. Did you hear of the downfall of Mr. Diem?

Yes, I did, but I didn't know why he was overthrown.

60. Who told you that?

Someone in the village had a radio. He listened to the news and informed us. He just said that Mr. Diem had been overthrown but didn't say why. I heard that one person was overthrown and that another person would step up to replace him.

61. What did you think about the downfall of Mr. Diem?

I thought since he had been in power for so long he should step down and let someone else take his place.

62. What did the Front have to say about that?

I didn't hear them say anything.

63. Do you know who heads up the present government?

I am ignorant -- I don't know.

64. Did the GVN carry out any programs in your hamlet to help the villagers?

When they (villagers) were still in the Strategic Hamlet, they would receive food, rice, and fish sauce once in a while. Those who weren't staying in the Strategic Hamlet got nothing.

65. What did the villagers think about this assistance?

Since the Government had thrown them in the Strategic Hamlet, the Government should help them stay alive.

66. After the troops had gone, were there any other forces to defend your village?

Nothing at all. There was a village chief and another man who was his assistant. These two men were in charge of the entire village. (Were there any SDC in your village?) No, at least I didn't see them. If there were any, they must have stayed with the village chief. (Was there a GVN post near your village?) No. There was one that was located in the Strategic Hamlet, but since the occupants had left, the post was abandoned.

67. Did the GVN troops pass through your village?

Every now and then they'd come to find out how the people were doing. (How often did they come?) Every three or four months. These were told me by other people.

68. Was there a post near [redacted]

Yes. Also there was [redacted] District, which wasn't so far from there.

69. Since [redacted] was a secure place, why did you come out here?

Because there was so much bombing, I got scared, so I came out here. (Were there bombings over Cu Chi?) No, there were at [redacted] but the explosions seemed so close, I got scared and decided to move out here.

70. Did many people leave [redacted]

There was no bombing there, and few people left [redacted] I left because I was too scared. The Government has urged the people from [redacted] and [redacted] to come to [redacted] for protection. [redacted] was safe. Many people from other villages have come there, and the Government told them that they could either stay there or come out here. I came out here. Furthermore, once in a while there were some shellings. The GVN soldiers would patrol often, and whenever they did, there would be shellings. I got scared, so I came out here.

71. How did the people feel about the GVN troops?

I didn't hear them say anything. I wish that the GVN troops would go back to the Strategic Hamlet, so that I could move my family back there. Out here, I have no work to do, no land to work on, no money, and life is very hard on us.

72. Did the VC come to [redacted] any time?

I didn't see them. I don't think so. I wouldn't have stayed there all that time, if I had known that they'd come in to [redacted] The people in my village had all left. They had worked in peace when the bombings and shellings got more heavy. Now the people are lying in wait for the Government to decide what to do. They wish the Government would send troops to their village so they could go back and work on their land and gardens. I wonder what is happening to the paddy on the field now that the harvest is getting near. If the Government doesn't let us go home and gather it for our use, we may not be able to get there and it'll rot in the field.

73. What have you heard about the aims of the Front?

I heard nothing about those aims. (Didn't you hear that the aims of the Front were to liberate the South and to fight the Americans?) No.

74. What have you heard about life in the Front military units?

I know nothing about it.

75. What have you heard about Front successes, defeats, and losses?

I heard nothing about those.

76. How many times has your village been attacked by airplanes?

Many times. (When did these attacks occur?) I don't remember. I heard from the people who had fled that at first the attacks would come once every two or three days. Later they happened more often. A little child was killed, entire families were killed. They were all children and women and they were like ourselves, working hard to feed themselves and to support their families.

77. Did you hear what type of airplanes drop those bombs?

I heard them call those airplanes "jets, jets" but I do not know what they are.

78. From whom did you hear that?

From the women who had fled out here. They said, "Oh my God, the bombings were terrible. We had to come out here." They also mentioned some kind of airplanes they called "B-something." There were too many kinds of airplanes, some with flat wings, some with angular wings, some with pointed noses, and what they called "jets," and now that BB-something. (Was the B-52 you had heard of?) It was "B-something." When someone mentioned the word "jets," I would use the same word when talking to others, but I really don't know what those jets look like. My hamlet was the first one to be attacked by airplanes. The other hamlets were not attacked until later.

80. Did the Government urge the people to leave their village before the attacks occurred?

No. The Government didn't urge the people to leave their village until the rate of air attacks had gone up a great deal.

81. When did the Government urge the people to leave their village?

That I don't remember. I've become so forgetful that I don't remember any date any more.

82. What damages did these attacks do to your village?

The bombings and shellings had caused much damage to the gardens. The trees were destroyed. During the first wave of attacks, only the people's property had been damaged on the second wave, many people were killed.

83. Why were there any casualties during the first wave of attacks?

Because those who dropped bombs dropped them in the gardens instead of on the houses. But the gardens were all ruined. Also the people went to their trenches for cover. There were casualties on the second wave because the bombs were dropped right in the trenches.

84. Did you get to see the holes that were made by the bombs?

Yes. (How did they look?) They looked awful. The trees were all burned and some houses were destroyed, but there were no deaths. Some holes were so big, they ran at least 20 m in length. Some were smaller.

85. How about the bombings on the second wave?

I didn't come home then, so I did not know how things looked. I didn't dare return because the bombings went on day and night. After the Government had urged us to leave the village, the bombings went on day and night.

86. Why didn't people come out here when they heard the Government ask them to leave their village?

In the leaflets, the Government said they could take a month to make the preparations for their evacuation. Some people left early. Those who did not leave early were killed by the bombings.

87. What did the people think about those attacks?

They would only report what they'd seen. (Which side did they blame for the attacks?) I talked to some women who had members of their families killed during those attacks. They would just say that the bombings had killed this or that member of their families, and that was all they said. (Didn't they blame the Government for causing those attacks that killed their people?) I didn't hear them say anything about that. They just reported that so many people were killed, that this person was hurt on his head, or that person had his head or leg cut by shrapnel. Some wounded had come out here to get their treatment.

88. Have you heard of Zone D?

No.

89. What do you think about those attacks?

I'm very afraid. I wish the Government would sent troops there, so we could come back with them and look after our gardens and land. If the Government continues to bomb my village, none of us will dare to return and the gardens and land will be abandoned with no one to take care of them, to work on them. The land will go to waste. If the Government supports us, it will support us just for a time, it will not support us till we die.

90. You said you were afraid of the bombing and that was why you came out here. There had been bombing before -- why didn't you come out then?

I left my village for [redacted] then. When the people from other villages streamed out to [redacted] the place became too crowded. Also, there were mortars shellings. I decided to move out here.

91. Did those mortars attacks cause any damages to the refugees?

No. Some of them went to see those CVR people and asked them not to shell [redacted] anymore because the refugees lived all over the place, and they might get hurt by those shellings. Since then the rate has gone down. (Where did the attacks come from?) From [redacted] As for me, I was too scared, so I took my family with me out here. Besides, my father was sick, and I had to take him to the hospital for treatment.

92. What did you hear about the second wave of attacks from the people who had fled from their villages?

I didn't hear what they had to say. From my own experience, it seemed that the airplanes during the second wave of attacks were different from those of the first wave. (What were the differences?) They flew very high, high up in the sky, and dropped bombs. (Did the other fly lower and drop bombs?) Yes, but the ones that were in the recent bombings flew very high and they dropped a lot of bombs.

93. How about the explosions?

They were deafening. They were! They were awful. My ears are still ringing with those sounds. I think I've become hard of hearing because of those explosions. The earth trembled and the houses shook. I was scared stiff. The houses seemed ready to fall on us at any moment. I think just the fear alone could kill me.

94. Do you blame the Government for dropping bombs on your village?

The bombs were dropped on many places -- not my village alone. I wish the Government would stop bombing us, so I could go back. If the Government takes pity on us, it will stop dropping bombs and let us be alive. If the Government has no feeling for the people, we will die of starvation.

95. Do you know the reason for those air-attacks?

I don't know. (Do you know that it was because the VC were hiding in your village that the Government had to bomb it?) I don't know whether there were VC there or not; I only know that the bombing has caused much damage to my garden and house.

96. What did the leaflets say?

The leaflets said that the people should leave the village so that the Government could bomb it and flush out the VC. If the people remained in the village they might get killed.

97. Do you think the Government was right to bomb your village?

The Government suspected there were VC in our village, and that was why our village was bombed and our gardens destroyed, and the people evacuated and led a hard life.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

This interview was not finished because subject's father had been very sick and there was no one in the house to look after him. Subject asked to be released from a continuation of this interview so she could go back home early.
Subject was cooperative and sincere but was not well informed about what was going on in her village.
She talked very slowly and would repeat the same answer to herself. She would ramble on, and the final statement would always have something to do with her house and garden.
Her attitude toward the attacks on her village and her present situation was that of resignation and submissiveness.

No. AGF 44

QUESTIONNAIRE II
For Refugees

1. Name of interviewer [redacted]
2. Name of subject [redacted]
3. Time and date of interview :
   From 10:30 AM to 12:00 AM on Sept. [redacted] 1965
   From _____ to _____ on _____ 196___
   From _____ to _____ on _____ 196___
   Total time 1 hour and a half
   Interview based on : tape (XX) hand written notes ( )
4. Place of interview :
   Binh-Duong conference hall
5. Sex of subject : Male ( ) Female (X)
6. Age of subject : 45
7. Ethnic background : Vietnamese
8. Place of birth :
   hamlet _____
   village [redacted]
   district Ben-Cat
   province Binh-Duong
9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :
   hamlet _____
   village [redacted]
   district Cu-Chi
   province Binh-Duong
10. (a) Length of residence in last location : Two years
    (b) Who controlled the place of residence:
        GVN ( ) VC ( ) Contested (X)
    (c) Since when controlled or contested ? _____

11. Number of brothers ( ) and sisters ( )

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : _____

13. Marital status : Married

14. Number of children : 1

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age : _____

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject( ) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject(X) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion : Ancestor worship

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : Farming

19. Economic status : Does not know
(a) VC designation _____
(b) Landowner ? _____ How much land _____

20. Education :
illiterate (X)
literate ( )
schooling completed : _____

21. Any relatives in VC : None

22. Any relatives in GVN : 2

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by :
(a) French None
(b) GVN None
(c) VC None

24. When became a refugee : September [redacted] 1965

25. Where took refuge first _____

26. Present residence _____

AGR

INTERVIEW

45

THE RAND CORPORATION

[redacted]

STUDIES OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT
OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR-45

Date of Interview : September [redacted] 1965

Subject's Category : Refugee: September [redacted] 1965

Former Residence : [redacted] village, Ben Cat district, Binh Duong province

Comments. Subject, a 62-year-old farmer, was suspicious and bitter. Specific information, such as that on VC taxes (Q.31), was not easily obtained. His bitterness was directed toward both sides (Q.68), but with the GVN he had at least three complaints: the failure of the strategic hamlet (Q.2), the absence of security and pacification (Q.34, 61), and especially the lack of promised aid for refugees (Q. 6, 9, 56-59, 62).

1. How long have you been here?

I have been here for two weeks and I haven't received anything yet: no money, no rice. My wife told me to go and find out. This is so disgusting. One of my child is sick.

2. Where did you come from?

I came from [redacted]. A few years ago the government organized Strategic Hamlet and made us all move to live in there. I stayed there for a year, and when the troops left I moved back to my former home. I don't know why the government gathered us all in the Strategic Hamlet and then abandoned us later. It's rather sad.

3. Who was in control of your village when you came out here?

The Government people still checked on my papers and we still had to obtain permit from the Government to go back and forth. The entire village has been destroyed by the bombings.

4. How did you come here?

We took the Lambretta. I could go by bicycle, but then I would have to go back and forth to fetch the whole family and it would take too much time. (How long did it take you from [redacted] to here?) It was an earthern road that ran from my village to here. It took [redacted] by Lambretta.

5. Did the VC try to stop you from coming out here?

That road was under the control of the Government.

6. What are your plans and prospects now?

What can I do? I am too old and I have too many children to feed. (How old is your youngest child?) He is six. When we came out here we couldn't bring anything with us. Just my wife and me and my children. I am very sick at heart. The Government urged us to come out and we left amptyhanded. We have been here two weeks and haven't received anything at all. I have my wife and children on my hands. An old man like me, what can I do? I am really sick at heart, I tell you the truth.

7. How large is your family?

Six. My married children did not stay with me.

8. Did all the members of your family live together before you come here or were some living apart?

We lived together.

9. How big was your village? How many hamlets did it include?

[redacted] hamlets. There had been [redacted] hamlets before the Government organized the Strategic Hamlets. There were only two Strategic Hamlets which served the entire village. They were called [redacted] and [redacted] (How many families lived in your village?) In my hamlet [redacted] there were about 110 families (How about in the other hamlet?) There were about 150 families. [redacted] was a Strategic Hamlet. [redacted] was one too, but it was not as good as [redacted] (Why?) There was no barbed wire around it. (Why was there no barbed wire around [redacted]?) That was the Government business -- how can I know about that? The Government sent troops there and then took them away. I wish you would ask the Government to give us some help. I am really sick at heart. Look, I have nothing for my wife and my children and I've been here and received nothing: no rice, no money. I don't know why. My child is sick. The place we're living in is so crowded, and if one child gets sick, all the rest will get that sickness from him. Then they all will get sick. Deep down I'm really sad.

10. How many families or persons have left your hamlet in the past years?

There were some, but I don't know how many. (Why did they leave their village?) They wanted to live in peace, and when they found their lives were threatened, they left. (Why were their lives threatened?) Some of them were poor, others were not very poor, but they left their village because they found that they couldn't remain in their village any longer. Life was too hard in their village.

11. How was your life then?

It was hard. (Then why didn't you leave with them?) When the Government moved us to the Strategic Hamlet, we were very happy and grateful, but then the troops were taken away. My house in the Strategic Hamlet was still there.

12. What did most of the people in your village do to earn a living?

They were rubber-tree tappers. There was a big rubber plantation there, but I don't think anything was left in that plantation after the bombings had finished with it. (Was the village prosperous or poor?) Poor -- there weren't any rich people around. (Did people have enough to eat, or did they have to go hungry some times?) They were poor and they had to work hard to get something to eat. If they didn't work, where could they get food? They could eat twice a day, but there was no extra.

13. Were there any changes in your family's economic conditions in the past years?

Life in the Strategic Hamlet was much better than it had been outside. (When was the Strategic Hamlet organized?) In June 1963, then in June 1964 the troops withdrew. My life became harder, because after the troops had left, the people moved back to their former homes and we received no more help from the Government.

14. What did you like about the Strategic Hamlet?

I wish the Government would do something to bring back peace. The Government took us to the Strategic Hamlet and then forsook us. What could we do about it? Now I'm here, because the Government urged us to come out.

15. How did the GVN village and hamlet authorities behave?

They were nice to the people.

16. How did the people feel about those GVN authorities?

The people were nice to them too. There was no conflict at all.

17. Who controlled your hamlet a year ago?

It was because of the VC that the Government didn't trust us anymore. (Who controlled your hamlet a year ago?) The Government said there were VC in our village. Last year the Government controlled the village. (How about this year?) They've started to control it just recently. (Who are they?) The VC, who else? (When did they start to control your village?) Since February or March. (How many hamlets in your village are now controlled by the VC?) The entire village.

18. Did the VC carry out any terroristic acts in your village, or kill any of the people?

They've been there just recently, they haven't done anything. (Had they done it before they took over the control of your village?) No, nothing of that sort.

19. Were you satisfied or disaatisfied with the Front administration and policies in your hamlet?

I was old, I didn't go around much. (Didn't you meet them?) Every now and then. (What did you think about them?) I was too old. I worked hard to support my children I didn't go around much. (How did the people feel about the VC?) After farming I went home and stayed home. I didn't go around. (What did you hear from the members of your family?) Nothing, nothing at all. They didn't know anything, and I didn't know anything. I am too old -- I know nothing.

20. Were there any organizations in your village?

I was too old. I didn't go around the village. I just stayed home. (Did you have to get any kind of permit from them?) No. I got all my papers from the Government. (You haven't asked them for any permit since February?) No. (You've had nothing to do with them since February?) No. (How did they control your village?) I was told the VC were in control of my village. That was why I knew about it. I didn't go around the village. I didn't know what was happening. (Who told you that the VC were in control of your village?) Now let me ask you what could the people do after the troops had left? They had to stay in the village. (What I want to ask you is this: You told me that your village had been under the control of the VC since last February. If you never had contact with them for any permit, then how did you know that they were in control of your village?) I'm too old, what do I know? I worked hard. (I understand that, but you told me that the VC were in control of your village.) You said "control, control", so I said "control". I was old, what do I know? (Well, let me ask the question again, who was in charge of your village when you left it for here?) After the Government troops had left they (VC) would come in every now and then.

21. Was your hamlet a Combat Hamlet? Were there any guerrillas in your village?

The VC lived in the jungles.

22. When you wanted to go some place, whom did you ask for permission?

No one. I got my I.D. card from the Government.

23. Were there any guerrillas in your village?

No, they lived in the jungles.

24. Was the Strategic Hamlet destroyed by the Front?

Yes. (When?) The Government troops left in June 1964, and in July and August they destroyed it.

25. How many young men were left in your village when you left it for here?

They had all gone. (Where did they go?) They went here and there to earn a living. (Did any of them join the VC?) There must be some, but I don't know how many of them did. Also, some went to Saigon to work. I'm an old man. I know nothing. I tell you I didn't do anything. I was an old man, who worked hard to earn a living and to support my family. I didn't go to meetings. I didn't join in any activities in the village. I farmed during the day, and after that I went home to rest.

26. Did the Front carry out land distribution in your hamlet?

No, I told you I was an old man. I didn't participate in any activities in the village, so how can I know anything.

27. How did the Front recruit people in your village for military duty?

I told you I didn't know anything.

28. How did you get news about what was going on?

I heard the villagers say this and that. (Didn't you hear the villagers say the VC were doing this and that in your village?) No. (What did you hear from the villagers?) Nothing. (You just said the villagers said this and that.) I'm an old man and I worked hard. I didn't work for them (VC). I farmed the land and at the day's end I was too tired. I just went home to rest my tired bones.

29. You said you did not attend the meetings. Were you invited to these meetings?

Yes, but I told them I was over 60 and I wanted to live in peace. (How often did the Front hold meetings with the villagers in your hamlet?) Once every month or two months. It was not my business, so I didn't ask them. The VC didn't trust me. (Why didn't they trust you?) They said I worked for the GVN. (What did you do for the GVN?) Nothing. But they (VC) said I sympathized with the GVN because I moved to the Strategic Hamlet. (How about others from your hamlet? Didn't others move to the Strategic Hamlet with you?) I don't know about them. I only know about my family. (How did you know the VC didn't trust you?) I just know. I told you already that I know nothing whatsoever about what was happening in the village.

30. Did you belong to any village organization or Farmer's association in your village?

I told you I did not participate in any activity in the village. (Was there a Farmer's association in your village?) I was not a member of that organization. (Good, but was there such organization in your village?) Yes. (How did you know?) The villagers told me. (Were you invited to be a member of that organization?) No. (Why? Weren't you a farmer?) Because I was too old.

31. To whom did you pay taxes during the past three years?

I've never paid taxes. (You've never paid taxes to the GVN?) No. But recently they came and asked me to pay taxes. (Who were they?) They were the officials. (Were they GVN people or Front members?) They were VC -- I really don't know who they were. I was just simple civilian. I don't know who they were really. (Did the VC come to ask you to make contributions to their fund?) Well, we lived in their area and they (VC) must be doing something like that in the village, but I don't know what else they were doing. (Did the VC come to ask you to make contributions to their fund?) They (VC) made each family pay one or two bushels of paddy. (How about your family?) We paid one bushel. (How many times have you done that?) Only once. (What year did you pay them one bushel of paddy?) This year, when I was still in the hamlet. (Were you told what they were going to use your paddy for?) No, I was told to make the payment and I did.

(Did every family in your village have to pay one bushel, or did some have to pay more?) I don't know. I wasn't in charge of collecting the contributions. I don't know.

32. Were there any damages done to your family during the Resistance?

Yes. (How much?) Our house was caved in.

33. When did the Front become active in your village?

I've told you already. It was during February or March of this year. (Didn't they come to your village last year?) I lived in the hamlet. (Did they come to your hamlet last year?) I lived in the hamlet. How could I know whether they had came in or not. (Did they come in your hamlet during the previous year?) They came in and were beaten away by the GVN people. Two or three of them were killed. That was what I heard from the villagers. I really don't know. (When did they come?) During the year when the GVN people were still there. (What year was it?) During 1963 or 1964.

34. What did the villagers think about those attacks from the VC?

The people were very disgusted. They wished the Government could keep their village in peace. There were battles from both sides, and the people were disgusted. (Were the people disgusted with the Government or with the VC?) They were disgusted with the Government. The Government moved them into the Strategic Hamlet and promised them security and yet the VC could come to harass them. Personally, I wish the Government would do something to speed up the unification so we could live in peace. As things stand now, people are very disgusted.

35. What have you heard about the aims of the Front?

I know nothing.

36. What have you heard about life in Front military unit?

I know nothing.

37. What have you heard about front successes, defeats and losses?

I heard nothing. I told you I was an old man and wasn't interested in knowing what was happening in the village.

38. Why did you come out here?

Because the Government urged us to come out. (When?) During the 8th or 9th of this month (September). As soon as I heard the appeals, I gathered my possessions and took my wife and children out here. (What did the Government tell you?) We were told to leave the village and find some secure place to stay. I've been out here for 15days. (Did the Government tell you why it wanted the people to leave their village?) So that it could destroy the village. The entire population from my village left. They left their homes to come out here.

39. How often has your village been bombed?

Two or three times. One of my houses was destroyed during the last bombing. (When was it?) On September [redacted] (You came here on the [redacted]?) Well, on the [redacted] I came home to get the chicken and ducks. (Did the bombing occur when you were in the village?) I just went into the village and got out immediately. I didn't dare stay there, I was too scared. (Did the bombing occur before or after you had been home that time?) There was shelling that day and one of my houses was caved in. I left and later heard from others that there was bombing in the village. From then on I didn't dare go back again. (Didn't you say that the bombing destroyed one of your houses?) It was the cannon that did it.

40. There had been bombing before. Why didn't you come out then? Why did you wait till now to come out?

We came out now because the Government asked us to leave our village. (Suppose the Government hadn't asked, would you have come out?) Yes. I was too scared. (Weren't you scared before?) The Government said this time the bombing would be more fierce. We were scared, so we listened to the Government's appeals. In the leaflets, the Government said the B-52 air lanes would drop bombs and those bombs were quite powerful.

41. When was the last time you saw the VC before you left your village to come out here?

I don't know. I know nothing.

42. Do you have any close friends serving in Front military units?

No.

43. Are any members of your family or relatives serving in the ARVN or with the GVN?

I have two nephews with the GVN, but I don't know what they're doing.

44. Are any members of your family or relatives serving with the Front?

I told you no.

45. Has any fighting taken place in or near your hamlet or village?

The VC came and were beaten by the GVN troops who were stationed then in the Strategic Hamlet. Some of the VC were killed.

46. What did you and the villagers do during those attacks?

We stayed in our houses. What could we do?

47. Were the villagers warned by the Front or the GVN about these attacks?

I don't know. (Just say yes or no.) No.

48. Was your hamlet bombarded by artillery?

Yes. (How often?) I don't remember. (was it once every two or three days, or more often?) I told you I don't remember.

49. Did anybody in your hamlet join the Front because he resented the attacks?

I told you I didn't know anything. I was an old man.

50. Did you hear about the downfall of Mr. Diem?

I heard about it, all right, but I know nothing else. (What did the Front tell the villagers?) I don't know. We were living in the Strategic Hamlet then, and were told by the GVN people to take Mr. Diem's photograph down, and we did. That was all. (Do you know who heads up the present government?) I don't know. (What have you heard about the present government and its policies?) I know nothing.

51. Did the GVN carry out any programs in your hamlet to help the villagers?

When we were still living in the Strategic Hamlet, the Government would distribute rice to us every now and then. After the troops had left, the people moved back to their former houses. And from then on, the Government stopped its aid.

52. Did the GVN troops pass through your hamlet?

Yes. (How often?) Only once. There were six Americans in that operation. (When was it?) I don't remember. (Was it this year or last year?) I don't remember. I told you, I didn't remember. (What was the strength of the GVN troops in that operation?) There were many of them. (Why were they in your village that time?) They were on an operation to destroy the VC. (How did they behave toward the villagers?) They were nice to the villagers.

53. When did you think about coming out here?

September [redacted] There were broadcasts from the airplanes, and leaflets were dropped to urge people to leave their village and come out here.

54. Had you thought of moving to a GVN-controlled area before?

No.

55. What have you heard about conditions in GVN-controlled areas before you left?

The leaflets said that the people should evacuate because the B-52s were going to bomb the village. The people should for safety go to Route 13, or near the GVN posts, or to town. and the Government would help them.

56. Were you told what the GVN would do for you and your family?

The Government said we'd be given assistance. It didn't say what kind. But I've been to the Welfare Center six times and I haven't received anything. Every time I went, I left empty-handed. They (GVN) said when the VC were all gone we could return to our own village.

57. What did you expect the GVN to do for you?

I was told the Government would give us rice, money, sauce, and clothes, but I haven't received any of these.

58. Did anyone talk you into moving out here?

No, I came out here because of the leaflets.

59. What did you fear most, when you were thinking about leaving your village?

The people were most afraid of bombs and bullets and death. Now that I'm here, I'm not afraid anymore, but I haven't received anything in money, rice, or any assistance from the government.

60. Have you heard about the Chieu Hoi program?

The leaflets were dropped from the airplanes. (Were those leaflets about the Chieu Hoi program?) I'm not a learned man, I don't know. (Have you heard of the word 'Chieu Hoi'?) I might have heard of it, but I don't remember. My mind was very slow. I don't remember whether I've heard of it or not.

61. How long did you expect to be away from your hamlet?

I wish the Government would do something so that, in a month or two, we could go back to our village in time for the harvest. If not, the harvest will go to waste.

62. What property did you bring with you?

Nothing at all. Just some clothes. Nothing at all. (Could you bring your savings out here with you?) We had little money, but we've spent it all during these last fifteen days.

63. Is there anyone in your village who will look after your property?

They've all left.

64. What else would you have like to have taken with you if you had been able to do so?

There's nothing in the house now.

65. When you left the village, did the VC try to stop you?

I don't know. I didn't see them. (what did other villagers say?) I mind my own business. I didn't mix with others.

66. What do you think might happen to you if you went back to your hamlet?

I'm afraid the village may be bombed again. (what do you think the VC would do to you if you went back to your village?) I won't go back to my village until the Government tells me that it's safe to return.

67. How long do you think the war will go on?

I don't know. Only the people in high positions know about it. The people want peace, but since that can't be, they have to make do with the way things are.

68. Do you blame anyone for causing you to leave your village?

We're the people and don't know who to blame. This is our fate, and we have to accept our lot. (What do other refugees say?) I don't know. When I was told there'd be bombing, I got scared and moved out here.

69. Have any of the villagers who left with you moved back to your hamlet?

I don't know.

70. Did anyone try to persuade you or the other refugees to go back to your hamlet since you came here?

I don't know. (Did anyone try to persuade you to go back to your hamlet?) I just want peace. I have a wife and children to support.

71. Have you seen any Americans?

I've seen them at the Welfare Center. (What do you think they are doing in Vietnam?) I don't know. (What did the VC say about the American aims in Vietnam?) I don't know. (Do you think the Americans came here to take over Vietnam?) No, I don't know. I'm just a simple citizen. This belongs to the military people. I don't know about it.

72. Who do you think bombed your village?

I think they are Americans. (You think the Americans bombed your village?) How can I know? I heard people said they were Americans, so I say they are Americans. Beyond that, I know nothing. (In your opinion, who dropped bombs on your village?) In my opinion, the Americans. (What do you think about the Americans?) I'm a simple citizen and I want peace. (According to you, your house has been destroyed by bombing. Don't you hate the Americans?) What can we do? If they let us live, then we'll stay alive. If not, what can we do? We want peace, but who can we blame? I don't blame anyone. My life is very hard. I'll work hard during my lifetime, and when I die I'll be resigned to my fate. Life is too hard for us -- the people -- and we have to be resigned to our fate. During that operation -- (Which one?) The one I mentioned to you earlier. The firing was very awful. There were three captains, and they told the people to hide their possessions some place, because they couldn't keep an eye on all their soldiers. There was such a great number of them, swarming all around. (Did those soldiers take anything from the villagers?) They just stayed there for a day or two and then left. (Did they steal anything from the villagers, or have you heard complaints from the people?) No. (Were there any casualties in that operation?) I don't know. They stayed there for five or six days. (Five or six days, or two or three days?) The Americans and some doctors stayed in my house. They bought some coconuts from me. I haven't received any rice or money from the Government.

73. Which side do you think is winning?

I don't know. I just want peace, so I can move back to my village. I hope there's no more fighting, so we -- the people -- can go back to work in peace.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

Subject was an old man of 62, but he looked very alert. He spoke quickly, in an accent that made it difficult for the interviewer to understand him. He got angry quite a few times and raised his voice when he was asked to clarify his answers. Subject seemed to be more informed than he was willing to admit in this interview. He would slip up in some answers, then catch himself in time with answers completely unrelated to the question. His attitude was somewhat hostile. He was most relieved when the interview was over.

No. AGR 45

QUESTIONNAIRE II
For Refugees

1. Name of interviewer [redacted]
2. Name of subject [redacted]
3. Time and date of interview :
   From 3:30 p.m to 5:00 p.m on Sept. [redacted] 1965
   From _____ to _____ on _____ 196___
   From _____ to _____ on _____ 196___
   Total time 1 hour and 30 minutes
   Interview based on : tape (XX) hand written notes ( )
4. Place of interview :
   Binh Duong conference hall
5. Sex of subject : Male (X) Female ( )
6. Age of subject : 62
7. Ethnic background : Vietnamese
8. Place of birth :
   hamlet _____
   village [redacted]
   district Ben Cat
   province Binh Duong
9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :
   hamlet _____
   village [redacted]
   district Ben Cat
   province Binh Duong
10. (a) Length of residence in last location : Since birth
    (b) Who controlled the place of residence:
    GVN ( ) VC (X) Contested ( )
    (c) Since when controlled or contested ? _____

11. Number of brothers (4) and sisters ( )

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : 4

13. Marital status : Married

14. Number of children : 7

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age :

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject( ) or not with subject (X)
Wife with subject (X) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject(X) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion : Buddhist

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : Farming

19. Economic status : Does not know
(a) VC designation
(b) Landowner ? How much land

20. Education :
illiterate ( )
literate (X)
schooling completed : 3rd year in elementary school

21. Any relatives in VC : None

22. Any relatives in GVN : 2 nephews

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by :
(a) French One brother
(b) GVN None
(c) VC None

24. When became a refugee : September 1965

25. Where took refuge first

26. Present residence

AGR

INTERVIEW

46

THE RAND CORPORATION

[redacted]

STUDIES OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT
IN SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR-46

Date of Interview : September [redacted], 1965

Subject's Category : Refugee: September [redacted], 1965

Area of Residence : [redacted] Village, Ben Cat District, Binh Duong Province

1. Where were you born?

I was born in [redacted] Village, [redacted] Hamlet, Ben Cat District, Binh Duong Province.

2. Did you always stay in your village?

During the troubled 9-year period (Resistance) I had evacuated to some other places. I returned to my own village when it was peaceful again.

3. Did you come directly from [redacted] Village to take refuge here?

Yes. I came straight from [redacted]

4. How long have you been back to [redacted]?

I've been living there all my life.

5. When did the VC get control of [redacted] Village?

I don't remember. I only remember that there were only one or two years of peace before the VC came.

6. Couldn't you remember the dates when the Village Council and the Popular Forces withdrew, and the VC took over the village for good?

I can't remember. It was about 8 or 9 years ago. The GVN authorities sometimes made a visit. They came to stay in [redacted] or [redacted] Strategic Hamlets for a few months, then they abandoned their posts.

7. Didn't [redacted] Village have any Strategic Hamlets?

There were old hamlets set up during the 9-year period. The GVN didn't establish any Strategic Hamlet in [redacted] They concentrated everything in the [redacted] and [redacted] Strategic Hamlets.

8. How many brothers and sisters do you have?

I only have one younger sister.

9. Are you married? How many children do you have?

Yes I'm married. I have four young children and three older daughters. The older children are all married. I have two sons, 8 and 10 years old. The younger four children -- two boys and two girls -- are living with me. They are 10, 8, 6, and 5 years of age.

10. Did you take them all along with you over here?

Yes, they're all with me. But my wife got sick and couldn't go earlier.

11. Are your parents living?

No. They're dead.

12. Then your family now consists of your wife, and four young children?

Yes.

13. What is your religion?

I worship my ancestors.

14. What is your occupation in the village?

I work on the land.

15. What class were you classified by the VC?

Peasant class. The VC came to the village and ordered us to dig trenches. We did whatever we were told.

16. How were you classified exactly? Middle class farmer? Poor farmer?

The poorest class of farmer. I think they call it poor farmer class.

17. Did you go to school?

I'm illiterate. I don't know how to read or write.

18. Do you have relatives working for the GVN or the ARVN?

Many of my relatives are working in Saigon. There must be four of them.

19. Were any of your relatives killed by the French during the Resistance period?

Yes. My younger brother was suspected, arrested, and killed.

20. Were any of them harmed by the VC?

My second daughter was taken away by the VC 7 or 8 months ago. I don't know who to ask about her whereabouts. She was working at the rubber plantation. They came there to arrest her. It must be 7 or 8 months ago, in the 12th month of last (lunar) year (January, 1965). I haven't heard from her since. She was only working at the plantation when they got her. I don't know where to look for her.

21. When did you get here?

I came here only three days ago. My wife's been so ill, I've got to nurse her. I only left a few days ago, when she felt a little better. I'd wanted so much to come here to submit an application to get something, but I couldn't until now.

22. Did you come straight from [redacted] Village? Did you stop anywhere on the way? How did you get here?

I came straight from [redacted] I didn't stop anywhere on the way. From [redacted] I walked to the [redacted] bridge where I boarded a Lambretta three-wheeler to come here.

23. Did you say you have four young children, and three older daughters?

Yes, I still have four young children. The older daughters are married. One of them was taken away by the VC; the others live with their husbands in Saigon.

24. How many hamlets were there in [redacted] Village?

There were [redacted] hamlets: [redacted]

25. How many inhabitants were there in each hamlet?

I don't know exactly how many inhabitants there were, but I know that [redacted] was more densely populated than [redacted] and [redacted]

26. What's the estimated number of inhabitants in [redacted]?

A few hundred people.

27. How many inhabitants were there in the whole village?

I can't tell.

28. Did you always stay in your village?

During the Resistance period, the village was not inhabitable. When the then-Government called on the people to surrender, I left the village to come to Cho Cat for a few years. Besides that, I've never left the village. Even if I had to make a living elsewhere, I still come back to village.

29. During the last few years, did any of the villagers leave?

Yes. Those who were too poor and too frightened evacuated to various places to live. Some went to the (rubber) plantation, others went to.....

30. Did they evacuate to other villages?

Yes, they moved to other villages. They went as far as Binh Duong and Ben Cat, where it was more peaceful, out of the reach of the VC.

31. Why didn't the others leave the village?

Those who left were too poor and too frightened...

32. Why should they fear the VC if they were poor?

They were afraid of the ARVN's raids and cannon shellings.

33. What's the main occupation in your village?

Most of the people were farmers, working on the rice-field. When the rice was planted, they'd work as hire-laborers for others, or they'd come out here to look for odd jobs.

34. Are the majority of the people of your village well-off, average, or poor?

I think they are average; nobody is well-off. During the peaceful years, under the French, there were rich people. Nowadays nobody could work in peace, nobody could do anything productive. Some were compelled to sell their land for good, and those who were too poor moved away.

35. So in your opinion, the living standard in the village has deteriorated?

Yes, life is very hard. There is no employment, and nobody dares work on his land properly. We were constantly afraid of airplanes and shellings.

36. How much land do you own in the village?

I own no land. I only rented 50 "sao" of land: that is, half an hectare. I worked alone on the land.

37. In the last few years, has your own living standard been rising or falling?

It's been deteriorating everyday. I've been too afraid of the planes to work on the land. The planes would strafe at any moving things on the ground. I'm afraid of bombs and cannon shells.

38. Would the planes strafe while you were working on the land?

Yes. We had to drop everything to run for cover; otherwise, we'd be strafed by the planes. That's why we couldn't make enough to eat.

39. Was your house located within a Strategic Hamlet?

No. [redacted] Village had no Strategic Hamlet. Once the GVN grouped people in [redacted] Hamlet, and I stayed there for a few months; then, when the GVN troops withdrew from the post, I returned to my old place.

40. Was there a Village Council in your village?

Yes, but they worked in Ben Cat District town.

41. How far is it between your village and the district?

[redacted] kms.

42. When whenever anybody needs some kind of paper, did they have to go to the District town?

Yes. If anybody wanted a working permit, or if they had applications of any kind, they had to go all the way to the District town.

43. Did the Village Council ever set up its office in your village?

They used to set up an office in the village during the more peaceful years but not for long. It was less than a year.

44. How did the villagers feel about the Village Council?

The Village Council was nice to the people. They'd grant what the people asked for.

45. During this last year, who has been in control of your village

The VC have been in control of my village.

46. How long have the VC been in control of your village?

About 8 or 9 years.

47. Have the VC ever terrorized or killed anybody in the village?

Yes. I've heard, for instance, that if anyone came out here to spy (to receive spying assignments from the GVN) they would be arrested and executed by the VC. Nobody knew if the victims were really spies.

48. Did they hold trials before executing?

The victims' offenses were written down on papers.

49. Did they hold Popular Court?

Yes. They sometimes did.

50. Did the people in the village think that those executions were justified?

I don't know. The victims were those who used to go to the District town to make a living. We have no idea if they really worked against the VC, but they were arrested and killed.

51. What did the people think of the VC's control of your village?

Some liked them, others didn't. But the majority didn't like them because they thought that the VC had brought troubles to them and made their lives harder, that life would have been easier without the VC.

52. Are you satisfied with the way the VC ran your village?

They've done many right things and also many unjust things. I didn't like them, but I didn't dare speak my mind. For instance, while we were busy working on our fields, they'd give us orders to do labor duties for them; we had to drop our work and do what we were told. They sometimes bullied us.

53. What else did the VC do that the people didn't like?

I don't know exactly.

54. Did the VC set up Combat Hamlets?

I've seen them set up Combat fences.

55. Did anybody live outside the Combat fences?

Everybody lived inside the fences. A group of houses would have one common fence. It's just like living in a pigsty. Those who lived in isolated places had to build their own fences.

56. What did you have to do in the Combat Hamlet?

We had to build fences, dig trenches, place spikes, etc.

57. How many youths between the ages of 16 and 30 are there still in your village?

There were not many of those youths. I don't know where they'd gone to.

58. How old are most of the youngsters in the village?

They are 12 or 13 years old.

59. Weren't there any young men?

(Respondent shook his head.)

60. How did the VC recruit fighters?

They made propaganda to the effect that it was the duty of young people to serve in the (VC) Army.

61. How many youths in the village took to their propaganda?

I don't know. But there were only children left in the village. All the older ones joined the VC.

62. How many youths were serving in the ARVN?

I don't think there were any. Because it was a VC area. If some people lived with their relatives out here, they might join the ARVN. Otherwise it's out of the question. If we went too often to the District town to make a living, we'd be suspected by them. Therefore there were no sons of the villagers serving the ARVN.

63. Was there anybody sent to re-education?

I've known a few people who went to the District town so often that they were suspected and sent to re-education.

63. How long did the education session last?

(Long pause.)

64. What did most of the people do that caused them to be sent to re-education?

I don't know exactly what they did. I only heard that those people were suspected. Besides, the VC also sent youngsters to education sessions.

65. Why did the VC suspect those people?

Because those people went to the District town too often, the VC suspected them of planning to join the ARVN.

66. Was any member of your family sent to re-education?

No. My children were too young yet. They're all under 10 years old.

67. Were you afraid of being sent to re-education yourself?

They wouldn't send old people to re-education.

68. How often did they hold mass meetings?

Formerly, in the peaceful years, they used to hold mass meetings once in every two or three months. Lately they haven't held any -- that is, in the last four or five months, since the village was bombed and shelled by the GVN.

69. What did they say at each meeting?

They lectured about politics. I didn't understand what they said.

70. Did they hold meetings regularly, or did they only when there was something important?

Once in a while they'd call a meeting of a group of some 20 people. When they were through with one group, they'd call another group, and so forth.

71. Then, there were only some 20 people in each meeting?

Right. It's the whole village.

72. You're there only some 20 people in a village?

No. I meant hamlet. There were about 10 to 20 persons in a hamlet. It depended on the size of the hamlet.

73. What kinds of people went to the meetings?

All kinds of people -- men, women, children, young or old. But the VC used to hold meetings for men only, or for women only.

74. Did you join the Farmers' Association in the village?

Farmers' Association? I don't know of any Farmers' Association!

75. All the farmers in the village had to join the Farmers' Association, didn't they?

I don't know anything about that.

76. How much tax did you have to pay in the last few years?

I didn't pay any taxes. There's only contribution in paddy. Sometimes I contributed one bushel, sometimes half a bushel. It depended on a good or poor harvest. I didn't have to pay personal taxes, only land taxes.

77. Did you rent your land?

Yes.

78. Did the owner live in the village?

The owner lived out here. He owned land in the village, but he lived out here.

79. Then you didn't have to pay land rentals, since the owner didn't live in the village, is it right?

I still had to pay the owner in paddy.

80. How did he collect his rentals?

At each harvest, he got permission to go to the village to get the paddy.

81. Did they have to request permission from the VC?

I don't know about that. I don't know how they managed to get through. But only those who lived out here rented out their land. Those who stayed in the village tilled their own land.

82. How many bushels did you have to pay the landowner a year for your 50 "sao"?

About 14 bushels.

83. And how many to the VC?

One bushel if the crops were good.

84. How many bushels did you make a year?

If it was a really good year, I got 27 or 28 bushels. If it wasn't, I got nothing.

85. Did the VC carry out a land distribution program?

Yes. They took the land from owners who were working for the GVN, to distribute to landless people. Each got some 30 "sao".

86. Did you get any?

No. I didn't get any. I had to work on my rented land. Although I owned no ricefields, I had an orchard.

87. How large was your orchard?

Over 10 "sao". The VC distributed land only to those who owned absolutely no land at all.

88. What did you grow in your orchard?

I grew coconut and other fruit trees. But everything was destroyed by the bombs.

89. When did the VC distribute the land?

Seven or eight years ago. As soon as they got control of the village, they started the land distribution program.

90. How was life in the village during the Resistance period?

During the 9-year period, although life was difficult enough, it was still better than now. Nobody was rich then, but they could still enjoy life a little.

91. Did the French raid the village often then?

They did, but very seldom. And there were less planes and bombs. It was easier to make a living.

92. When did the VC enter your village?

As I remember, it's been 8 or 9 years since the VC got to my village. It was a few years after the cease-fire.

93. What did they first do when they got into your village?

They only made propaganda saying that they, the Liberal youths, would support the people.

94. Did the people of the village know about the overthrow of the Ngo-Dinh-Diem Regime?

Yes, they did. The VC told them about that.

95. Did they tell you why the Diem Regime was overthrown?

They said that people in the GVN were fighting each other for power and position. I don't know anything else.

96. What did the VC say about the present GVN?

They didn't say much. They said all the GVN men were alike -- that all of them were corrupted and dictatorial.

97. Has the GVN ever done anything for the village?

I don't know about the other villages around. But my village didn't get anything from the GVN. Once, during the peaceful years, some Americans came to Cho Cat to distribute gifts such as picks, shovels, saws, etc.

98. Do you know who is the Head of the Government?

I don't know.

99. How many men were there in the VC force stationed in your village?

I don't know how many of them, for they were stationed in the forests. Some of them would come to the village to talk to the people.

100. Did they belong to the Main Force?

I don't know. I didn't dare ask.

101. How often did they come to the village?

Once in every two or three months or so. They didn't come regularly, and they stayed two or three days at a time.

102. How many of them came each time?

Sometimes there were very many, sometimes very few. Sometimes there were some 100 people; sometimes there were only 10 or more.

103. How did they treat the people?

They didn't say anything, except sometimes they told the people to stay on in the village to work and not to leave. Otherwise, they'd starve to death.

104. Did the ARVN ever get into your village on operations?

Yes, they did, but not regularly. Once in every four or five months, sometimes six or seven months.

105. Did fighting take place within your village each time the ARVN came?

Sometimes I heard gunfire. Sometimes I didn't hear anything.

106. Did big fighting ever take place?

I didn't see any.

107. Did fighting take place in the forests?

I heard the gunfire, but ...

108. How did the ARVN treat the people in your village?

Some were nice, others were nasty. Some would steal things from the villagers, such as fruit, others didn't touch a thing.

109. What kind of ARVN troops was it that were nice to the people, what kind was nasty?

I can't tell the difference of one troop from another. I only know there were some nice, and some nasty.

110. Did they ever say foul things to the people?

No.

111. Did they ever arrest or beat up anybody?

No.

112. What did the villagers feel about the ARVN?

They'd greet the ARVN properly, they'd serve them something to drink. I don't know whether they liked or disliked the ARVN, for they didn't say anything. Sometimes they would say matter-of-factly that these troops were nasty, that their chickens and ducks were stolen, or that other troops were nice and considerate. That's all.

113. What did the people think of the VC, of their guerrilla activities in the village?

The VC didn't take things away from the people, but they'd ask for them.

114. What was the attitude of the people towards the VC?

It used to be peaceful in the village, but it's no longer been so lately, everybody wanted to leave.

115. Did they like the VC more or less than before?

They never expressed their feelings.

116. Do you think the people liked the VC more or less than before?

I think the people resented the VC more, because the people could no longer work in peace, there's no house to dwell in, no food to eat...

117. Was it the fault of the VC?

That the people said the VC have caused all this. Because of the VC, the Americans have bombed their village. It's not like the post-Resistance period. There were no VC and there were no bombs.

118. What did you hear about the aims of the Front?

They said their aims were to liberate the South and drive Mr. Diem out of the country.

119. What did you hear about the life of the VC forces?

I've heard that they led a hard life, that they often didn't have enough to eat.

120. How were their battles? Did they often win or lose?

I was told that they always won.

121. Who told you so?

It was they who told us in their propaganda sessions.

122. Do you have friends in the VC ranks?

No.

123. Do you have relatives in the ARVN?

Yes.

124. How many of your relatives are in the ARVN?

There are four in Saigon and one over here. They're children of my uncle.

125. Did they live in your village before joining the ARVN?

No. They lived in Cho Cat. They used to work for the French.

126. Did they ever visit you?

They didn't dare visit me, but I used to visit them often in Saigon.

127. When was the last time you saw them?

It's been a long time since the last time I saw them. I went up there once last year. I didn't dare go too often anymore for fear of being suspected.

128. Has your village ever been attacked?

Yes. The GVN often attacked my village.

129. Did they ever engage in a big battle?

I don't know of any big battle. I only heard some gunfire but that's all.

130. Did the GVN ever warn the people ahead of time about their oncoming attacks?

Never.

131. Did the VC ever warn the people in advance of a battle?

No. When we heard planes flying, we'd get into the trenches. Nobody warned us in advance.

132. When was your village first shelled by artillery?

About two or three months ago. They bombed and shelled us heavily, and caused heavy damages. My younger sister was wounded, and her child's head was cut off by shells.

133. Did your sister live in the same village?

Yes, with her family.

134. How often has your village been shelled?

The shellings weren't regular, but they often shelled day and night.

135. What did the people do when the village was bombed and shelled?

All they could do was to get into the trenches.

136. How many people did you say were wounded and killed in the last two or three months?

About 10 people were wounded and about eight or nine killed, including children and grown-ups.

137. Why, in your opinion, did they shell and attack your village?

One time the plane broadcast over the village and told the people to evacuate to Route 13 or move to Ben Cat, because the village was going to be bombed and shelled. They broadcast in the afternoon, and they bombed the village in the evening of the same day. People didn't have enough time to move away. What kind of a warning was it? Why didn't they give us at least a few days to evacuate before they bombed and shelled us?

138. Was anybody able to move away?

Nobody made it. How could they? It was only a short interval between the warning and the bombing and shelling.

139. Why was your village bombed and shelled?

I don't know. I only know that they told us to settle out here. They didn't want us to live there, so they bombed the village.

140. Were there any VC in the village at the time of the bombing and shelling?

I don't know if there were any VC in the forests at the time, but none of them were in the village. All the wounded and dead were villagers; the VC lived in their forests, they didn't even show up in the village.

141. When did the intensive bombings start?

About two or three months ago. Before then, the planes only strafed if there were large gatherings of people. But they didn't attack us when we were working on the fields.

142. What kind of gatherings are you talking about? Did the VC gather people?

The planes would bomb anytime they saw a group of people.

143. What did the people say after each bombing?

They didn't say anything, except that the GVN was attacking the village too intensively and that they might have to move away if they wanted to survive.

144. What did the VC cadres say?

They told us not to be afraid, that we'd better stay in the village to work on the ricefield and that we'd starve if we moved away. But how could one do anything if he had to spend all the time in the trenches?

145. Did you see any new kind of aircraft among those which came to bomb your village?

Yes. The jet planes were quite new to me.

146. How high did they fly?

I don't know. As soon as I heard the noise of airplanes I ran for the trenches. There was no time to observe how high the planes were flying.

147. Did you see jet planes six months ago?

Yes. There were jet planes, but they didn't bomb then.

148. What's the difference between those jet planes and the ones that bombed your village in the last two or three months?

I saw that some of them were big, some were small.

149. Are the more recent planes bigger or smaller?

The more recent planes are bigger.

150. What's the difference in the size of the bombs?

Lately the bombs were huge; they made deep and large craters, about four or five meters wide.

151. Did the people move away after those bombings?

Yes, they moved away.

152. Did anyone move into the VC-controlled areas?

I don't think so.

153. How many from your village had moved out here?

Many of them had moved out here.

154. How many people from your village had evacuated?

About seven or eight persons out of ten.

155. Did the planes broadcast anything other than telling the people to move away?

They told the people to move to Route 13, or to Ben Cat, or to Ben Co. They said the Government would support the refugees. But they bombed the village that very evening.

156. Did they drop leaflets into the village?

Yes, that did both at the same time with the broadcast, and also occasionally before, appealing to the people to come to the GVN areas to live. But the people didn't move, because they didn't know where to live and what to do out here.

157. When was the first time the GVN appealed to the people to evacuate?

About two months ago. But the people didn't leave because they were afraid they'd be out of work, and homeless.

158. Did the planes bomb your village then?

They did but lightly. Lately they bombed too heavily and the people had to leave.

159. Is [redacted] Village near the forests?

[redacted] is composed largely of forests. On one side of the village road are hamlets and ricefields; on the other side are the forests.

160. Were the forests bombed?

Yes.

161. Were the forests bombed more often than the village?

Yes, they were.

162. What kind of damage did the bombings cause in the forests?

I only heard that the forests had been bombed, but I didn't dare get near there. Even if I ran out of firewood, I was afraid to go to the forests for it.

163. What kind of damage did those bombings cause to the village?

Nearly all the houses were destroyed. About seven out of ten houses were burned or collapsed.

164. Whom did the people blame, the VC or the GVN?

On the one hand, the people said it was because of the VC that the GVN bombed the villages; on the other hand, they said that the GVN in its war against the VC, didn't fight any VC but only killed innocent people.

165. Were there any VC in the village or in the forests just before the bombings?

I didn't see any of them. I'd seen them once in a while before the intensive bombings.

167. And you didn't see them during the last two months in your village, did you?

I saw a few guerrillas, but I didn't see any regular troops.

168. What did the people think about the bigger bombs that were dropped lately?

They decide that they could no longer stand the intensive attacks of the GVN and that they had to leave the village.

169. Did anybody evacuate to the VC-controlled areas?

I don't think so. Almost all the people came here to take refuge, they didn't dare go deeper into the VC controlled areas because those areas were no safer than our village.

170. Did you say the planes that attacked your village recently were bigger than those you'd seen before?

Those I'd seen before were smaller jet planes, and I didn't see the bigger jets until recently.

171. How many times had the bigger planes bombed your village before you left?

They had bombed four or five times, then I decided that I could no longer live there. I'd want to leave before, but I didn't know on what I would live once I came out here. I have no place to live, not a pot for cooking, no rice and not even a piece of firewood.

172. A year ago, when you were still in the village, who did you think would win the war?

I didn't know which side would win the war, but I heard the VC say they'd win.

173. That's what the VC said then, but how about you? Who did you think would win the war in the long run?

If the war keeps going on, the GVN will win because the VC don't have anything. The GVN is equipped with planes and cannons. The GVN troops would move only by cars, while the VC walk on foot. How can the VC win?

174. Six months ago, who did you think would win?

During the last six months the GVN has been winning over the VC.

175. And how has the war been more recently?

I've seen that the roads couldn't be used before, but recently all the roads were re-opened to traffic. And lately almost all the people have left their villages to settle in the GVN-controlled areas. Thus, I think the GVN is winning.

176. Did ground battles ever take place in the village or in the forests?

Yes, but there were only small skirmishes.

177. When did the last battle take place?

A long time ago. It was two or three years ago.

178. How long did it last?

It took place during the time of the Diem regime. After his downfall, I didn't see any other battles.

179. Was your village or the nearby area sprayed with chemical products for defoliation?

Yes. The planes sprayed poisonous products to kill trees and plants.

180. Why did they kill the trees?

I don't know exactly why, but I think that the GVN was aiming at destroying the villagers' properties so that they'd have nothing to cling to and would have to evacuate away from the village.

181. When did the defoliation take place?

It was last year, or the year before last, but not recently.

182. Was the forest sprayed?

That I don't know. But I saw that all the trees in the forest were green.

183. When you went into the forest for firewood, didn't you see any dead trees?

I saw some spots where trees were dead because of the bombings and shellings, but not from sprayings.

184. How often did they spray the village?

They sprayed only once last year, and not much either.

185. What damage did the spraying cause to the crop and trees?

The damage was heavy. The fruits were spoiled, but the ricefields weren't sprayed, so the crop wasn't lost. About half the fruit crop was spoiled.

186. Was your house damaged?

My house was ruined.

187. Was your orchard damaged?

It wasn't sprayed, but was hit by bombs and shells; all the trees were gone. The orchard was reduced to a bare hill.

188. Was your hamlet damaged?

It was damaged from bombs and shells, not from the spraying.

189. What did the people say about the spraying?

I didn't hear them say anything.

190. Did planes do the spraying of chemical products?

Yes.

191. Since the trees were dead from spraying, how did the VC hide themselves?

The VC used to live in the forest, not in the village. They'd come and go; they never stayed in the village.

192. Did the VC come to the village in the daytime, or only at night?

Formerly when the village wasn't subject to bombings and shellings, they used to come in the daytime. Later, they never showed up in the daytime.

193. What did the VC say to the people about the spraying?

They said that the Americans were trying to hurt the people, to starve the people to death.

194. What did the people say when their trees and plants were destroyed?

They complained that their livelihood depended on the orchards, that with this spraying they might as well starve to death.

195. Did you ever think of evacuating into the GVN area a few months ago?

I wanted to move a long time ago, but my wife wouldn't listen to me. She said we had no place to live out here, and we'd have to start everything over.

196. When did you decide to come out here?

I was so afraid of the bombs that I had to leave. I didn't think of leaving before (the bombs).

197. How long did it take you to prepare for your departure?

All I had to do was to pack up my clothes and go. The furniture had to be left behind.

198. Were the planes still bombing when you left?

I left after the bombing. Who dared go anywhere when they were bombing?

199. How long after the bombing did you start to leave?

As soon as the planes left the area, I started to run.

200. Did you have any worry when you left?

I was afraid that the planes might hit me on the way.

201. Did you worry about your future?

I didn't think of my future. I was only afraid of the planes on the way, where there were no trenches to protect oneself.

202. Did you hear of the Chieu Hoi program when you were in the village?

Yes. I've heard them (the VC) tell the people that the Chieu Hoi program was only a trick of the GVN, that the GVN lied.

203. Did you hear the broadcasts from the planes clearly?

I could make out the Southern accent clearly, but I couldn't get what the Northerners said.

204. When could you hear the broadcasts more clearly, in the daytime or at night?

I could hear them better at night.

205. When did you hear the broadcasts at night?

I've never heard the broadcasts at night.

206. Why did you say you could hear them better at night?

I guess I might hear better at night, because there was too much noise in the daytime.

207. Did you decide to stay here temporarily or did you intend to stay here for good?

If I could find a place to build a house, I'd like to stay here for good, since there's nothing left in the village to come back to. But as of now, there's no prospect and I still have to live with relatives.

208. Why did you decide to come here?

Because I was too afraid of the bombings.

209. Why did you decide to come to this place instead of somewhere else?

Because here is the nearest place.

210. Why didn't you go to Ben Cat district, which is closer to your village than here?

I figured I'd had to come here anyway, because each time I'd wished to get some sort of papers I'd had to come here.

211. Did anybody move to Ben Cat district?

Nobody. They all came here.

212. How far is it between your village and Ben Cat district?

[redacted] kms.

213. How far is it from Ben Cat to here?

I don't know.

214. Did you go through Ben Cat on the way to here?

No. I took the direct way to this place from [redacted] Village.

215. How did you come here?

I walked to [redacted] bridge, then I took a Lambretta three-wheeler here.

216. What did you take along with you?

I only took with me some changes of clothes.

217. Did you take some rice along?

No.

218. How did you eat on the trip?

It didn't take long to come here. I left in the morning and got here at noon. Besides, I was too afraid to think of bringing anything else; also, if I took a heavy load I wouldn't be able to move swiftly.

219. Is there anybody watching your properties for you in the village?

Nobody. Everything was abandoned.

220. Do you worry about your property?

I've hardly anything left to worry about, except some furniture. All I have is a strip of orchard and it was destroyed. Now it's only my life itself that matters.

221. Did anybody in the village leave at the same time as you did?

Lots of them did.

222. Were there enough Lambretta three-wheelers to transport all those people?

Not all the people left at the same time.

223. How many people left at the same time with you?

About five or six people at a time. We dared not walk in large groups for fear the planes might strafe us.

224. What did the VC say when they saw people leave?

They didn't say much. They only commented that the people were foolish to leave their own place to go to starve in the enemy areas. But the people said they'd rather leave than stay behind with their property and die.

225. Did the VC urge the people to move to some other areas?

No, they didn't.

226. Did they try to stop the people from leaving?

They only told the people to stay, but once the latter didn't listen to them, they didn't try to stop anybody from leaving.

227. Did they threaten the people?

I didn't hear any threatening.

228. Why did some people still stay behind in the village?

I don't know the reason for their staying behind.

229. Why, in your opinion, did they stay behind?

They probably were too attached to their properties to be able to leave.

230. Did anyone stay behind because of the uncertainty of life out here?

There probably are those who were afraid of starving and of having no place to live.

231. Was there anybody who was afraid to leave because they had some connection with the VC?

Some people have relatives in the Front, yet they came here.

232. Did anyone stay behind because they had at one time or another had something to do with the VC?

I don't know.

233. In your opinion, which of the three cited reasons (attachment to one's properties, the uncertainty of life of a refugee, connection with the VC) was the real reason that made people stay behind?

I think most of the people who stayed behind were those who have children serving the Front; therefore they were afraid of being punished by the GVN. As for properties, there's not much of them left to cling to ...

234. What would happen to you if you returned to your village now?

All I'm afraid of is the bombing.

235. What would the VC do to you if you returned now?

I can't tell.

236. How's life out here?

I've been here for a few days. I see that life out here is very free, but one must have money. Otherwise life could be very hard. I have no place to live, no job, and nothing to eat.

237. How long do you think the war will last?

I have no idea how long it will last.

238. Could you guess how long it's going to last?

I've seen that the GVN's been getting stronger and stronger everyday, while the VC hasn't anything. Yet the VC propagandized that they themselves were going to win. All this confuses me, and I have no idea how long the war is going to last.

239. Now that you're forced to leave your home village, whom do you blame most?

If there were no VC, the GVN wouldn't bomb my village and I wouldn't have to leave.

240. Have you received any assistance since you've been here?

It's been 12 or 13 days since I've been here. My wife's been too ill. I've had to nurse her, to get drugs for her, and couldn't get to this center until three days ago. The officials here have been making me run around; they kept putting me off. All I want, is to get some rice. Yet I haven't got anything.

241. Did you have any idea what you were going to do here when you left the village?

I had no idea of what I would do. I intended to look for a place to build a house first, then I'd search for a job.

242. What kind of job are you looking for?

I have no particular skill. I'll work as a hired-hand.

243. Do you plan to stay here, to go back to your village, or to move to another place?

I'd like to build a house and stay here for good.

244. Did you get news from those who stayed behind in the village?

No.

245. Since you've been here, did anybody urge you to go back home?

No.

246. Among those who came here, did anyone go back to the village?

Those who had children staying home, went back to the village sometimes.

247. Did they just go back for a visit?

Yes. They went home for a visit, then came back here.

248. What do you think the Americans are here for?

I don't know anything myself. But the VC said that the GVN was selling the country to the Americans. As for me, I know nothing about it.

249. During the 9-year period of Resistance, did you join the Viet Minh Militia Force?

During that time everybody had to join the Militia Force. Nobody was supposed to refuse the duty.

250. During the last few years, did they make you join the Guerrilla Force?

No. They made us do corvee labor sometimes -- such as digging trenches, destroying roads, etc.

251. Did they send you to education sessions?

No.

252. Did you get any military training?

No. There was no such thing as education or training, I only did corvee labor as I was told to do.

253. Did you have to make spikes for them?

Yes. I did.

254. How many days a month did you have to work for them?

About three or four times a month.

255. In the village, when your family was in need of help did your neighbors lend you a hand?

My relatives and neighbors would give me a hand if I had to repair the house, for example.

256. Did you have to pay them?

No.

257. Did you have any close friends?

I was too busy making a living to have time for friendship of any kind.

258. Who was the most trusted man in your village?

There was one man whose words were listened to by the villagers.

259. What did he do in the village?

He worked like everybody else.

260. Was he a VC cadre?

Yes, and he lived in the village.

261. Why did the villagers listen to him?

Whenever the VC called a meeting, all the people could do was to listen to them.

262. Did the people listen to that man because he was a cadre, because he was knowledgable, or because he was of mature age?

He was over 30 years old, and I don't know where he went to school.

263. What did he do during the Resistance period?

During the Resistance period he was working in the village like everybody else. Not until recently did he go away for training somewhere ...

264. How long did he go away?

He went away for three months. On his return he announced to the people that he'd talk to anyone who had a problem.

265. According to you, who was the most well-informed man in the village?

That man was the only one. He was the village cadre.

266. How did you get the news when you were in the village?

If there was important news, the guerrillas would come to our houses to inform us.

267. What kind of news did they usually give you?

It was news of the war, where the Front Force engaged in a battle with the GVN, for instance.

268. Did you ever learn the news concerning the GVN?

No. The GVN never got to my village. Unless we came out here, we couldn't learn anything.

269. Did people in your village go to Cho Cat often?

Yes. They usually went to the market bringing with them produce to exchange for goods.

270. What did they sell at Cho Cat?

Things like chickens, maniocs, potatoes -- anything they could get from their farm.

271. Did they bring news of the GVN back to the village?

They didn't say anything.

272. Did the VC come to these people for news?

I don't know.

273. Did you ever hear news from Saigon?

I didn't hear anything from Saigon. Only the VC once told us that they'd placed time bombs at the Saigon harbor, that the first bomb had exploded and had killed a few Americans; then when people crowded to watch, the second bomb had exploded and had killed a lot of them.

274. When did you hear about that event?

A long time ago.

275. Did you hear anything else recently?

No.

276. Did you believe what the VC told you about events in Saigon?

I don't know what to believe and what not to.

277. Did you hear news from Hanoi?

The VC took care to inform the people of important news.

278. When did they last inform you of news from Hanoi?

I didn't hear much, except that they had shot down more than 500 American jet planes.

279. Did you see any VC newspapers in the village?

No.

280. How many people in your village owned radio sets?

There were some four or five radio sets in my hamlet, [redacted]

281. Did the radio owners let their neighbors listen to the broadcasts?

They didn't invite anybody to listen to their radios, and they wouldn't refuse anyone who wanted to listen.

282. Did you ever listen to the radio?

Once in a while, on Saturdays I'd listen to "Vong Co" (Vietnamese traditional music) from Radio Saigon.

283. Did any of your neighbors have a radio?

Yes.

284. What else did you listen to from Radio Saigon?

Only "Vong Co". The radio owners only let us listen to Vong Co. They might be arrested by the VC if they ever let us listen to anything else.

285. Did they tune to Radio Hanoi?

Yes, they did.

286. Did they tune to the Liberation Front broadcast?

They did, but I'd never had the opportunity to listen to it.

287. Did they ever tune to foreign stations, such as the British or American stations?

I don't know. I only heard them say that they listened to Radio Hanoi, and Radio Liberation Front.

288. Did they tune to Radio Peking?

Yes, they did. They said they weren't supposed to tune in any kind of broadcasts except those that wouldn't offend the VC.

289. Did anybody in the village get newspapers of any kind?

There were GVN newspapers bought from out here, but not too many people read them.

290. Were the papers brought in freely? Did the VC say anything about that?

They brought the papers in freely. I didn't hear the VC say anything.

291. How did they buy the newspapers?

Those who went to [redacted] brought them back.

292. Who in your hamlet read the papers most often?

There's nobody reading newspapers in my hamlet, [redacted]. There were some in [redacted].

293. Did those who read the papers know more news than other people?

I suppose when they read the papers they ought to know more.

294. Who was better informed, the ordinary man who read the papers often, or the village cadre?

I don't know who was better informed. The men who read the newspapers were better informed about the GVN, while the cadres knew more about the Front.

295. Did the newspaper readers ever share information with others?

They did secretly with their closest friends.

296. In your opinion, what sources of news were more reliable -- those which originated from the cadre, or those repeated by the newspaper readers?

I don't know, since both sides claimed that they were winning. But judging on the strength of each side, we realized that the GVN were more powerful, and thus its claims were more or less justified.

297. What did those who used to go up to the District market do in the village?

They were also farmers.

298. Didn't the men and cadres of the VC Village Committee read the GVN newspapers?

No.

299. Yet they let the people buy and read newspapers freely without stopping them?

Yes.

300. This is the picture of a ladder of which the top step is numbered "1," and the bottom step number "10." Step #1 represents the best kind of life in the village, and Step #10 the worst. On which step of the ladder would you classify your actual life in the village?

I'd classify my life during this past year at Step #10. It's been so hard on us all; we didn't dare work for our meager living. We were constantly afraid of planes and bombs.

301. Besides that, was there anything else that made life in the village harder?

The people didn't do anything else. They worked on the land. When the rice was planted, they'd work as hired-hands out here, waiting for the rice to ripen.

302. Was there anything that made life harder for the villagers, besides the bombing and shelling?

Yes, the VC also bothered us. For instance, we had to interrupt our work to obey their orders. They made us dig or fill holes in the roads etc. We seldom had a chance to work in peace.

303. Was last year the worst year you've spent in the village?

Yes.

304. Five years from now, how do you think your life will be?

If I'm going to stay here, life will be easier -- that is, if I can find employment. I may even move up to Step #5 or #6.

305. What do you think will make life better for you?

Here, we're free to work for our living. We may get more than enough to eat.

306. What is the best possible life in the village that you could imagine?

To have the best life in the village is to have a large orchard and ricefield, to have good crops yearly in order to exchange for money.

307. What do you want your son to be?

My son is 11 years old now. I think by the time he grows up, the war will be over. He'll have no fear of death. He'll be free.

308. What kind of life do you want him to have?

I plan to send him to school as soon as I get settled down. Then what he's going to do with his life, time will tell. He's too young now, I don't know what he's going to be.

309. What do you hope he'll be?

I hope he'll become a tailor.

310. Why do you want that occupation for him?

To be a tailor is to have a little more freedom, and he won't have to be out in the sun or the rain all the time.

311. What should your son have in order to be happy?

I figure that I'm too poor to do anything more for him but send him to school to get some education. Then he'll decide what to do with his life. I have no way of knowing ahead.

312. But what do you think he ought to have in order to be happy?

In order to have a happy life, one must have lots of money. One must be very rich, so that there'll be no need to work as hired-hands, and nobody can say anything against us.

313. Each time you met your relatives or friends in the village, did you talk freely to each other?

Yes, we talked within limits.

314. Did you make any comments on the situation?

No. We didn't dare, for fear that our friends might report back to the VC.

315. Suppose that you broke a certain VC regulation, would you be afraid you'd be reported?

I'd sure be afraid. My neighbors might tell on me.

316. Would your own neighbors tell on you?

They certainly would. If they wouldn't, how could the VC know all about those who went to the district market?

317. Could you talk freely within your family?

I could talk freely to my wife and children without fear of being reported. I've never kept anything from my wife. For instance, if I met some of the relatives working (for the GVN) out here, I'd tell my wife about it. But my children were too young, they might not be able to keep quiet.

318. What did you fear more, the shelling or bombing?

I fear the shelling more. We might be able to take cover from the bombings by running for the shelters as soon as we heard the planes coming. Shellings used to surprise us, and they were more fearful

319. Which caused more damage, the shelling or the bombing?

The bombing was more dangerous. If a trench was hit, one couldn't escape death, for the bombs could drill deep into the earth.

320. During the last few months, did you see any difference in the bombs dropped?

They used to drop smaller fragmentation bombs. Then, we could be safe in the trenches. Recently the big bombs would kill us no matter where we hid ourselves. Even if a bomb was dropped 10 m away, our trench would collapse from the pressure.

321. Were the bomb explosions deafening?

Yes.

322. How many people did you say were wounded or killed?

All in all, over 10 persons.

323. Were they hit by bombs or shells?

Most of them were hit by shells. They bombed the forest much more than the village, but the village was shelled day and night.

324. Were there any VC in the bombed forest?

I don't know. I'd never gone near there. But since they dropped so many big bombs, some VC were bound to be killed.

325. Did they dig trenches in the forest?

I don't know. We used to fetch firewood at the edge of the forest. We never dared go deeper inside. The VC wouldn't let us enter deeper into the forest anyway.

326. Did the people know where the spike pits were?

They'd know where the spike pits were in the village, but not in the forest. Because it was the villagers who dug the pits in the village.

327. From what you saw, were the villagers happier to meet the VC or the ARVN?

Take my case: I'd be glad to see the ARVN, but I was afraid of them from afar.

328. Why were you afraid?

One never knew what was going to happen, they might bring bombs and shells. But once they got into the place, we were safe.

329. If ARVN troops came while the VC were in the village, did the VC get ready to fight or did they withdraw?

They would stage an ambush if they knew that the ARVN troops were in small numbers. Otherwise, they'd withdraw, except for the village guerrillas who would fire at anything. The VC generally avoid facing ARVN operations, for the latter were often supported by planes and bombs.

330. When did the VC inform the people of the bombings of the North?

It must've been more than a month ago. Those who owned radio sets, told us about it also. I've heard that the planes went to the North every day.

331. Who broke the news of the bombing of the North to you?

The villagers who owned radio sets told me of the news.

332. How long afterward did the VC start to tell you about that?

About 10 days later, they officially told the people of the bombings. They also told us that a number of planes were shot down.

333. How did the VC explain the bombings of the North?

They didn't explain anything, except that the Americans were very cruel, that they wanted to crush the North. They said a lot more, but I can't remember.

334. Did the VC tell you why the GVN bombed the North?

They said something to the effect that the Americans had won in the South, now they started to fight the North. They didn't explain why.

335. Did they explain why the North didn't send planes to bomb the South?

They didn't say anything.

336. Did they say why the Front didn't use aircraft in the war?

They didn't say anything. As for me, I think that the North didn't dare send their planes to the South. The VC boasted that the North had lots of airplanes. Yet it didn't dare retaliate...

337. Why didn't they dare retaliate?

They must be afraid that the GVN might shoot down their planes and capture their men.

338. Why didn't the GVN fear that the North might do the same thing when they send their planes up there?

That I don't know.

339. How is the people's life in the village now compared with that of the post-Resistance peaceful period?

The people were happier during the post-Resistance period, when they built more houses, earned their living in peace. Everything was destroyed later when the VC came.

340. How was the life of the villagers during the Resistance period compared with that during the last seven or eight years under VC control?

Before, it used to be easier to live and work in the village later we lived in constant fear. Life has been getting harder and harder.

341. How heavy were the taxes paid to the GVN during the peaceful post-Resistance period compared to those paid later to the VC?

The taxes paid to the VC were heavier. Formerly if we rented a piece of land, we only had to pay rentals to the owner in paddy; now, besides the rentals we also had to pay taxes in paddy to the VC.

342. Did you ever pay taxes to the GVN?

No. I only had to pay land rentals to the landowner.

343. How much did you have to pay the VC?

I paid one bushel. If one tilled one hectare of rice-field, one had to pay two bushels to the VC. I worked half an hectare, so I had to pay one bushel. The rate depended, however, on the quality of the land.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

Although illiterate, the subject talked easily and was a relatively knowledgeable and observant villager.

He was frank, occasionally criticizing ARVN troops and the GVN, though he did not have a bad opinion of the National Government despite having lived for nearly ten years in a VC-controlled area.

No. AGR- 46

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

1. Name of interviewer: [redacted]
2. Name of subject [redacted]
3. Time and date of interview :

   From 9:45 AM to 12:00 on Sept. [redacted] 1965

   From 3:30 PM to 4:40 PM on Sept. [redacted] 1965

   From _____ to _____ on _____ 196___

   Total time 3:55'

   Interview based on : tape (XX) hand written notes ( )
4. Place of interview :

   Binh Duong
5. Sex of subject : Male (XX) Female ( )
6. Age of subject : 50
7. Ethnic background : Vietnamese
8. Place of birth :

   hamlet [redacted] (Hamlet [redacted]

   village [redacted]

   district Ben Cat

   province Binh Duong
9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :

   hamlet [redacted]

   village [redacted]

   district Ben Cat

   province Binh Duong
10. (a) Length of residence in last location : Since birth

    (b) Who controlled the place of residence:

    GVN ( ) VC (XX) Contested ( )

    (c) Since when controlled or contested ? 6 or 9 years ago

11. Number of brothers ( ) and sisters (1)

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : 0

13. Marital status : Married

14. Number of children : Seven

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age : 0

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject( ) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject (XX) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject(XX) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion : Ancestor worship

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : Farmer

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation Poor farmer
(b) Landowner ? _____ How much land _____

20. Education :
illiterate (XX)
literate ( )
schooling completed : _____

21. Any relatives in VC : _____

22. Any relatives in GVN : Six

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by :
(a) French One brother
(b) GVN
(c) VC One daughter (Captured by VC 7 months ago in rubber plantation)

24. When became a refugee : Sept. [redacted] 1965

25. Where took refuge first _____

26. Present residence _____

AGR

INTERVIEW

47

THE RAND CORPORATION
[redacted]

STUDIES OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT
OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR-47

Date of Interview : September [redacted], 1965
Subject's category : Refugee: September [redacted], 1965.
Area of Residence : [redacted] Hamlet, [redacted] Village
Ben-Cat District, Binh Duong
Province.

1. Where were you born?

[redacted] Village, [redacted] Hamlet, Ben-Cat District.

2. Have you always stayed in your village?

The GVN set up a post in [redacted] and I was told to move to the Strategic Hamlet in [redacted], where I built myself a house and lived there for 2 or 3 months. Then they withdrew from the post. The rubber plantation owner turned us out of their property, because they (GVN) had to clear an area in his plantation to establish the Strategic Hamlet. We returned to our former place, built a hut to live, tilled the land, and raised hogs and chickens for a living. Recently the planes called us to move out here, saying that the Government would take care of us, for our village would be razed to exterminate the VC. The planes broadcast in the afternoon, and the bombings took place right that evening. My daughter was wounded, and had to spend 2 weeks in the hospital. She's home now, but not quite recovered. Another grandchild of mine was killed by shrapnel. So we started running, myself and 2 grandchildren, since the [redacted] (of September) till now.

3. Has your hamlet, [redacted], been controlled by the VC?

I don't know. I only lived in [redacted] I don't know anything about the VC. I've heard about them, that's all, sometimes I saw them, sometimes I didn't.

4. Who controlled your village, the GVN or the VC?

Nobody controlled it. We might stay or leave as we wanted. If we felt it was safe to live there then we'd stay; otherwise we'd move to out here. Nobody controlled my village.

5. Did the ARVN get in there sometimes?

They did somewhere else, but I didn't see them come to my village.

6. Did the VC troops come to your village sometimes?

I was told that they came sometimes, but I didn't see them. I'm old, and busy working for a living. I only have 2 grandchildren left, and a pregnant daughter who was wounded. I took them all here since the [redacted], the day the planes broadcast and bombed the village. Now that we're here, homeless and hungry, I've tried but haven't been able to get anything from the GVN yet. Two days ago I received few litres of rice, but that was all. No money, nothing.

7. When did the VC first control your village?

I don't remember. Being old and ignorant, I don't know where they came from. Sometimes I saw them, sometimes I didn't. I only knew for sure that there were bombings, and I ran away.

8. Is the Village Council still in the village?

Village Council? I didn't see any Village Council!

9. When did they move away?

Long time ago. I haven't seen them for the last 5 or 6 years. They used to be there, offices and school and all; but they gave it up long time ago. Bombings and shellings have taken place; the school was gone, the offices were gone. The Village Council used to visit the village once in a great while to issue papers, and to spray insecticide. But I haven't seen them back in the last 10 years or so.

10. How many of you had come here?

All three of us, my grandchildren live with me. They haven't got a father.

11. How many children do you have?

My two sons are dead. One of my daughters-in-law is living in Ben-Set, and one is here. My wounded daughter stayed in the hospital.

12. Have you only one daughter left?

Yes. The boys died. One left a wife and 5 children in Ben-Cat, the other also left a wife and 3 children who are now in Bung trying to get some rice and money from the Government.

13. Do you have any brothers and sisters?

I have 2 sisters, and a younger brother now living in Ben-Cat (his boy is in the Army). I lived in [redacted] Village with my 85-year-old mother. After the bombing, I left her there to run out here together with 2 sisters.

14. Is your mother still in [redacted] Village?

Yes. She's too old to go, so she stayed behind with my 60-year-old brother-in-law. I fled with my grandchildren out here.

15. What is your religion?

Buddhism. I usually go to pagodas on the 15th of each lunar month.

16. What did you do for a living?

When my husband was still alive, we used to be farmers. He owned some cattle, raised hogs and so on, and earned enough to feed the family.

17. How were you classified by the VC?

I don't know how they named us. But we were poor; we didn't own much land.

18. Do you know how to read and write?

No. I'm illiterate. I've been working all my life, first for my parents, later with my husband. I didn't have time to learn anything.

19. Do you have relatives in the ARVN?

Yes. My grandsons are in the Army. One was a construction worker; he is the son of my daughter. The other two are sons of my sons.

20. Do you have relatives other than your grandsons in the ARVN?

No.

21. Did the VC force any of your relatives to work for them?

They took my two sons. I don't know what they did with my sons but they are all dead and left their families with me.

22. How did they take your sons away?

They raided the house in the middle of the night and took one away.

23. What did your sons do?

The other boy was earning his living by selling firewood in Ben-Cat. One day he was told to sell his wood to someone in Tan-Binh. When he went back there to collect his money, they took him away.

24. Were any of your relatives killed by the ARVN?

Nobody.

25. Was anybody in the family killed in the war with the French?

Nobody.

26. When did you get here?

I got here on the [redacted] (September, 1965). Since I've been here, I haven't gotten one piaster from the Government. They distributed bananas and cakes at the pagoda, but I couldn't get any. Oh, I know there're too many people, and when they get to my name everything's gone, or time's up! It goes on like that day in and out, and I haven't gotten anything. I had to borrow from friends some money to spend the last few days.

27. How did you get here?

We walked to the bus station, then took a car to here. The fare was 10 piasters. We were so afraid that we had to leave, no matter how little money we had. Now that we're here, we don't know what to do. We wouldn't dare back to the village. They bombed and strafed there too much!

28. What did you take along with you?

I only took along a bag of clothes. They bombed so much that as soon as we got out of the trench, we gathered some clothes and fled. There was some rice in the house, but we didn't have time to take it.

29. Did you leave right after the bombing?

Yes, I left when they finished bombing. As soon as the planes were gone, we ran to the bus station.

29. When did the planes call to the people to move away from the village?

They came in the afternoon. They told the people to leave the village because they were going to bomb the place. We said to ourselves that we'd leave the next morning, but the planes attacked that very night. When the bombing lessened somewhat the next morning, about 10 AM, we ran for our lives.

30. How was your daughter wounded?

Well, there were the fast-flying planes, the big kind, that she'd never seen before. So she and her boy just sat there and watched. Suddenly a bomb exploded, she fell on her side, and the boy screamed: "Mother, we're going to die." She told the boy to crawl to the trench near there, but he didn't make it. He was hit and died instantly. My daughter was wounded and had to stay in the hospital for 2 weeks. She suffered from multiple wounds.

31. Is she here with you?

Yes, she's here.

32. So you came here with two grandchildren and one daughter, is that right?

Right.

33. Where are your daughters-in-law?

One is in Lai-Thieu now. Her husband died and left behind 3 sons; 12, 10 and 7 years old. They're now living in a pagoda. Another daughter-in-law is living in Ben-Cat, she has a house there.

34. Don't you have any son left?

No.

35. What do you plan to do now?

I don't know. We have been told that the Government would take care of us. If they do, we'll be thankful; if they don't, then we'll die here. Now we live by the help of our friends and relatives. We have no future; we only live from day to day. If the bombing stops, we'd go back to the village to get some rice to eat. But if this situation continues, we're ruined.

35. Did anybody leave the village in the last few years?

Yes, those who had relatives out here, moved away. My second son went to Ben-Cat to settle there. (Note: subject's older sons went into the Army, and only the younger ones were left with their mother.) My sister's family also moved to Ben-Cat to earn their living by farming and fishing.

36. Did the people have to move anywhere in the last few years?

Yes, once. The GVN told the people to move to the [redacted] Strategic Hamlet. So everybody dismantled their houses, even brick houses, and took their cattle to Phu-An to live. We built a house in the Hamlet, and stayed there for 3 or 4 months. Then the GVN withdrew, and we had to go back to the old place. We were back to the village for almost 3 years, now we have to run again.

37. Were most of the people in your village well-off, average, or poor

Most of them were poor. Very few were well-off. Those who used to be well-off, have become poorer because they had to remove and rebuild their houses and their properties were bombed and ruined. In other words, everybody was poor. They've all gone now, and only a few old people stayed behind.

38. Do you find it easier or harder to make a living in the last few years?

It's become harder and harder to make a living. My older children got married and lived on their own. I myself was getting older and couldn't work as hard as before. I used to be better off. I'd had some cattle to help me work on the land, but after the death of my husband -- he died from illness during the time the Japanese were here, 17 years ago things have changed. We used to harvest 80 bushels a year. In the last few years, we could only make 10 bushels at most, plus some manioc and potatoes. We got some money from raising hogs and chickens. I'd sell some chickens once in a while to get the money to buy other necessities for the house. When we lived in the Strategic Hamlet, I also raised some chickens and ducks. I took them back to the village when we were told to leave the Strategic Hamlet. We could have 3 crops a year, but we had just finished planting the third crop when we had to run. I wonder if we could go back for the harvest.

39. How much land do you own?

I own half a hectare.

40. Who else besides you worked on the land with you?

Nobody. I'd hire somebody to plough the field, enough for me to plant and earn some 20 bushels a year to eat.

41. How many bushels do you make a year?

I made about 20 bushels a year. We didn't cultivate the whole field. We left the dry portions of the land idle. We only tilled about two or three "sao."

42. How many bushels did you have to contribute to the VC?

I didn't have much rice.

43. Didn't they make you contribute?

No. I only had barely enough to feed my grandchildren.

44. Did other people have to contribute?

I don't know about them. But I myself didn't contribute any. Those who made more than enough to eat might have to contribute, but not the likes of me.

45. What's the name of your village again?

[redacted]

46. Were there any Strategic Hamlets in [redacted] Village?

No. The Strategic Hamlets were in [redacted]

47. How long did you stay in the [redacted] Strategic Hamlet?

I built a house and lived there for 3 months. When the GVN abandoned their post, we went back to our village.

48. Was yours a brick house?

It used to be a brick house, but we took it down when they told us to move to the Strategic Hamlet. When we got back again, we build a thatch house to live in.

49. When did they set up Strategic Hamlets?

More than 3 years ago.

50. Was life different in the Strategic Hamlet?

When 2d Lt. So-And-So was there, he used to call daily meetings. I was an " inter family-group " head. I used to get permission to go back to my village to work on the land everyday, 10 days in a row. When permission expired, I'd ask for another one. In the Hamlet there was a fence, and the yards were kept clean. Then I don't know what happened, but he was transferred away. Another officer replaced him. The GVN sent us rice two or three times. Each family got half a bag of rice, a pot of fish-sauce, one kilo of dried fish, and a can of oil. When the authorities left the Hamlet, we went back to our old place to live and work.

51. Did the VC come as soon as the GVN withdrew?

We were told to move out of the Hamlet by the people and by the VC.

52. Who were the people who told you to get out of the Hamlet?

They were the owners of the plantation. We built our houses on their property. I don't know whether they wanted their property back, or they were encouraged by the VC to get us out.

53. Did you have land to work on in [redacted] Strategic Hamlet?

There was lots of land in [redacted] Other people worked there, but I didn't. I asked permission to go back to [redacted] to till my own land. People might get permission to work outside. Those who were sick were given medicine.

54. Did you have to go back to the Hamlet to sleep at night?

Yes. I'd go back to the hamlet by 4 or 5 PM, and leave again at daybreak. I did that 10 days in a row. I'm 65 now, and I've had all kinds of hardships. Now it's the turn of bombing and strafing. I don't know what to do.

55. When did they first bomb your village?

It must've been 2 months ago. There used to be more strafings than bombings. But they bombed so hard on the 8th that people had to leave. Before the "Oc-noc" (tadpoles, i.e., helicopters) used to fly over the village and they strafed sometimes. Some people got killed while working in the field, but the strafings then weren't too bad.

56. How many people were dead in the last three months?

Lots of them. Some died when the trenches collapsed, some were wounded. Two or three people at a time were hurt, mostly women and children.

57. How many people altogether were killed in the last three months?

I've seen them dead, but I don't know how many of them altogether. I didn't dare go anywhere away from the trench.

58. Were the houses damaged?

Lots of them were ruined. The trees were dead.

59. How many houses in your own hamlet were ruined?

Six or seven houses out of ten in the hamlet were ruined. Nobody was spared damage.

60. Was it hard to work when you had to live in [redacted] Strategic Hamlet?

Yes and no. It was easy to get permission to go back to the old place to work. Yet it was hard because we weren't allowed to live on our own land. But we didn't complain, because it was safer in the Hamlet.

61. What did you like best about the Strategic Hamlet?

I don't know. We lived like everybody else, we had no choice. We only wanted to live and work in peace.

62. When you were in the Strategic Hamlet, what did you think of the Village Council?

They were all right. They'd grant us permission to travel outside of the Hamlet. And it was easy to earn a living by selling at the post. It's harder when I came back to the old place, where there was no Village Council or anybody to enforce the law. We did what we wanted to do.

63. How often did the VC visit your village?

I don't know. Once in a while I heard people say that the VC had come. But I didn't see any of them. They usually come at night quietly. Nobody'd know about them. Ordinary people like us worked hard in the daytime, and slept at night. We didn't pay attention to anything else.

64. When the GVN withdrew from the Village, did the VC come to establish some committee to replace the Village Council?

No. The Village Council had moved to Ben Cat a long time ago.

65. In which hamlet did you live in [redacted] Village?

[redacted] Hamlet.

66. How many young men between 16 and 30 years old were there in your hamlet?

They'd all gone. Some went into the Army, others left to make a living somewhere else. There were only old people and children in the hamlet.

67. Did the VC force the village youths to join their Army?

They did. But there was no youth left in the village. They either went to work on the rubber plantation or joined the ARVN. There's hardly anybody left in the village. Those who were still able to work went to find a job elsewhere. The village is ruined. There's nothing to do. My mother is still there, but I wouldn't dare go back for her.

68. How did the VC get the village youths to join them?

I don't know how and where they got them. But I didn't see them do it in my village. There was no youth in the village for them to get.

69. Did they send any member of your family to education sessions?

No.

70. When did they take your two sons away?

A long time ago -- 2 or 3 years ago. We waited for them for a few years; still there was no news, and we assumed that they were dead.

71. Did they take them both away at the same time?

One was taken away a year after the other. One was taken from the house in the middle of the night, the other was led away when he went to collect his firewood money in

Ton-Binh. Another boy, a son of my uncle, was also taken away. Their wives didn't know whether they were alive or dead, but they lit up the altar and prayed for their husbands' souls on the anniversaries of their capture.

72. Did one of your sons live in Ben-Cat?

It wasn't safe in the village, so he took his family to Ben-Cat, and built a house to live.

73. Where was he captured?

He brought the wood to Ben-Binh to sell. When he got back there to collect his money (it was [redacted] they took him away.

74. How often did the VC hold mass meetings in the village?

I don't know. I heard about it, but I didn't see any. I lived near the forest, and I seldom left the house.

75. How often did the VC gather the villagers for a meeting?

I don't know. I've been back to the village for 2 or 3 years now, but I haven't seen any meeting.

76. Did you have to pay taxes to the GVN?

Yes, we used to pay taxes on our cattle.

77. How much did you have to pay?

It was such a long time ago! I used to pay a little over 1 piaster for each buffalo I owned.

78. Did you have to pay land taxes?

Yes. But I've forgotten how much. The papers were lost during the war. The Government used to come every year to collect all kinds of taxes; personal tax, cattle tax, land tax, and so on. But now my cattle are lost and I didn't have much land. Besides, nobody collects taxes now.

79. Didn't the VC make you pay taxes?

No.

80. How often did the ARVN get into your village?

They'd make a raid once ... every few months. Sometimes they got into the village, sometimes they only passed by.

81. How did the ARVN soldiers behave toward the people?

The people were afraid of them. They'd ask to buy a chicken from the people and they'd take the chicken anyway, even if the owners didn't want to sell. As for me, they didn't take anything away from me, because my house was too small and located near the forest. I had only a few neighbors.

82. Please describe the last bombing attack.

We were going to eat breakfast when the planes came to bomb. The bombing lasted from 5 AM to 9 AM. We didn't have time to touch our breakfast. The previous evening, before our bed-time, they also bombed, it was about 10 PM So I left!

83. Did they bomb the village more than the forest?

They bombed the village much more. They destroyed all the orchards and houses.

84. Did they bomb the forest?

Yes.

85. Did they drop more bombs in the forest than in the village?

They bombed one place at a time. If they bombed the village today, they'd bomb the forest next day, and two days later they'd bomb another village, and so on. They also shelled a lot.

86. Did you see that the bombs dropped lately were different from bombs dropped previously?

They hadn't bombed my village before. Now they dropped so many bombs!

87. Hadn't your village been bombed before?

No. They used to fire "flying bombs" village from Ben-Cat.

88. What are flying bombs?

Cannon shells.

89. And the planes had never dropped bombs in your village before?

That's right.

90. How did you find the craters made by the bombs?

They were huge: very wide and very deep. Big trees were unrooted. The craters were about 10m wide, and about 9 or 10m deep.

91. Had you ever seen craters like those before?

No.

92. Why did they bomb your village?

I've seen one side fire at the other, and vice versa. I don't know why. We're only simple people. If anyone let us stay, then we'd stay; if they told us to move away, then we'd go. We don't know anything else.

93. Were there VC in the village at the time of the bombing?

No. They didn't live in the village.

94. Then why was the village bombed?

That's the point! They only wasted the bombs killing innocent people.

95. What did the people say?

What could they do? If the father was killed, the children would bury him. If the husband died, the wife would bury him. What else could they do?

96. Did the people blame anybody?

They could cry and complain with Heaven and Earth! They didn't know who to blame. Take my case: my grandson was killed, yet I didn't have time to look at him twice. I had to take my wounded daughter to the hospital. My neighbor had to bury the child for me. There's no one to blame. It's war? What a miserable time!

97. Whom did the people blame for all the damage inflicted upon their families and properties?

They didn't know who to blame. They only complained that the warring sides failed to aim their bombs and guns at the right targets, and that they, innocent people, become victims of the war.

98. Who did the people think were flying the planes that bombed your village?

They said the Americans were flying the planes.

99. Why did they think it was the Americans who flew the planes and not the Vietnamese?

They said Viet-Nam didn't have that kind of aircraft.

110. Now that you had to leave your village, whom do you blame for all these troubles?

I don't blame anybody. I was too afraid, so I ran away. I don't resent anybody.

111. Whose fault was it that you had to go?

I don't know. It's a curse of Heaven and Earth that we have this war. I don't know who to blame. I only pray that it'll soon be peace again.

112. Whose fault did the VC cadres say it was?

I don't know what they said. I've only seen war all the time, but I don't know who caused it.

113. You lived in the village, and yet you don't know?

Well, all I've been were planes and helicopters and bombs and bullets.

114. Did the shelling inflict any damage?

Yes. The gardens and the houses were damaged.

115. Were there any VC in the village at the time of the shellings?

I don't know. I only knew my own place. Whenever they bombed or shelled, I'd get right into the trench.

116. How many times did they drop the big bombs?

They bombed so many times, sometimes twice a day, sometimes once. There were all sorts of bombs and shells.

117. Did the planes ever spray powder to kill the trees?

No.

118. Have you heard of it?

Yes. I've heard they sprayed a certain place, and the sprays killed fruit trees making the leaves turn yellow and die.

119. Did you say there were neither VC nor ARVN troops in your village?

The GVN used to be there once, but they hadn't come back since they left a long time ago!

120. Did you say there were neither GVN Village Council nor VC Committee? Then did people do what they wanted?

(No response.)

121. Then if someone saw the fruits in your garden, all he had to do was to help himself?

No. He could not.

122. Why? Nobody was keeping order in your village.

But there was the owner.

123. But if someone just ignored you and went ahead and picked your fruit, what could you do?

No such thing could happen in my village. If I had fruit, I picked and sold them at the market for money. Nobody touched my property. The elderly people in the village would keep the place in order.

124. Have you heard about the Liberation Front? What is it for?

I've heard they were engaged in this war. That was all!

125. Why did they fight this war?

I don't know.

126. Did any battle take place in your village?

No. They fought somewhere on Highway 14, or Highway 13, but not in my village.

127. Didn't the VC troops get into your village sometimes?

I heard about their coming sometimes, but I never saw them. They lived somewhere in the forests.

128. How often was your village shelled?

They used to shell once in every 2 or 3 days. Now they shelled day and night.

119. When did they start shelling more than ever before?

It was during the June crop.

130. Was it about three months ago?

Yes. The helicopters often flew over the village, and the shellings became more intensive. The helicopters would come, followed by the fast flying planes, the jets. These jets had killed my grandson.

131. What kind of aircraft was more fearful?

That kind of jet planes. They flew so fast that we didn't have enough time to reach the trench.

132. Did the population dig their own trenches?

They either dug their own trenches or they hired others to do it for them.

133. Did the ARVN warn the people in advance of a bombing?

Sometimes when I heard the sound of gunfire from far away, I got ready to get into the trench. Nobody warned the people in advance of a bombing.

134. How did the planes broadcast?

The helicopters circled above the village for a while. They dropped leaflets. Those who could read told me that the GVN was calling to the people to move away from the village.

135. Did you hear louspeakers?

Yes. They told the people to move away, for they were going to drop big bombs. I couldn't hear them very well. I heard them broadcast once, at noon. Then the village was bombed that very night. The next day I was preparing to go away when the planes came to strafe, the "Oc noc" (tadpole) kind of planes (=helicopters).

136. Did the "Oc noc" strafe only?

No, they fired rockets, too. And the fast-flying planes only dropped bombs.

139. Do you mean the jet planes bombed?

Yes. The jet planes dropped series of bombs.

138. Did you see them yourself?

Yes. They were very big.

139. How high did they fly?

They flew very high.

140. How about the other kind of planes, did they fly as high as the jet planes?

No. They flew lower. The jets might zoom by us, and we didn't have a minute to make for the trenches. They were the planes that were the most frightening.

141. Did anybody in your village own a radio set?

Yes.

142. And in your hamlet, [redacted], did anybody there own a radio set?

Some better-off families owned radio sets. But they'd come out here taking the sets with them. They were well off. They could afford to live in Ben-Cat or out here.

143. Did anybody in the village read newspapers?

I don't know.

144. You'd left the village once before, hadn't you?

Yes. I went to [redacted] then.

145. How did you find the GVN treating the people in [redacted]?

It was kind. It distributed rice. Two families would share one big bag of rice, 2 pots of fish sauce, two cans of oil. On another occasion, we received bags of American rice, and each got 4m of cloth. Whenever anybody got sick, they might go to the Health Station for medicine. The GVN was very helpful to the people. But it didn't stay long enough. It left 3 or 4 months later.

146. How many times had the helicopters given warnings to the people before you left?

Only once.

147. Had they ever appealed to the people before?

They did in [redacted] and elsewhere, not in my village. They only broadcast over my place once, in the afternoon, and they bombed that very night. The next morning when

I was going to have breakfst, they began to shell. So I left.

140. How many people out of ten in the village have left it?

Almost all have gone. There're only old people staying behind in the village. At first only half the village left, but later the rest followed suit.

149. When you left, did you only intend to get away from the village just for a few days?

I only took with me a few changes of clothes, thinking that I'd come back when things would quieten down. I did come back once, at noon one day, and was able to pick some corn in spite of the helicopters which were strafing overhead. I took the corn to the bus station and sold it for 40 piasters. I went back to the house for some more clothes and got out here again. I wanted to go back again but I wouldn't dare.

150. Why did you choose to come here?

I didn't choose to go anywhere. It's they who called us to get out of the village.

151. Why didn't you go to Ben-Cet, for example?

Because I have a daughter living here. I used to come here very often. My daughter had come here when I moved to the Strategic Hamlet.

152. Is she the one who was wounded?

No, she's the younger one. She's the luckiest in the family. She's been here a long time . with her husband.

153. What is she doing here?

(her husband) operates a bulldozer.

154. When you left, did the VC object to your leaving?

They didn't do anything. I'd leave even if they did.

155. Did they tell you to move to other places than here?

No. Everybody ran frantically for his own life.

156. What would happen to you if you should go back to the village now?

I'm only afraid of the shellings, and the planes. If it quiets down, I'll go home to stay. Otherwise I'll sneak back sometimes to fetch some rice and corn to eat. But if they keep shelling, I'll have to stay away indefinitely.

157. Are you satisfied with the GVN assistance out here?

I'd heard that the GVN was going to take care of us, and in fact it did help. But people are so crowded that the officials couldn't get to everyone. That's why some got their shares, some didn't. Well, I'm not the only one who hasn't received anything. Some day they'll get to my name!

158. But are you satisfied with the situation as a whole?

Having left home to come out here and to beg the Government for something to live on, being satisfied or not is out of the question. It's true that I haven't got anything yet, but there are too many people and the Government couldn't possibly get to everyone at once. I've received a few litres of rice, but haven't got any money. Some people have received both.

159. Since you've been here, has anyone advised you to go back to your village?

Nobody has.

160. Has anybody gone back to the village?

I don't know. I don't think so. There're too much bombings back there.

161. You must've seen a lot of Americans out here. What do you think the Americans are doing here?

I don't know. I've seen white men, but I don't know if they were French or American. I'd seen the Americans come to the Strategic Hamlet bringing gifts to the people once, but I don't know anything else.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS:

The subject was 65 years old, but was very alert. She talked freely (chewing betel-nuts while talking into the tape-recorder's microphone), but did not seem to be entirely frank in her dismissal of any mention of the VC and their activities in her village.

No. AGR 47

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

1. Name of interviewer [redacted]
2. Name of subject [redacted]
3. Time and date of interview :
   From 10:10 AM to 12:00 on Sept. [redacted] 1965
   From _____ to _____ on _____ 196___
   From _____ to _____ on _____ 196___
   Total time 1 hour and 50 minutes
   Interview based on : tape ( ) hand written notes (x)
4. Place of interview :
   BINH DUONG
5. Sex of subject : Male ( ) Female (x)
6. Age of subject : 65
7. Ethnic background : Vietnamese
8. Place of birth :
   hamlet [redacted]
   village [redacted]
   district Ben Cet
   province Binh Duong
9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :
   hamlet [redacted]
   village [redacted]
   district Ben Cet
   province Binh Duong
10. (a) Length of residence in last location : Since birth
    (b) Who controlled the place of residence:
    GVN ( ) VC (x) Contested ( )
    (c) Since when controlled or contested ? 3-4 years

11. Number of brothers (1) and sisters (1)

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : _____

13. Marital status : Widowed

14. Number of children : 1 daughter

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age : _____

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject( ) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject( ) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion : Buddhist

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : Farmer, husbandry

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation _____
(b) Landowner ? yes - orchard How much land _____

20. Education :
illiterate (x)
literate ( )
schooling completed : _____

21. Any relatives in VC . _____

22. Any relatives in GVN : 2 grand sons.

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by :
(a) French
(b) GVN
(c) VC 2 sons

24. When became a refugee : September, 1965

25. Where took refuge first _____

26. Present residence _____

AGR

INTERVIEW

48

THE RAND CORPORATION
[redacted]

STUDIES OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO: AGR-48

Date of Interview : December [redacted] 1965

Subject's Category : Refugee: August [redacted] 1965

Area of Residence : [redacted] hamlet, [redacted] village, Cai Be district, Dinh Tuong province

1. How long have you been in [redacted] Hamlet?

I have been a refugee in [redacted] Hamlet since the [redacted] day of the 7th month of the lunar year. (Interviewer's Note: that is, since August [redacted], 1965.)

2. Where did you come from?

I came from [redacted] Hamlet, [redacted] Village, Cai Be District, Dinh Tuong Province.

3. How large was your hamlet? How many "mau"?

I don't know how many mau, but it was very large. It stretched along the Canal [redacted], it was 5 km long.

4. How many households did your hamlet have?

I think it had over 100 households. The houses were far from each other, sometimes almost 100 m.

5. How many families left your hamlet as refugees?

My family was the only one who left as refugees.

6. What about other hamlets in your village? How many families left as refugees?

I don't know the exact number, but there were about 30 or families who left. About 20 families came to [redacted]. The other families went to other places in Cai Be District.

7. What did people in your village and in your hamlet do to earn a living?

Most of us worked on ricefields and orchards.

8. What about your family? What did you do to earn a living?

We did the same thing, we worked on ricefields and orchards.

9. How many ricefields and orchards did you work on? Did you work on your own ricefields and orchards, or did you rent them?

We worked on 50 cong of lua sa and 6 cong on which we built our house and grew fruit trees. The ricefields and orchards on which we worked were all rented. (Interviewer's Note: lua sa is the kind of paddy the farmer scattered right on the ricefield and which do not have to be retransplanted.)

10. How long had you been renting ricefields, and how much did you have to pay to the landlords?

I had rented ricefields and orchards for 10 years. When we still lived in peace, I had to pay each year to the landlord 1 gia of paddy for each cong of ricefields and orchards rented. But since 1959 when the Liberation Movement was born, the landlord in Saigon didn't dare come and collect paddy, and I didn't have to pay. (Interviewer's Note: 1 gia is equal to 40 liters or 20 kg of good paddy, or 17 kg or 18 kg of sa paddy.)

11. How much did you get each year from 50 cong of ricefields?

At least we got 500 gia of paddy. When the harvest was good, we got up to 600 gia. (Interviewer's Note: In South Vietnam, people used to measure ricefields in 3 various ways: cong tam quan, cong tam thua, and cong tam cat. Tam is a pole used to measure, its length varies to each type of cong.

a. Cong tam quan is an official cong, measure 1,000m2 and used in cadastral registers and in the ricefields trade. Here a tam measures 2.64m. Here is the way people used to measure:
12 tam X 2,64m = 31,68m (each side)
31,68m X 31,68m = 1,003m2, rounded to 1,000m2

b. Cong tam thue is cong for rent, measures 2,50m. A cong tam thue has a surface of 900m2 only:
12 tam X 2,50m = 30m
30m X 30m = 900 m2

c. Cong tam cat is cong used in the harvest or when the landlord hires farmers to work on their land. A tam in this case measures 3m. The surface of a cong tam thue is 1,296m2:
12 tam X 3 = 36m
36m X 36m = 1,296m2

Cong tam thue and cong tam cat are used to exploit poor farmers who have to rent ricefields or those who are hired workers. This explanation is based on documents provided by Mr. Nguyen Ngoc To, Ex-Minister for Rural Development under the Phan Huy Quat Government.

12. Before you left [redacted] Hamlet, what was the price of paddy there?

It was 70 piasters per gia in [redacted] In Dai Be District town it was 90 piasters per gia.

13. Did the buyer and the seller decide the price of paddy or someone else?

The price was fixed by the Front.

14. Did the Front allow people from the GVN controlled areas to come and buy paddy in your hamlet or village?

The Front forbade people from GVN-controlled areas to come and buy paddy from the people.

15. Did the Front allow the villagers to bring and sell their paddy in the markets in GVN-controlled areas?

No, the Front didn't allow the villagers to do so. But I still see the cadres' families sell their paddy in the markets at high price.

16. What did you and other villagers think about it? Did any of you protest against it?

We were all very dissatisfied about it. But we kept it to ourselves or whispered among us, and didn't dare protest. We were afraid the Front would accuse us of being against the Front. The cadres used to tell the villagers they would behead those who are against the Front.

17. Then to whom did you sell paddy?

To tell the truth, from time to time, I brought paddy secretly to the markets in GVN-controlled areas to sell it at higher price and at the same time bought necessary things such as material, clothes, etc. If the Front caught me on my way, I would have to pay 20 piasters per gia. Therefore, if I sold paddy in the market at 90 piasters per gia, I had to pay 20 piasters taxes, and I had only 70 piasters left. That means I got the same amount of money as when I sold paddy in the hamlet.

And so I lost the transportation for nothing, and if I was caught by the Front many times, I would be severely criticized. Besides the quantity of paddy I sold secretly in the market, I had to sell paddy to the Village Economic and Financial Committee at 70 piasters a gia. Or if anybody lacked paddy in the hamlet, I sold it to them at 70 piasters as fixed by the Front.

18. In your opinion, if we divided the quantity of paddy sold in a hamlet in 10 equal parts, how many parts were sold secretly in the market, and how many sold to the Economic and Financial Committee?

I think three parts were sold secretly in the market, and seven parts sold to the Economic and Financial Committee.

19. Did you see the Economic and Financial Committee sell the paddy they had bought from the villagers to merchants? If you did, what was the quantity they sold?

I saw them sell paddy to the merchants. They didn't go to the market, and didn't allow the merchants to come to the hamlet. The merchants' junks stayed away from the village; the Economic and Financial Committee used small junks to carry paddy to the merchants' junks.
I don't know the quantity of paddy they sold. I think they sold only some, and kept it to feed their soldiers.

20. Did you have to pay tax on your ricefields to the Front? If yes, how much in 1964, and how much in 1965?

Since 1964, the Front collected from me 2 gia for each cong. They said they collected for the landlords who were away, and would return what they had collected to the latter when they return to the village. In 1965 they also collected 2 gia for each cong as in 1964. Actually, the Front didn't raise/kept for the landlord. The rent was 1 gia for a cong. In the 2 gia they collected, 1 gia belonged to former years from 1960 to 1963 that the landlords didn't collect.

21. Besides the amount of paddy you just mentioned, and you have to pay other taxes to the Front? If yes, how much in 1964, and how much in 1965?

I had to pay agricultural tax. In 1964 I paid 3,000 piasters, and in 1965 it rose up to 6,000 piasters.

22. Do you know on what basis the Front fixed your agricultural tax?

Since I am uninstructed, I don't know how they did. They only told me I had to pay at the rate of 25% which corresponds to 3,000 piasters in 1964 and 6,000 piasters in 1965. I did ask for a reduction because we didn't have an easy life, but they refused. Finally, I had to pay all.

23. Did you have to buy troop support bonds?

Up to the day I left my hamlet, I didn't see any bonds sold. But a month ago my half-brother who took refuge in Cai Be told me he had had to buy bonds of 500 piasters. Because he was poor, he had to buy only one, other people with an easier life had to buy up to three or four bonds.

24. Was your hamlet often attacked by aircraft or artillery?

Since the 2nd month of the lunar calendar (Interviewer's Note: March, 1965), my hamlet was attacked more fiercely each day. First it was attacked three or four times a month. Since the 6th and 7th months of the lunar calendar, it was attacked more often. Usually, it was attacked every two or three days.

25. Artillery used to attack during the day or at night? Did it inflict any damage?

Artillery used to shell during the night, it hit the ricefields, and didn't inflict any damage.

26. Did aircraft inflict damage to your village or your hamlet? How was the damage on civilians? How was it on the Front?

Aircraft did much damage. No house had been burned in my hamlet, but seven houses in other hamlets in my village burned and blew up. In the whole village, there were six dead and eight wounded. On the Front side, I heard there were many dead, but I don't know how many. In the 2nd month of the lunar year, when aircraft strafed my hamlet, I saw that the Front suffered five dead. I didn't see any wounded. There was a rumor among people that it was C Cai Be, but I don't know what C meant. During other air attacks in other hamlets in the village, I heard the Front forces suffered heavy casualties, but I don't know how heavy.

27. What did you and other villagers think and say about losses caused to the people?

The families whose members were dead or wounded, or whose houses were burned and destroyed, said they had to suffer because the Front forces had been staying in their houses or in their neighborhood and caused the aircraft's attack. They spoke straight out without any fear. Other villagers and myself thought so, but we didn't dare say so.

28. Who did you and other villagers think were strafing from the aircraft?

I think the Americans were strafing from the aircraft, because how could Vietnamese fire at their countrymen? And I think other people shared my opinion.

29. Did you and other villagers blame the Americans?

I did see some people blame the Americans. Many others, and I myself, didn't blame the Americans because the Front people stayed in their houses at which the American aircraft fired and which they damaged. I blame the Front people because if they fight, they better stay in the ricefields so that the Americans won't fire at the people's houses.

30. Why do you think the Americans come here?

I think the Americans come here to help the Nationalists to fight the Front people. It's just like a thief is coming into our house, and someone helps us to chase the thief. The Front people are like thieves, and the Americans are like who come to help us chase the thieves. That is why I don't blame the Americans.

31. What did other people in your hamlet think of the presence of the Americans here?

There were people who thought the Americans were aggressors trying to take over Vietnam and oppressing the Vietnamese people, but they were among a few cadres' families. I think many people shared my opinion, but they were afraid of the Front and didn't dare speak straight out. Just like myself -- because I am in the GVN-controlled area, I can tell you so. But when I was in my hamlet I couldn't say so, for fear of being beheaded.

32. What did you and other villagers do to avoid aircraft and artillery attacks?

We lived next to the canal. Aircraft didn't attack us as much as other places. I only dug holes next to the houses and took cover there when aircraft passed by. In other places, more often attacked by aircraft and artillery, people didn't dare live in their houses and had to screen the houses in the ricefields with bamboo.

33. Did you see or hear of defoliation?

I didn't see such a spraying in my area, but I heard the cadres talk about it. They said that American aircraft sprayed poison to kill the people. The poison caused scabies, and if people drank the infected water, they would die.

34. Did you and other villagers believe what the cadres said?

We didn't believe them, because we had never seen such things.

35. What did the cadres tell the people to do in order to protect themselves from the sprayed gas?

They said when aircraft sprayed powder, people should cover their noses and mouths with a wet cloth. If they caught scabies, they should cover the wounded areas with the roots of Loc Binh lentil.

36. Did the market meet in your village or hamlet? If yes, during the day or night time?

Before I left, in other hamlets as well as in mine, the market didn't meet. Lately, my brother came here to take refuge and told me the Front just allow the market meeting in Nga Sau of [redacted] Hamlet. I didn't ask whether they met during the day or night.

37. When the market didn't meet, where did you buy necessary things such as pork, cloth, nuoc mam, etc?

If we needed pork or cloth, I had to go secretly to Cai Be. (Interviewer's Note: Cai Be was the market in the district town, under GVN control.) Other miscellaneous things could be bought at the hamlet grocery stores. The stores got their supplies from Cai Be.

38. Tell me what could be found in the hamlet grocery store.

I saw tea, pastry, beer, orangeade without ice, tobacco such as Ruby or ARA (Interviewer's Note: The latter is made in Cambodia), rubber sandals, petroleum, nuoc mam, salt, combs, mirors, needles, threads, paper, pencils, etc.

39. Did you see any newspapers or books published in GVN-controlled areas?

They were strictly forbidden. There were people who went to Cai Be and bought things wrapped in newspapers. If the guerrillas saw these, when the villagers passed through control posts, the newspapers would be seized and burned, and people were threatened.

40. When you and other villagers moved around, did you have to ask the Front's permission?

If we moved in the Front-controlled areas, we didn't have to ask for permission. But if guerrillas in other villages asked, we had to tell whom we were going to see and why. If they believed us, they would let us go. If not, they would conduct us to the men we mentioned to see whether we had told the truth or not. They did that to guard against GVN spies.

41. Do you know how the Front administered your village and hamlet?

I know they had committees for this and that -- "Mister Such-and-Such" -- but since I am uneducated, I don't know how they were organized. In the village level, I saw the Front Village Committee; in the hamlet level, the Hamlet Farmers' Civil Affairs Committee. In the village level, there was also the Economic and Financial Committee. There were many other committees, but I don't remember them all.

42. To what committee did the villagers pay taxes or contributions? Or when there were problems to be solved, what committee did you get in touch with?

When we paid taxes or contributions, met, or undertook collective work, etc., we got in touch with the Farmers' Civil Affairs Committee.

43. Did you join any Front organizations?

I should have to join the Farmers' Association, but I wasn't asked to do so -- maybe because the Front didn't trust me. I understood that each member of the Farmers' Association had to pay a monthly fee of 2 piasters. In my hamlet, only a small number of people hadn't joined the Farmers' Association like me.

44. Do you know why the Front didn't trust you and asked you to join? And do you know why others didn't join?

I don't know exactly why, but I think it was because many members of my family were in GVN-controlled areas. Besides, in the middle of 1963, the Nationalists were stationed in my hamlet post. My house was just next to the post, and I worked for the post by digging trenches and building fences. Maybe that was why the Front didn't trust me. I don't know why the Front didn't trust others.

45. Tell me about the occupation of your hamlet post by the Nationalists.

As I told you before, the Liberation Movement started in 1959. In the middle of 1963, the Nationalists conducted an operation and were stationed in my hamlet, but they had control only around the post. In the fall of 1963, the Nationalists withdrew. I don't know why. I only remember they withdrew right after the fall of the Diem regime.

46. Did the Front have a First Aid Station in your village or hamlet?

The Front didn't have any health organization for the villagers. It took care only of the cadres' and guerrillas' health. The Front chose literate men in the village, sent them to nursing courses to take care of the cadres and the guerrillas, but not to take care of the villagers.

47. Then if a villager got sick, what did his family do?

If people weren't too sick -- such as having a cold, headache, stomach-ache, or fever -- they used oriental medicine (pills and powder) bought at the grocery store.

If they were very sick, they were brought to Cai Be or [redacted]. (Interviewer's Note: [redacted] Village is next to [redacted] Village, on National Route [redacted] it has a medical installation.) The village midwife took care of easy cases of birth. More difficult cases had to be brought to Cai Be. Even members of the cadres' families, if they were very sick or having a difficult delivery, were brought to Cai Be.

48. What did you and other villagers think about the fact that the Front didn't take care of the people's health?

We thought it was very unfair. The Front forced the people to pay taxes, to do their military duty, and it didn't try to take care of the people's health. Even if the villager was wounded by air attacks, he would have to be taken to the district town for treatment.

49. Did the Front say anything when very sick people were brought to GVN-controlled areas?

The Front didn't say anything. They didn't help the people, how could they prevent them from leaving, kill them?

50. Did you and other villagers ask the Front to set up a First Aid Station?

Everybody liked to have a First Aid Station and a maternity clinic in the village to take care of the sick people and women in child-birth. This would spare the villagers from danger and expenses caused by transportation. We all wanted to have them, but we didn't dare ask for them for fear of being treated as reactionary elements struggling against the Front.

51. Did the Front have schools for children in the hamlet? If so, how were the schools organized?

Since the first month of this lunar year, the Front has organized schools in the hamlet. Each child to be sent to school had to pay 20 piasters to buy wood and leaves, and all families with children to be sent to school joined in the building of the school. The Front selected literate people in the village to be teachers with a monthly salary of 300 piasters. The teacher's salary was paid by stu-

families. The school had about 70 children. After one month, aircraft attacked near the school; the villagers were afraid and didn't dare send their children to school anymore.

52. When children didn't have school to go, did you and other villagers blame aircraft for it?

Some did. They said they had spent much time and money to build the school, and they couldn't use it because of aircraft. The children stayed uninstructed. But many other villagers and I thought we were afraid of aircraft because of the Front's presence. Other schools in [redacted] didn't have to worry about aircraft (Interviewer's Note: [redacted] Village belongs to Giao Duc District town, Dinh Tuong Province). After the school had been abandoned, a few easy families in my hamlet sent their children to [redacted] schools.

53. Did you and other villagers like to live in peace so that you could send children to school?

Why not? No matter how poor we were, we would wish to send our children to school. How could parents leave their children uninstructed? But as long as the Front people were there, how could we have schools for them?

54. Did the Front have public educational service to teach elderly people how to read and write?

Up to the day I left, I didn't see any such organization. I heard the cadres once talk about it, but I don't know why they didn't organize it. It would be a good idea to do so, because there were many illiterate people in my hamlet.

55. What do you and the majority of the people in your hamlet want most?

We all want peace and the aircraft and artillery not to attack the hamlet, so that we would be able to live in peace and send our children to schools. I also don't want the Front in the hamlet so that I wouldn't have to pay heavy taxes.

56. Before you left, had you transplanted all your 50 cong of ricefield?

I finished transplanting all my 50 cong of ricefield in the 4th month of the lunar year. The rice plants are having grains now, and we could harvest in the 1st month of the next lunar year.

57. Did other people in your village leave uncultivated ricefields? If yes, what did the Front do with these fields?

Most of them left in the 7th or 8th month of the lunar year; at that time, the ricefields had been transplanted. Some left before the transplanting season. The Front temporarily gave those ricefields to the cadres' and guerrillas' families to work on. They worked on about 2/3 of the ricefields left by the people, the other 1/3 being abandoned. There were about 100 cong of ricefields abandoned in my village.

58. Would the Front give these 100 cong to people of the village next to yours to work on?

I didn't hear about it, but I think in every village there were refugees who left, and there were not enough people to work on abandoned ricefields in their own village. How could they take care of abandoned ricefields in other villages?

59. At the last crop, what was your net income after all expenses -- such as the workers' salaries, taxes, fertilizers, etc.?

At the last harvest, I got 500 gia paddy from all my 50 cong. The expenses included 50 gia for a plowing machine and 50 gia for cutting. The Front took 2 gia from each cong for the landlord; that means 100 gia all together, 6,000 piasters, or almost 100 gia, and a few gia for seed-corn. Therefore, I had about 200 gia, but if I count the money I had to spend for fertilizers to improve a few bad cong (10 gia), I had only 180 gia left.

60. You told me you had 6 cong of orchards. How much did you get from them?

I planted fruit-trees in my orchard, but I didn't get much because the soil wasn't good. I also planted sweet potatoes and manioc. I only get about 3,000 or 4,000 piasters the whole year.

61. You just told me you rented a plowing machine. So somebody in your village must have had a plowing machine.

A man living out of Cai Be District brought his plowing machine in and worked for us. I heard he had to pay the Front up to 100,000 piasters in order to be allowed to work so. After the work, he brought the machine back to the District, he didn't dare leave the machine in the village for fear of air attack.

62. Did people in your village like to use fertilizers? What kind of fertilizers did they use, and where did they buy them?

People in my village liked to use fertilizers very much, because many ricefields in my village were alkaline. They liked to use Than Nong fertilizer, which they bought them in Cai Be District. (Interviewer's Note: Than Nong is the name of a phosphate fertilizer very well known by the farmers in South Vietnam.)

63. Did the Front forbid the villagers to go and buy fertilizers in the District?

The Front authorized the villagers to go and buy fertilizers in the District.

64. You told me at the last harvest, you had 180 gia of paddy left after all expenses. You also told me that the average price of paddy was 70 piasters a gia. Therefore you got 13,000 piasters out of paddy and about 3,000 piasters of other cereals, or 16,000 piasters in all. Did you and your family have an easy life with that amount of money?

I had to support my wife and our five children. Since we didn't dare spend much, we had enough to eat. Besides we saved some money.

65. If we can classify people in your village in 10 categories, category 1 includes the richest people, and category 10 the poorest, in what category would you classify your family?

We would be in category 5.

66. In what class did the Front assign you?

The Front called us middle farmer.

67. Before you left your hamlet to become a refugee, had you known that refugees could get help from the GVN?

I knew that the GVN helps the refugees. My father went to tell me, and he saw the GVN helping the refugees, and told me so.

68. Did you tell your neighbors that the GVN was helping the refugees?

I told a few close friends of mine about it, but I didn't speak straight out. If the Front had known about it, I would have been treated as a reactionary element.

69. Did the friends to whom you mentioned the GVN aid leave the hamlet with you?

When I left, they were still in the hamlet. At that time my family was the first to leave.

70. Do you know why they didn't leave?

I don't know, but I think because they were poor, they didn't want to leave their ricefields and orchards -- especially when the rice plants were having grains. They were also afraid because they didn't know how to earn their living out of their hamlet. But about a month later, I saw a few other families in my hamlet here.

71. Why did you become a refugee?

The Front forced me to do military service. I am the only boy in the family; the other 10 are all girls. I had to come here to avoid military service. I couldn't earn a living in my hamlet because of air and artillery attacks. I was also afraid bullets would hit my small children. Besides, how could we pay such heavy taxes to the Front? We all are furious if someone else benefits from our hard work.

72. Tell me how your family became refugees.

That day I was fishing in the fields. My father came and told me the Front cadres had ordered me to do military service. When I came home, they asked me to leave for

training from 6 PM to midnight in the hamlet. After the training, they told me to have my clothes and canvas bag ready to leave in three days. That same night, when I returned home, I took my wife and three children, and we left for Cai Be on a sampan. We left at 1 AM, and reached Cai Be at 6 AM.
We took Canal [redacted] and Cai Be Arroys to go to the District. We didn't see anybody, or meet any refugee. We were lucky that day, because the Front used to check along the canal. My parents stayed behind. The next day the Front asked them to attend courses for nine days, and obliged them to go to Cai Be and call me back. On the 10th day, my parents took a sampan to go to Cai Be and didn't return to the hamlet.

73. When you became a refugee, what did you take with you, what did you leave behind?

We took with us only some dozens thousands piasters, and our clothes. We left behind a three-room house, furniture, and other things, 100 gia of paddy and 50 cong of transplanted ricefields.

74. Do you expect to earn 16,000 piasters a year here as you did from your ricefields and orchards when you were in your hamlet under the Front control?

I think I would get more than that. I am breeding three pigs I can sell them for 50,000 piasters within a year. Since I'm preparing wine, I'll have the grape husks to feed the pigs. So I'll have 50,000 piasters for myself. Out here, I don't have to pay taxes. If I stayed in the hamlet, I'm sure that the Front taxes would be much higher than before.

75. How did the GVN help you?

The GVN gave each member of my family 7 piasters a day and this went on for the whole month. Besides, we received 5,500 piasters for the building of a straw house.

76. Are you satisfied with the help you got from the GVN?

I am satisfied with it. But I know that many other refugees are looking forward to receiving the allowance of 7 piasters a day and the amount reserved for the building of the house.

Up to now, there are still many refugees who haven't received any help. The District is providing jobs to the refugees for salaries such as digging ditches. But there are days when there is no job, and the refugees are worrying about it.

77. What do you think about the GVN cadres -- such as members of the Village Council when your hamlet was still under the GVN control?

In 1958, the GVN controlled my hamlet. The Village Council forced the villagers to go and work in [redacted] Agroville 7 or 8 times, and each time for 4 or 5 days without any pay. I think that it was very unfair. When the ARVN returned to my hamlet, at the middle of 1963, I had to work for the post 2 or 3 times without pay. (Interviewer's Note: Here the subject took out his wallet and showed the interviewer 7 certificates dated 1958, proving that the subject had worked for the agroville, and 3 certificates dated 1963, proving he had worked for the post.) To tell the truth, during those years under the Front control, I had to work much: hedging the village, setting spikes pits, building roads, etc. I never got pay for my work. The reason I keep these certificates is that I can show them to the GVN when it comes back to my hamlet, and so prove that I'm not for the "Liberation." (Interviewer's Note: The subject didn't want to answer the questions directly, perhaps fearing to offend the GVN cadres, even those of a former regime.)

78. Do your children go to school here?

When I became a refugee, I left my two elder children (one 12 years old and the other 9) with my sister in Giao Duc District. They go to school there. My three small children are here with us. Only my 6-year-old child goes to school here; the other two are too small. My boy goes to a private school and I had to pay 20 piasters a month. I did try to put him in a public school, but unsuccessfully because he doesn't have his birth certificate. I asked the Village Council and I was told that before asking for my boy's birth certificate, I should have a marriage certificate. In the Front-controlled areas, there was nobody to give us marriage and birth certificates.

The Village Council told me that in order to have these certificates, I would have to take my wife and children to the Province, and it would take very long, and be very expensive. They also told me that they will take care of everything, if I give them 2,400 piasters for the certificates and transportation expenses. If I have the money now, I will give it to them so that I won't have to lose time in waiting. (Interviewer's Note: The interviewer had the chance to talk to the District Chief. He told the former that the getting of birth and marriage certificates is very simple now for refugees. They don't have to go to the province, they can get them right in the District Administrative Office. The District Chief had taken his oath, and had been authorized by the Court to give them these certificates. The expenses aren as high as the interviewee thought. The District had informed the population about the new regulation.)

79. Would you like to come back to [redacted] Hamlet? If yes, why and under what conditions?

I would like very much to be back, because it is my native land. My ancestors' graves, my house, my land are there, and I know the people. But I don't dare return unless there is security. I wish the ARVN would camp in my hamlet and make it a New Life Hamlet so that the villagers wouldn't have to support the Front under pressure.

80. If the GVN controls your hamlet and builds up a New Life Hamlet but the people also have to do their military service, will the people be afraid?

Some people are afraid, some aren't. But I think if we serve the ARVN, we will have salaries to help our families. If we serve the Front force, we don't have enough to eat. How can we help our families?

81. When you were still in the Front-controlled areas, did you know who was the leader of the Front?

I only know that Mr. Ho has the highest position, but he is in the North. I don't know who has the highest position in the South.

82. Do you know who headed up the GVN?

I know that, before, it was President Ngo Dinh Diem, but he's been overthrown. We all knew Mr. Diem by name, because the Front always said we should fight against American-Diem. After Mr. Diem I heard that the GVN changes its leaders very often. I don't remember who came after Mr. Diem. I heard about them, but I don't remember.

83. Do you know who heads up the Government now?

I heard about him, but I don't remember his name.

84. Do you know that Mr. Ky is in the Government?

Yes, now I remember. It is Mr. Nguyen Cao Ky. Since I came here, I've been too busy earning a living and haven't paid attention to other things. Now that you mention his name, I remember.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

The subject's intelligence was below average.
His memory was weak, his reaction low. His knowledge was very limited concerning the Front's organization and administration (both military and civilian organizations, as well as group organizations).
His answered more easily to questions on economics, education, and social matters.
His attitude, his expression, and his voice suggested that he was cooperative and sincere in his answers.

No. AGR - 48

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

1. Name of interviewer [redacted]

2. Name of subject [redacted]

3. Time and date of interview :

From 8:30 AM to 12:30 on Dec. [redacted] 1965

From _____ to _____ on _____ 196___

From _____ to _____ on _____ 196___

Total time 4 hours

Interview based on : tape (X) hand written notes ( )

4. Place of interview : Psychological Warfare Office
Cai Be District, Dinh Tuong Province

5. Sex of subject : Male (XX) Female ( )

6. Age of subject : 33

7. Ethnic background : Vietnamese

8. Place of birth :

hamlet [redacted]

village [redacted]

district Cai Be

province Dinh Tuong

9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :

hamlet [redacted]

village [redacted]

district Cai Be

province Dinh Tuong

10. (a) Length of residence in last location : From birth to August [redacted] 1965

(b) Who controlled the place of residence:

GVN ( ) VC (XX) Contested ( )

(c) Since when controlled or contested ? 1959

11. Number of brothers (0) and sisters (10)

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : none

13. Marital status : Married

14. Number of children : Five

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age : none

16. Parents with subject (XX) or not with subject ( )
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject( ) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject (X) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject(X) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion : Ancestor worship

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : Farmer

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation Middle farmer
(b) Landowner ? _____ How much land _____

20. Education :
illiterate ( )
literate (XX)
schooling completed : _____

21. Any relatives in VC : Five

22. Any relatives in GVN : Four

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by :
(a) French
(b) GVN
(c) VC

24. When became a refugee : August [redacted] 1965

25. Where took refuge first _____

26. Present residence _____

AGR

INTERVIEW

49

THE RAND CORPORATION

[redacted]

STUDIES OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT
OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR-49

Date of Interview : December [redacted] 1965

Subject's Category : Refugee: September 1965

Area of Residence : Cai Be District, Dinh Tuong Province.

1. How long have you been taking refuge in [redacted] Hamlet?

I don't recall the date. I only remember that I came here at the beginning of the 8th month (Lunar Calendar). (Interviewer's Note: Beginning of September 1965.)

2. Where did you come from?

I came from [redacted] Hamlet, [redacted] Village, Giao Duc District, Binh Tuong Province.

3. Was your hamlet controlled by the Front? If so, since when?

Yes, my hamlet was controlled by the Front. It's been under Front control since the 3d month of last year (Lunar Calendar). (Interviewer's Note: Since April 1964.) I don't recall the date.

4. How long did you live in [redacted] Hamlet?

I lived there for ten years. That hamlet is my wife's native hamlet. Mine is [redacted] Hamlet, [redacted] Village, Kien Binh District, Kien Tuong Province.

5. You are married, aren't you?

(Subject nodded his head and smiled.)

How many children do you have? Are any of them over 15 years of age?

I have 8 children. They are all very young. None of them is 15 years old.

(Subject smiled, shook his head and looked embarrassed and resigned.)

6. How did you earn your living before becoming a refugee?

I tilled the land, worked as a hired laborer and fished for a living. I was hired to dig canals, clear the gutters, harvest crops and plough the fields.

7. How many cong of land did you till? How much income did you have per year?

I tilled 10 cong of land. (Note: 1 cong= 1,000 sa meter.) In the bumper crop years I had 70 bushels of sa rice per year. (Note: "Sa" rice: rice which needs no replanting. One bushel of "sa" rice weighs 17-18 kgs.) My ricefields were alkaline soil and of bad quality. Last year I got only 50 bushels.

8. Did you grow fruit trees or vegetables? If yes, how much land did you have for growing vegetables and fruit trees, and what was your annual income?

I tilled 2 cong of orchard. Part of this land I used to build my house on. On the rest I grew bananas and sugar canes. Each month, I got a few hundred piasters.

9. Did the ricefields and orchard belong to you or did you rent them?

The ricefields, as well as the orchard, belonged to the landowner who lived in My Tho.

10. During the time the hamlet was under GVN control, how much land rental did you have to pay the landowner?

Because the ricefields were of alkaline soil and of bad quality, the landowner didn't ask me to pay any land rental. He gave the land to me. Then the GVN expropriated the landowner's ricefields and sold them to the farmers who paid in installments. But I didn't have money to buy the land. The Village Council members, seeing that I was poor, let me till the land without levying any taxes on it.

11. If there were 10 different levels of richness and poverty in your village -- the 1st level being the richest villagers and the 10th the poorest ones -- where did you stand?

I was on the 10th level. I was the poorest man in the village. I didn't get much from my land, which was of bad quality. I didn't have enough to eat. So all year round, I had to work as a hired laborer to make a living. I had ten mouths to feed in the family, so I was miserable.

12. How did the Front classify you?

I was classified as Poor Farmer.

13. Did the villagers use tractors or buffaloes to plough their ricefields?

For the last two years, we've been using tractors mostly. Before, we used buffaloes mostly. At that time I rented a tractor. The price for each cong of land was 1 bushel of paddy.

14. Did any villagers own the tractors?

Yes, there were those who owned tractors in the village. They had gotten them when the village was still under GVN control. Besides, people from the district town also brought their tractors to the village to plough for fees.

15. Do you know if the people from the district town who brought their tractors to the village to plough for fees had to pay taxes to the Front? If so, how much did they have to pay?

I heard these people say that they had to pay taxes to the Front, but I don't know how much. I think that they had to pay extremely heavy taxes.

16. Did you ever see tractors being bombed or strafed by aircraft?

I never saw this. During the last planting season I saw that they camouflaged their tractors with leaves to avoid bombing. After they'd ploughed the land they brought their tractors back to the district town. They didn't dare to leave them in the village.

17. Did you and other villagers use fertilizers for the ricefields? If you did, what kind of fertilizer? Where did you buy it?

Because the ricefields in my village were of alkaline soil, fertilizers were very much needed. My ricefields and those of the other villagers were fertilized with "Than Nong" (Genie of Agriculture) fertilizer. We bought the fertilizer from the district town.

18. Each time you and the other villagers went to the district town to buy fertilizer, did the Front cause you any difficulties?

I've never seen the Front cause difficulties to anybody.

19. Before the Front gained control of your village, was it set up as a Strategic Hamlet?

No.

20. Tell me how the Front gained control of your hamlet?

My hamlet was near two posts. Between the two posts is the Tong Doc Loc Canal. My hamlet was near the border between Dinh Tuong and Kien Phong Provinces, and was near [redacted] Market. The post on the side of Kien Phong Province was a Hoa Hao Buddhist post. The one on the side of Dinh Tuong Province was a Civil Guards post. In the 2nd lunar month of last year, the Civil Guards in the post and the Village Council withdrew all of a sudden. After the Civil Guards withdrew, the Hoa Hao Buddhist post on the other side of the canal sent soldiers to control the Civil Guard post. Over a month later, the Hoa Hao Buddhist post also withdrew. From that time on, the Front has been in control of the hamlet.

21. Before the two posts withdrew, did you see Front cadres operating in your hamlet and village?

Even though there was a post near the village, the men in the post and the Village Council Members only controlled the area close to the post. At night, all those who worked for the GVN returned to the post to sleep. At night Front cadres came to areas far from the post to gather the people, indoctrinate them, and collect contributions.

22. In your opinion, why did the two GVN posts withdraw? Before they withdrew, were they attacked by the Front?

I don't know why they withdrew. None of the posts were attacked by the Front.

23. When the Civil Guards withdrew from their post, did anyone leave the village with them?

The people stayed behind. Only those who worked for the GVN left with the Civil Guards.

24. How did you and the other villagers in the hamlet feel when the Civil Guards withdrew?

Many other villagers and I were confused and sad because when the post was still around, the area was very prosperous. Even those who were as poor as I was could work as hired laborers and earn their living rather easily. What's more, we were afraid that the Front people might come after the GVN had withdrawn. If the Front people came, it would mean that there would be bombings and destruction. Even before the Civil Guards withdrew, aircraft had already come to bomb and strafe the remote areas. When the post was still defended, if any villagers were arrested during a big sweep operation, the people could go and present their cases to the officials in the post. We were afraid that there would be no one to defend us if some of us were arrested by mistake during a big sweep operation, now that the Civil Guards had withdrawn.

25. After the Civil Guards withdrew, how was the trading at the [redacted] Market?

It wasn't as good as before. Nobody dared to spend money like before. For exemple, not many villagers dared to use scented soap and drink beer because the Front cadres considered them as luxury goods. The shops only sold necessary things, such as fish sauce, kerosene, tobacco, fabric and shoes, etc. There was a big merchant at the market. Seeing that he could no longer trade, he left for My An in Kien Phong Province.
(Interviewer's Note; My An District Town is Kien Phong Province.)

26. GVN administration at hamlet and village levels was carried out by the Village Council and the Hamlet Chief. What agencies did the Front set up in your hamlet and village?

I heard them talk about many agencies, but being ignorant I don't recall them all. I only remember that on the village level there were a Village Finance Section in charge of collecting taxes from the people, and a Village Guerrilla Unit. There were also a Finance Section and a Guerrilla Unit at the hamlet level.

27. Did you hear of the Party Chapter Committee?

No.

28. Were there any organizations in your village and hamlet?

There were the Liberation Youths' League, the Liberation Women's League, and the Liberation Farmers' Association.

29. Did you and the other villagers have to join an organization? If yes, what organization did you join?

All the villagers and I had to join the organizations. Depending on our age, we either joined the Liberation Youths' League or the Farmers' Association. If a villager was young he joined the Liberation Youths. If he was old, he joined the Farmers' Association. As for me, I joined the Farmers' Association because I was 38 years old.

30. Think hard. Was there anyone in the village who wasn't allowed to join any organization by the Front?

At first, a few people who had worked for the GVN as Hamlet Chief, Combat Youths, or who had joined the National Revolutionary Movement, were forbidden by the Front to join the organizations. But a few months later the Front forced all of them to join.

31. What did you have to do in the Farmers' Association?

I had to pay a 2 Piastre-monthly fee, called membership dues, and each month I had to meet with the other members in the hamlet once.

32. What did you discuss during the meeting?

We met to study. The cadres said: "Let's unite to study how to oppose the Americans." They said the Americans bombed and killed the people. Then they read the news of the victories that the Front had won in this and that region. We also studied many more things, such as military draft, and tax payment, but being ignorant I can't recall all the things I studied.

33. How many men were there in your Farmers' Association cell?

Ten.

34. Were you ever proposed to be a cell leader?

During some of these meetings, I was asked to be a cell leader but I refused, saying that my family was too poor, that my family was large -- with 8 children and my wife and me -- that I had to work as a hired laborer to earn a living and that therefore I didn't have any time left to serve as cell leader. At the end they stopped asking me. Those who were better off than I was couldn't refuse when they were asked to serve as cell leaders. They had to accept it.

35. Has your hamlet been bombed and shelled since the beginning of 1965?

Yes, it's been constantly strafed and bombed. Artillery from My An also shelled it a lot. Sometimes it was bombed once every six or seven days. Sometimes it was bombed continuously for many days. Sometimes aircraft bombed it twice a day. About a month before I took refuge, 4 planes came to strafe many places in the village -- they also strafed my hamlet -- burned down 27 houses, and killed 1 old woman, and over 10 buffaloes. Otherwise, once in a while a house or two was burned down.

36. What did you and the other villagers do to avoid bombings and shellings?

At the beginning of the year, when there were not many bombings and shellings, each family only dug foxholes near their houses to avoid the bombings and shellings. After the airplanes strafed and burned down a few houses, the villagers who were living in big houses, tore them down and came to live in the smaller houses (i.e., the annexes). They scattered their furniture, rice, fish sauce, etc., in the garden, under the trees. Afterwards, when the bombings and shellings became intensive, they built a small house in the middle of the ricefields and lived there. They had to dig the floor of their houses deep in the ground and build thick walls to protect them from the bullets.

37. In your opinion, did the bombings and shellings cause much damage in your village and hamlet?

I've figured that 70% of the damage was caused by bombings and 30% was caused by shellings.

38. If the bombings were so frequent, how could you and the other villagers till the ricefields?

Generally speaking, in the 2nd lunar month of this year the bombings were not frequent. It was starting from the 6th lunar month onward that they became intensive. At that time, however, the ricefields had been sown, so the villagers spent all their time running to take cover from the planes.

39. How many people were in your hamlet? How many families were there?

I don't know how many people lived in my hamlet. As for the families, I think there were from 100 to 150.

40. How many families, from the hamlet had taken refuge?

I don't know how many exactly. I only know that many of them did. I guess that 70% of the families took refuge and that only 30% of them were left in the hamlet.

41. Did the families who took refuge leave someone behind in the hamlet? If yes, why did they do so?

Some of the families who took refuge left someone behind in the hamlet. They did so because they regretted leaving their property. They had large ricefields and got much income from their orchards.

42. In your opinion, of every ten families who took refuge, how many left someone behind in the hamlet?

I think that two families did so and the members of the other families all left the hamlet.

43. Did you notice that usually the people who stayed in the hamlet and didn't take refuge with their families were old or young?

This depends on the families. Some left the old people behind, some left their eldest sons, and in other cases the fathers stayed in the hamlet, and sent their old parents, their wives and children to take refuge.

44. If they left their eldest sons behind, what would they do if the cadres drafted them?

In practice they had to join the Front for their military service, but they argued with the cadres and delayed it. They said: "My parents have left. How could I join the Front? If I join, who will take care of the ricefields and orchard? I'll join when my parents come back." If the cadres insisted, they replied: "You do what you want. If you want to shoot me, go right ahead and shoot me right here. I can't join the Front forces." They argued and fought for a long time, and at the end the cadres had to let it go at that.

45. Did you see the families of Front cadres and fighters take refuge?

Yes, but there were only a few of them. Usually, only the Front fighters' and cadres' families with old members and a large number of children took refuge.

46. In your opinion, did these Front cadres' and fighters' families have the authorization of the Front or did they take refuge on their own initiative?

The Front never allowed them to go. The Front even forbade the villagers to leave, let alone the families of the cadres and fighters.

47. Please tell me why you became a rufugee.

I took refuge because I could no longer make a living in the hamlet. I lived by working as a hired laborer -- digging canals, clearing the orchards, etc. -- but right now there are so many bombings in my hamlet that a large number of the people have left to take refuge elsewhere. Those who still stay in the village only think of taking cover against air bombardments. They don't think at all of making a living and of their ricefields and their orchards. Nobody hires me to work, so how can I earn my living? I have a large family and my chilfren are all very young. We are very poor. If one of my children gets hit during one of the many bombings and strafings, what will I do then? This is why I have to look for a secure area where I can find work and make my living.

48. Did you hear the other refugees from your hamlet say why they became refugees?

I think they took refuge simply because there was no security in the hamlet. They said: "If we stay in the village we'll have rice to eat. But if one of us gets killed in the strafings, then it won't be wobth it for us to stay here. We'd better go to a secure area and work as hired laborers for a living. If we have vegetables, we'll eat vegetables. If we have rice gruel, then we'll eat rice gruel. Even then our life will be better than here."

49. There was no security in your hamlet because of the bombings. Did you and the other villagers hate the aircraft?

We hated the aircraft, but we also blamed the Front. When we were still in the hamlet, we used to say secretly to each other that when both sides fought, the people who were caught in the middle had to bear the results, and that only the people suffered. This is why we had to go to a secure area where there is no bombing or shelling so that we can make a living. If we want to have security, if we don't want to be caught in bombings and shellings, we have to go to GVN areas.

50. Did you and the other villagers believe that you could avoid completely all war calamities in GVN areas? Or did you think that in the GVN areas where you take refuge the Front could still attack and cause damage to the refugees also?

I thought that the Front could still attack the GVN and cause damage to the refugees and kill them. But even if the Front attacked and killed us, we couldn't do anything about it because there is nowhere else we could go. A Front attack, however, is still far off. Bombings, on the other hand, were daily business in the hamlet. The Front, however, doesn't have any aircraft. I am sure that the other villagers also thought like me.

51. Whom did you and the other villagers think piloted the planes that bombed and strafed Front-controlled areas?

The other villagers and I thought that the Americans flew the aircraft. The Vietnamese, even those who are educated, can't fly them.

52. Did you hear broadcasts in Vietnamese from the planes warning the villagers in advance that the ARVN would send planes to bomb, strafe or shell your area?

I heard broadcasts from planes calling on the Front fighters to rally to the GVN two or three times in either the 6th or 7th lunar month. But there was no broadcast giving advance warning that aircraft would come to strafe and bomb the area. Only once -- it was around the last Tet (Lunar New Year) -- aircraft dropped leaflets requesting the people living near the small canal to move to the big canal, otherwise they'd get caught in the bombings and shellings there. When we heard the broadcasts in Vietnamese from the planes, we thought that there were Vietnamese aboard, but that they only made propaganda and broadcast the appeals. We thought that it was the Americans who flew the planes, bombed and strafed.

53. In your opinion, why did the Americans come to Vietnam?

I think the Americans have come here to help the GVN fight against the Front.

54. What did the Front cadres say about the Americans?

The cadres said that the Americans have come here to kill off the Vietnamese. They said that the Americans talked both sides into fighting against one another in order to reduce the Vietnamese population, so that when they take over Vietnam it will be easy for them to rule it. They said that the Americans will be defeated, however, because the Front is supported by the North that is very strong and because it also is aided by China.

55. Do you think that the villagers believe what the cadres said?

Many villagers believed them, but the old people didn't agree with what the cadres said. These old people said that the Americans help the GVN to defeat the Front, and that when the Front is defeated the Americans will rule Vietnam. They also said that China helps the Front to defeat the GVN; and if the Front wins, China will rule the Vietnamese people. They said that in the ancient times Vietnam was ruled by the Chinese and that the Vietnamese people were miserable. As for the Americans, those old villagers didn't know how they will rule Vietnam, but they believed that the Vietnamese will be less miserable under the Americans because the Americans are rich.

56. Weren't they afraid that they would be criticized by the Front if they said such a thing about the Front and China?

They didn't say this to just anybody. They told this to their sons and grandchildren, and the latter whispered it to me.

57. Has the Front set up a first-aid station in your hamlet to take care of the people since it gained control of the hamlet?

No, I didn't see the Front set up any first-aid stations.

58. In case someone fell ill, what did you and the other villagers do?

If we used herb medicine, then the oriental doctor could help. But if we wanted to use Western medicine then we'd have to take the sick to the district town.

59. Did the Front forbid the families to take their sick to the district town for treatment?

No, I didn't see the Front do it.

60. Did the Front cadres' and fighters' families take their sick to the district town for treatment?

Yes, certainly.

61. What did you think of the fact that the Front didn't set up a first-aid station in your village and hamlet?

I was very sad and worried, but I didn't dare speak up. Before, when the GVN was still in control of the hamlet, if my child got sick, I took him to a private first-aid man for treatment. If my child didn't get better or if I didn't have any medicine, I could take him to the military first-aid man. If he was seriously ill, the military first-aid man would give me a letter of introduction for treatment at the district hospital. I was very moved by this help. Before when there were still GVN posts in the hamlet, when my child got sick I could take him to the district hospital for diagnosis. If he was slightly ill, I could ask for a doctor's prescription and buy medicine, and then I could ask the first-aid man in the

hamlet to give injections. (Note: the "doctor" is actually a health cadre, in charge of the district hospital. There is no public doctor at district level.) Since the GVN withdrawal from the posts, things have changed. Even if my child was slightly ill, I had to leave him at the district hospital for treatment. This cost me a lot of money. Even if I wanted to take him back to the hamlet for injections as prescribed by the doctor, I couldn't do so because there was no first-aid man in the hamlet. What's more, I couldn't take the medicine back to the hamlet, because the GVN posts didn't allow taking medicine back to Front-controlled areas.

62. Please tell me if the Front set up schools for the villagers' children in the village or hamlet? Did it organize adults' courses for the grown-ups?

I haven't seen them set up any schools since they gained control of the hamlet. They didn't organize any adults' courses either. There were adults' courses during the 9 years of the Resistance.

63. Were there any private classes or schools?

There were none of these either. And even if there had been, nobody would have dared to send their children to school because they were afraid their children would be killed in the bombings.

64. What did you and the other villagers think of the fact that they couldn't send their children to school?

I was very sad, because my three oldest sons -- who were 11, 9, and 7 years old -- have never been to school, and none of them know how read and write. Since I took refuge here I've applied for their admission in the public school. The teachers said that there is no room left but promised to take them in next year. I also applied at a nuns' school. I was asked if I was a Catholic. When I said I wasn't, I was told that there was no room left. I hope the GVN organizes a school in the refugee camp. I'll work hard as a hired laborer so as to earn enough and send them to school. In my village and hamlet, there were still many children, aged 7 to 10, and they were all out of school and children to poor families. Many of the well-off families sent their children to school in the GVN areas.

65. In your village and hamlet, have the people had freedom of movement since the Front gained control?

Generally speaking, if they moved within the Front-controlled areas -- that is to say, the "liberated" areas -- then they had freedom of movement. There were control stations along the way from one village to the next to defend against GVN spies. But if a villager was honest, the Front didn't cause him any difficulties when he moved around. If a villager wanted to go to the GVN-controlled areas, he had to do so secretly, or lie that he had to go to buy fertilizer or for medical treatment.

66. In your area, did you hear about or see aircraft spraying chemicals to kill vegetation in order to keep the Front troops from hiding in it?

There was no chemical spraying in my area, but I have heard the cadres talk about this. They said everybody should be on the alert against the Americans' sprayings of poisonous chemicals to kill the people. They said that if we saw aircraft spraying the chemicals, we had to wet a towel and put it over our mouths and noses, Otherwise, if we inhaled the chemicals, we would feel dizzy and vomit blood.

67. Did you and the other villagers believe what the cadres said?

The other villagers and I didn't believe them, and we didn't pay any attention because our area had never been sprayed by aircraft.

68. Did you have to pay taxes to the Front? If so, how much did you have to pay in 1964 and this year?

The Front determined that only those who had an income of over 10 bushels of paddy per year had to pay taxes. There were ten people in my family. We only had to pay taxes to the Front if we got over 100 bushels of paddy from the land per year. But we only got 70 bushels at most during a bumper crop year. So we were exempt from taxes.

69. Did you have to pay contributions to the Front? If yes, how much did you pay last year and this year?

The Front cadres stimulated my spirit many times and asked me to pay contributions to the Front, but I said that since I lived from day to day, where could I get the money to contribute to the Front? Finally, they had to give up propagandizing me.

70. Please tell me how you took refuge.

In the 3d lunar month of this year, because of the frequent bombings and strafings, I took my wife and children to Cai Be District on a sampan. We took refuge for a few days at my brother-in-law's house in [redacted] Hamlet. We stayed there for 6 days, and as things calmed down, we returned to [redacted] Hamlet. Then in the 4th and 5th lunar months, we took refuge two more times at my brother-in-law's house in [redacted] Hamlet. The last time we came there, we stayed for good. We didn't return to [redacted] hamlet because we saw that even if we went back there we couldn't earn our living. Many people from the village and hamlet had taken refuge elsewhere. Those who stayed behind didn't care about production. If nobody hired me, how could I make my living? We left the hamlet on a sampan. We followed Canal [redacted] headed for Cau Xeo and then went straight to Cai Be District. We left at midnight and arrived in Cai Be District the following morning.

71. While you were on the way, were you afraid that the Front would stop you?

Certainly. I had to leave secretly at night because I was afraid I would be stopped. The day I left, I wasn't checked by any Front cadres. Before I left the hamlet, a villager from the hamlet was stopped by the cadres. Later on, he found ways to escape all the same. In the 7th and 8th lunar months, lots of people left the hamlet to take refuge.

72. When you left the hamlet to take refuge, what did you take along with you?

We could only take along our clothes and 400 Piasters. As for the furniture, I slipped back in the hamlet 5 days later and took it all with me to Cai Be District.

73. What did your family leave behind?

We left a small house and 10 cong of land in which rice seeds had been sown. This year, the level of water is low. So I think that the harvest would bring in 40 bushels of paddy at most.

74. Since you took refuge here, what help has the GVN given your family?

I was helped twice. The first time I got a bag of corn flour and a bag of wheat flour that I shared with 2 other families. As for cooking oil, I got a can for my family and another can that I share with 2 other families. As for money, I received allowances for 10 days once. Each member in my family was given 7 Piasters per day. There were 10 people in my family, but the Hamlet Chief made a mistake in the register, so we only got allowances for 7 people. So we only had 49 Piasters per day. For the last few days, the Hamlet Chief has asked me to come to his office to get more food allowances. As for the money to build the house, I haven't gotten it. Right now my family is still living with my brother-in-law.

75. Did you find that it's easier for you to make a living out here than before, when you were still in the hamlet?

I think that my life has become much easier than when I was still in the hamlet. Out here, we don't have to take cover against bombings. My wife cooks rice wine and uses the residue to feed a pig she's breeding. As for me, I work as a hired laborer 15 days a month. Each day I get 60 Piasters on the average.

76. When the GVN was still in control of your hamlet, did you obtain a plastic ID card? If yes, when the Front gained control of your hamlet, did the Front sieze your ID card?

I obtained an ID card issued by the GVN. When the Front gained control of my hamlet, for a time they searched the hamlet to tear up all the ID cards. I hid it and lied that it had been seized by the Civil Guards in the post and that it hadn't been returned to me when the Civil Guards withdrew. I kept not only the ID card, but also all papers certifying that I had worked for the GVN in the post, so as to show them to the ARVN on big sweep

operations. If the ARVN arrested me, I could show them the papers as evidence that I wasn't a VC. As for the ID card, I thought that I had better keep it. I didn't need it to work as a hired laborer in the Front-controlled areas, but if I moved to the GVN-controlled areas to work, I would need it. Without the ID card, the people would think that I was a VC and they would arrest me. What could I do then?

77. Did the Front troops ever come to stay in your house?

My house was very small and had only one compartment. It was just big enough for my wife, the 3 children and me, so they didn't come to stay at my house. (Subject laughed.) I don't think the troops could stand listening to my children cry!

78. Do you and your wife want to return to your village? If so, under what conditions will you go back there?

My wife and I -- especially my wife -- want very much to go back, because it's my wife's native village. But we'll dare to go back there only if there is good security and if the GVN posts are strong. I'm sure that if the GVN builds posts in my hamlet and calls on the people to return to the hamlet all the villagers will go back because they don't have any land in Cai Be District and also because there are too many refugees here. Looking for a job as hired laborers is very difficult. The people in my hamlet have the good reputation of not supporting the Communists and of worrying about making their living. The first lieutenants who were stationed in the posts near my hamlet regretted it a lot when they were transferred elsewhere.

79. What would you think if the GVN built a post in your hamlet and then called on the people to go back in order to set up a New Life Hamlet?

Building a New Life Hamlet is a very good idea. The New Life Hamlets are clean. There are schools there. There are also first-aid men, and security. Who won't like it?

80. What did the Front say in its propaganda about the New Life Hamlets?

The Front cadres said that the New Life Hamlet is a prison, but not many people believed them because the villagers went to the District Town very often. They saw that in the New Life Hamlets around the District Town, the people were free to make their living and that they were prosperous, and the students went to school in large groups.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

The subject was below average in intelligence. His memory was not sharp and his knowledge was limited. Therefore, it was not possible for the interviewer to delve deeply into any subjects or even to discuss many topics. The interview was in one way successful, however: the cooperativeness, gentleness, and sincerity of the interviewee. At first, he was careful in his answers. But after the Interviewer inquired about his family situation and drank tea with him, he became more open and neither refused to answer or avoided answering any questions.

No. AGR 49

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

1. Name of interviewer [redacted]
2. Name of subject [redacted]
3. Time and date of interview :
   From 2:00 PM to 6:00 PM on Dec. [redacted] 1965
   From _____ to _____ on _____ 196___
   From _____ to _____ on _____ 196___
   Total time 4 hours
   Interview based on : tape ( ) hand written notes ( )
4. Place of interview :
   Office of the Cai Be District (Dinh Tuong Province)
   Psywar Service
5. Sex of subject : Male (x) Female ( )
6. Age of subject : 38
7. Ethnic background : Vietnamese
8. Place of birth :
   hamlet [redacted]
   village [redacted]
   district Kien Binh
   province Dinh Tuong
9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :
   hamlet [redacted]
   village [redacted]
   district Giao Duc
   province Dinh Tuong
10. (a) Length of residence in last location : 10 years
    (b) Who controlled the place of residence:
    GVN ( ) VC (x) Contested ( )
    (c) Since when controlled or contested ? Since April 1964

11. Number of brothers (1) and sisters (3)

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : 1

13. Marital status : Married

14. Number of children : 8

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age : _____

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject (x)
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject( ) or not with subject (x)
Wife with subject (x) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject(x) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion : Ancestor worship

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : Farmer

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation Poor Farmers
(b) Landowner ? _____ How much land _____

20. Education :
illiterate ( )
literate (x)
schooling completed : _____

21. Any relatives in VC : _____

22. Any relatives in GVN : 3

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by :
(a) French 1 killed in bombings during the Resistance
(b) GVN
(c) VC

24. When became a refugee : Beginning September 1965

25. Where took refuge first _____

26. Present residence _____

AGR

INTERVIEW

50

THE RAND CORPORATION
[redacted]

STUDIES OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT
OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR-50

Date of Interview : December [redacted] 1965

Subject's category : Refugee: October [redacted] 1965

Area of Residence : [redacted] Hamlet, [redacted]
Village, Giao Duc District,
Dinh Tuong Province

1. How long have you been taking refuge here?

I've been here since October [redacted] 1965. (Note: before answering the question, the interviewee looked at his Refuge Certificate.)

2. Where do you come from?

I come from [redacted] Hamlet, [redacted] Village, Giao Duc District, Dinh Tuong Province.

3. Had all members of your family lived together before you came here?

No. I still have my parents and two younger brothers. But they didn't live with me in [redacted] Hamlet. They've been living about [redacted] km from my place, in Co Co Market. (Note: under GVN control.) Actually, [redacted] is not my native village. My family originally came from [redacted] Village Cao Lanh District, Kien Phong Province. We settled in Co Co Market almost ten years ago. In Mid-1961 I went to [redacted] Village to make a living, where I met my wife, and we settled down there. My parents and my two brothers stayed on in Co Co Market.

4. How many children do you have? Are your wife and children here with you?

I've three children. Everybody's here with me.

5. What was your occupation in the village?

I worked on the land. I also worked as a hire-laborer to make a living.

6. How much land did you work on? Do you own your land?

I worked on four cong of ricefiel. This land has been abandoned by the landowner a long time ago. My wife and I have been tilling it for four years, as if it belonged to us. We didn't have to share our earnings of paddy because the landowner lived in Saigon.

7. Was the hamlet under VC control at the time you began to work on that piece of land?

No, the GVN was in control of that hamlet then. The VC didn't get it until the next year.

8. Do you remember exactly when the VC first got control of the hamlet?

I don't remember the exact date. But it was sometime in mid-1962.

9. How much did you earn a year from working on the land? Did you make enough to meet your own needs?

If the crop was good (1964, for instance) we earned forty bushels of paddy. This amount wasn't enough to feed my family. I had to work as a hire laborer to make ends meet. Sometimes I still had to borrow money from the villagers.

10. Suppose there are ten classes of people in your village. The first class is the wealthiest, and the tenth class is the poorest. Which class do you belong to?

I'm the poorest in the village. I guess I belong to the tenth class.

11. How were you classfied by the Front?

Very Poor Farmer.

12. Did the Front cadres talk about giving you more land to work on?

They didn't talk about giving me more land. But they said the very poor farmers would be helped by the Front. Those who had no land would be distributed some to work on. In 1963 some well-to-do families left the village to settle in town; the Front took their land and redistributed it to over ten families who had close relatives in the Front forces serving either away from their families or in the village guerrilla unit. My family wasn't given anything although we were very poor because we didn't have any relatives in the Front forces.

13. How much land did each of those families get?

The large families got a maximum of six cong each. Others got from three to four cong at most.

14. Was the land given to these families permanently? Or was it given temporarily while the landowners were away?

I've heard that the land was given temporarily.

15. Did the GVN ever carry out Land Reform program in your village? Did it ever take away land from large landowners to resell it to the poor people, using the installment plan?

Yes. Four or five families in my hamlet bought some of these lands. Some bought three mau, others bought four mau. They paid installments for a year before the VC took control of the hamlet. I wasn't there at the time of the Land Reform program.

16. Did the Front take away the land which the farmers had bought from the GVN to give to other families?

No such thing has happened. I don't think the Front could do that, because it'd be an injustice. The villagers wouldn't let that happen.

17. What do you think will happen when it's peaceful again, the landowner return to the village, and wants to take back the land that you've been working on?

If he wants it back, I'll be willing to hand it over. It's his land, and he's got all the rights. But I'll try to persuade him to take into account my work in clearing the once-idle land, and allow me to go on working on it. After a year, I'll be willing to pay rent.

18. Do you wish to have a piece of land of your own? How large would it be?

Just think of it! Who wouldn't like to own a piece of land? My family only dreams of having some twenty cong, just enough to live on. We'd till it carefully, using fertilizers to improve its quality. Then we'd save enough money to buy a buffalo. That would mean the end of worries. I hope when it's peaceful again, I'll be able to buy some land from the GVN by credit installment.

19. You said you earned about forty bushels of paddy a year. Did you keep the whole amount for your own use, or did you sell a portion of it? How much paddy did you sell?

I wouldn't be able to keep the whole amount even if I wanted to. I had to sell some paddy at harvest time to repay my debts and buy some clothes. I usually had to sell my earnings, sometimes two-thirds, because the children had been sick and we'd had to borrow large amounts of money to buy medicine.

20. What time of the year did you and the people from your hamlet sell most of your paddy?

At harvest time.

21. To whom did you sell your paddy? Did you sell it within the hamlet, the village, or did you take it to the markets in the GVN-controlled areas?

The Front forbade us to take the paddy to the markets in the GVN-controlled areas. It allowed us to sell to the junks which came from the GVN-controlled areas.

22. Were those junks allowed to come to your village any time during the year?

No. They were allowed to come at harvest time only.

23. Were you and the people allowed to sell as much paddy to the junks as you liked?

No. We were supposed to sell up to one-half of our earnings. That is, if we made one hundred bushels, we were supposed to sell fifty bushels only. That was to get the money to repay our debts, buy clothes, and pay contributions to the Front. We had to sell all we wanted to sell at one time. We weren't supposed to sell more than once. There were some well-to-do families in my hamlet who, instead of selling their paddy to the junks at low price at harvest time, made a deal with the junks to sell the paddy for them in the markets in the GVN-controlled areas at higher price.

24. Did the sellers and the buyers decide on the price of paddy?

No, the Front decided on the price of paddy.

25. Do you remember the price of paddy in the 1964 harvest, and that of 1965?

Last year, the price was 55 piasters a bushel, this year it was 70 piasters.

26. Do you know why the Front raised the price of paddy?

I don't know.

27. Has the life of you and your fellow villagers been improved because of the raise in the price of paddy?

I think everybody has been better off than before because of the higher price of paddy. But the small families who owned a lot of land had to pay higher taxes. So in the end, everything came out the same. As for me, I didn't have to pay taxes, but I didn't have much paddy to sell.

28. This year, when you sold your paddy to the junks at 70 piasters a bushel, did you know what the price of paddy in the markets in the GVN-controlled areas was?

Those who came back from Co Co Market told me that the price of paddy there was 90 piasters a bushel. I felt sorry for myself. Had the Front allowed us to sell our product in the markets, we would've made twenty piasters more per bushel.

29. Did the people in your hamlet complain about the Front's forbidding them to sell their paddy at good price in the markets?

They complained among themselves but didn't dare let the Front cadres hear them for fear of being criticized.

30. You said you didn't have to pay taxes to the Front. Do you mean an agricultural tax? If not, what did the Front cadres call it?

It wasn't an agricultural tax. In fact, I've never heard of that kind of tax. The people in my village had to pay a so-called "contribution for the maintenance of soldiers."

31. Would you tell me why you didn't have to pay contributions for the maintenance of soldiers? How did the Front decide on the amount of contribution an individual had to pay?

The cadres told me that I was below average. My family had to earn at least 120 bushels a year before I had to pay 12 bushels to the Front. As we earned only forty bushels, we didn't reach the minimum amount required. As for others, I don't know how they decided on the amount of paddy a man had to pay. I'm very ignorant.

32. You said the Front only allowed the people to sell paddy to the junks once. If after that, you wanted to sell some more paddy, to whom would you sell? Did the Front buy paddy from the people?

We're free to sell paddy to the people in the VC-controlled areas. Take me for instance: I earned a little amount of paddy. After having sold half of it to repay my debts and to buy some clothes, I only had enough to feed my family for three months. When I ran out of paddy, I had to buy it from other villagers. I didn't see the Front buy paddy directly from the people. But I was told that they asked some people whom they trusted, and who were well-off, to buy it for them. They didn't ask me because I was too poor. I might have given their secret away.

33. Did anybody in your hamlet secretly take his paddy to the markets in the GVN areas to sell?

There were some. But they didn't dare take too much paddy with them at a time -- nor go too often either. Once in a while, they'd risk being caught and take from five to ten bushels of paddy to the markets. If they were caught once, they'd be criticized. But if they got caught two or three times, they'd be warned and watched. That means a lot of troubles, and they'd have a tough time making a living afterward.

34. Did the land in your village need fertilizers? If so, what kind of fertilizers did the people use? Where did they get it?

Some parts of the land in my area were alkaline earth; they needed chemical fertilizers. We had to buy those in the district town.

35. Were the people allowed to go to the district town to buy fertilizers?

They were free to go.

36. When you left your village, did you see any land being abandoned?

I didn't see any idle land. All the ricefields had been planted.

37. How large were your hamlet and village?

I don't know about my village. But [redacted] Hamlet had about five hundred mau.

38. How many hamlets were there in your village?

[redacted]

39. How large was your hamlet compared to others?

I don't know for sure. But I don't think there was a great difference.

40. How many families were there in your hamlet, and how many in the whole village?

There were about one hundred families in my hamlet. I don't know about the village.

41. Was your hamlet the most densely populated in the village?

No. It was the most thinly populated.

42. Which was the most densely populated?

It was [redacted] Hamlet. It had about two hundred families.

43. How many families in your hamlet have left to take refuge elsewhere? Where did they go?

I don't know the exact number, but there were many of them. About eight out of ten families have left the hamlet. They went to Cai Be District Town, to [redacted] (Giao Duc District), to [redacted] Kien Phong Province), and to Co Co.

44. Did they leave somebody behind to watch their houses?

Some of them had people stay behind to watch their houses. Some didn't.

45. How many families out of ten have left somebody behind to watch their properties?

About four.

46. Do you plan to go back at harvest time?

I want to go back to harvest the paddy very much. But I wouldn't dare do it if it wasn't secure.

47. What does security mean to you?

It means no more airplanes, no more shellings, and no more Front. Because if the Front cadres were still there, they'd stop us from taking the paddy away. It would be a waste of time!

48. What's going to happen if you and other people won't be able to return to your village to harvest your paddy? Who's going to get all the paddy?

I think those who stayed behind will enjoy all of our paddy.

49. What's going to happen in the next planting season if all the refugees are going to stay here to make a living? Will the Front send men from other villages over to work on the land?

I think the land is going to stay idle. Not only the people from [redacted] Hamlet have moved away, people in other hamlets have done the same. The Front wouldn't be able to find enough men to work on the land in my hamlet.

50. Did the Front replace the GVN Village Council and the Hamlet chief?

In the village, there was the Village Front Committee, and the Party Chapter. In the hamlet, there were local cadres.

51. Did you and other people have to get in touch with the Village Front Committee?

The people in the hamlet only knew the local cadres. I only saw the Committee members on feast days, such as the anniversary of the establishment of the Front.

52. Have you ever seen the members of the Party Chapter?

I heard about them, but I've never seen them.

53. Do you know who is the highest-ranking man in the Front?

Once the cadres told us that the highest Front men in the province was Mr. Phan Huynh Dieu. I've never heard of anybody higher.

54. Have you heard of Lawyer Nguyen Huu Tho, General Vo Nguyen Giap, and Mr. Ho?

I've heard about Mr. Ho, but he lived in the North. I've never heard of the other men.

55. On the feast days, did you see them hang flags and portraits of anybody?

I saw flags -- half red, half blue, with a star in the middle. They were Front flags. I didn't see any portraits.

56. Do you know anything about the organization of the Village Front Committee and the Party Chapter?

I've heard of them, but I was too dumb to understand how they were set up.

57. What kind of groups or associations were there in your hamlet?

I've seen the Farmers' Association, the Liberation Youths, the Liberation Women.

58. Did everybody join an association? Which one did you join?

The majority of the people joined associations. The Front didn't urge me to join any. At my age, I should be eligible for the Farmers' Association, but I didn't see the Front approach me. I guess they didn't trust me.

59. Why do you think the Front didn't trust you?

Perhaps because I continued to go to work as a hire-laborer in Co Co even after the Front had gotten control of my hamlet. Although I didn't join any associations, I still had to go to the Inter-families Group meetings, and do labor duty.

60. Who presided over the Inter-families Group meetings?

The local cadres.

61. What kind of labor duty did you have to do? How often?

They usually made me build bridges, dig spike pits, make spikes, build combat village fences. I had to do so every five or seven days. Each time it took half a day, sometimes all day.

62. How did the local cadres treat you and the people?

If we did what we were told, nothing would happen. But if we refused to do labor duty or to go to meetings three or four times, they'd bring the guerrilla men over to arrest us. They'd blindfold and lead us away. If we'd committed a major offense, they'd take us away for half a month. If it was a minor offense, we'd be away for a few days. I've never been arrested myself. But one of my neighbors had been once.

63. Was anybody kidnapped and liquidated?

Yes. In [redacted] just outside my hamlet, there were three people who were kidnappedd and eventually liquidated. The Front said they were spies. But I don't think so. Those people had gone to a market in a GVN-controlled area. Following their return to the hamlet, there was a GVN raid. Thus they were suspected of being spies for the GVN.

64. What did you and the people in your hamlet think of that event?

Everybody was frightened. For a few months after that event, nobody dared go to the GVN-controlled areas. Later they began to sneak out sometimes, or went under the pretext of getting medical care or buying fertilizers.

65. Were you and everybody else allowed to travel within the liberated areas?

We were free to travel without having to ask for authorization.

66. Did the Front issue authorization for whoever requested it? When you travel from one village to another, did anybody check your papers

Nobody was issued authorization. If anybody questioned us while we were in another village, all we had to do was to tell him which village we came from. We never had any trouble.

67. Did the Front set up a health station in your hamlet?

There was a nurse in my hamlet, but the people had to pay for the medicine.

68. Have you ever asked the nurse to help any members of your family?

My child was sick once, I looked all over the place for the nurse but couldn't find him. From then on, I took my children to Co Co whenever they were sick.

69. Didn't the Front set up a medical station where the nurse was always in attendance? Why did you have to look all over the place for the nurse?

There was a medical station, complete with a sign. But the nurse was never there for fear of the parachutists and the airplanes. If we spent all day looking for him, our child might be dead in the meantime. If we were lucky enough to grasp him in time, he'd be willing to take care of our child without fussing.

70. How many times in 1965 did you take your family to Co Co for medical reasons?

My wife had to take my child there twice because he was seriously sick. If it was something ordinary like common cold or cough, I'd buy Chinese medicine at the store for them.

71. Was there a market place in your hamlet?

No.

72. Were there any stores? How big were they? What did they sell?

There were two stores in my hamlet. They were tiny. They sold miscellaneous things, such as candy, tea, sugar, scent sticks, petroleum, tobacco, soft drink, Chinese medicine, fish sauce, stationary, combs, mirrors, etc. But both stores had been closed, and the keepers moved to Cai Be District at the same time as me.

73. Where for instance, did you get pork to celebrate the anniversary of the death of one of your ancestors?

We had to buy it from Co Co.

74. Has your oldest child reached school age?

He's five, still too young. I'll send him to school next year.

75. Did the Front organize a school for children in your hamlet? If so, how was it set up?

Last year the Front organized a school to teach fifty village children to read and write. The local cadres first held a meeting of all the villagers, and decided that whoever wanted to send his children to school had to contribute ten piasters per child. The sum collected was used to buy building materials, as wood and thatch. The villagers chipped in their labor to build the school house. The Front furnished a teacher who wasn't a native of the village. The people didn't have to pay for the teacher, but they had to take turns feeding him.

Although the teacher was a Front man, he carried a proper GVN plastic covered ID card. If the GVN carried out a mopping-up operation, he'd produce his card and say that he was only a village teacher. Early in 1965, right after Tet, the airplanes started to strafe the hamlet. Everybody kept his children at home, and thus it was the end of the school.

76. Was the teacher paid by the Front? Do you know what his salary was?

I don't know if he was paid by the Front. I've never heard about it.

77. Did the Front organize a popular class for adults?

No. The illiterate stayed illiterate.

78. You said the airplanes started to strafe your hamlet right after Tet. That was about February 1965. Do you know why the aircraft strafed your hamlet?

A regular unit was stationed in my hamlet then. They fired at the airplanes, and thus drew bullets from the latter.

79. Do you remember what date it was? What damage did the strafing inflict upon the troops and the people?

I don't remember the exact date. But it was about half a month after Tet. The Front suffered one dead. Two villagers were wounded -- a very old man and a younger one.

80. Were there any more strafings in the village from then until the day you left? Which month did you get the most strafings?

From then on, the village was strafed every ten days. But beginning in the fifth lunar month (June 1965) until the day I left, the strafings became more intensive. The place was hit every three days, sometimes twice a day.

81. Was your hamlet ever shelled by artillery? Which month did you get the most shellings? What damage did the Front and the people suffer?

There weren't as many shellings as strafings. It was in the same month -- the fifth lunar month -- that the hamlet began to be hit by artillery every five or seven days. Each time there were some fifty shells. I don't know if the Front troops suffered any casualties. No villager was hit because all the shells fell on the fields.

82. What damage did the shellings and strafings inflict on your hamlet since the beginning of 1965?

There were five dead and two wounded in my hamlet. About seventy percent of the fruit orchards were damaged by artillery shellings. Ten houses were burnt.

83. What damage did the Front suffer since the beginning of 1965?

I saw one Front man dead in the strafing that took place after Tet. During the fifth and the sixth lunar months, I heard that three more were wounded.

84. Who did you and the people think were flying the airplanes which strafed your village?

The Americans.

85. Who did the cadres tell you were flying the airplanes?

They also said it was the Americans who flew those airplanes. They added that the Americans wanted to kill the people.

86. Do you blame the Americans for the strafings which caused damage to the people?

I don't blame them. Because the Front attacked the GVN, so the latter had to hit back. The unlucky people were caught in between by pure accident. I only blame the Front, that's why I came here to take refuge.

87. What did the families who had members killed in the strafings say?

They said: "We people have been paying contributions to you, and let you stay in our houses. Why do you have to tease the airplanes by firing at them, and thus make them strafe us to death?." They said so in the face of the Front troops without fear.

88. What did the people do to protect themselves from the strafings and shellings?

At first, the strafings weren't too intense. The people dug shallow trenches in the orchards near their houses. The trenches were about 1 m underground, and the walls were built up to 1 m above the ground. Sometimes they dug "Z" - shaped trenches. Later on, the strafings became too intense. Some of the houses were burned down. The orchards were often hit. The people no longer dared to stay in the houses. Those who had big houses took them down and soaked the parts in water to prevent them from being moth-eaten. Then they set up some huts in the fields to live temporarily. They even dug trenches right in the kitchens.

89. Have you ever heard the planes broadcast and warn the people ahead of an air or artillery attack, and call on the people to leave the area?

About five months ago, I heard the aircraft broadcast and call on the people to move to the GVN-controlled areas. We were also told that the GVN was going to help us. Afterwards, the broadcast took place every ten or fifteen days. Sometimes the Front troops fired at the planes. Then they had to go up high, and we couldn't hear anything.

90. Were leaflets dropped in your area? If so, when were they dropped, and what did they say?

I remember the planes dropped leaflets in my village twice. The first time took place about ten months ago, and the second four months ago. I got hold of them on both times. But I had to burn them up after reading; otherwise, I might be warned by the cadres if I got caught having leaflets on me. The leaflets called on the

VC troops to rally to the GVN. The leaflets would serve as a safe conduct pass to the GVN-controlled areas. They promised good treatment for the ralliers.

91. Did any Front cadres of fighters in your hamlet rally to the GVN?

I haven't heard of anyone who rallied.

92. Did the cadres say why the Americans came to Vietnam?

They said the Americans came to take over Vietnam, and to disturb the people's peace.

93. What did you and the people think of the cadres' explanation?

Some people believed what the cadres had said. Such as those who had relatives serving in the Front as cadres or fighters. They said insulting things about the Americans. As for me, it was none of my concern whether the Americans had taken over this country. I was a simple citizen, interested only in making a living for my family. I'd go to wherever there was peace. As for the fact that the Americans disturbed the people's peace, I think it's all because of the VC. If they hadn't "teased" the Americans, we'd never be strafed or shelled. They attacked the Front, and if by chance the bullets struck us, then we just had to bear it. I saw saw some Americans come to the refugee hamlet sometimes with the Vietnamese army officers to distribute gifts to the people. They talked kindly to us.

94. Have you seen or heard of the spraying of chemicals to kill the leaves?

My area wasn't sprayed. But I heard the cadres say that the Americans sprayed poisonous chemicals to kill the people. They told us to protect ourselves by covering our noses and mouths with wet towels in case our area got sprayed.

95. Do you believe that the Americans sprayed chemicals to kill the people?

I've never seen it take place, so I don't believe it.

96. While in the Front, did you know who was the leader of the GVN?

I don't know. I only know President Ngo-Dinh-Diem, but then he had been overthrown. After Mr. Diem, I've heard that there were many changes of leaders. But I don't remember their names because I didn't pay any attention.

97. Now that you're here, do you know who is the head of the GVN?

I don't know. I only know the district chief -- a captain who often visited the refugee camp. But I don't know his name.

98. Why did you leave your village to take refuge here?

Back there the Front called on me to do my military duty. I didn't want to, because should I die, who's going to take care of my family? Besides there were too many bombings, we had to take cover all day long, and couldn't do any work. I'm poor, my family depends on me, so I just have to find a peaceful place to make a living. Back there, nobody stayed behind to hire my labor.

99. Tell me the circustances of your becoming a refugee.

One day, about noon, the cadres came to tell me to prepare to do military duty. I knew I could no longer stay in the village. So at midnight I took my family in a sampan. We took the little canal near the house, then we rowed to [redacted]. It was still dark when we arrived in [redacted]. At daybreak, I went to see my parents and told them about my taking refuge in Cai Be District. Then we took the tri-lambretta to Cai Be. We arrived there at noon.

100. Why did you choose Cai Be District to take refuge?

Because I heard many people had come to take refuge there. I thought it might be easy for me to find a job. Besides I was told that the GVN gave a lot of assistence to the refugees in Cai Be. I also have a brother in [redacted] Hamlet, right in Cai Be District.

101. What did you take along with you? What did you leave behind?

I left behind two wooden beds, some old clothing, and some worthless cooking utensils. I took along a bushel or rice, and some clothes. Upon arrival in Cai Be, I only had ten piasters left in my pocket.

102. Have you received anything from the GVN?

Yes, I was given a bag of wheat, a can of cooking oil, two cans of condensed milk, and a mosquito net. We've received neither the daily allowance of seven piasters nor the house building money. My family is still living with my brother.

103. How are you making a living?

I went to the market every morning offering my labor for hire. For each day's work, I got fifty piasters. Last month, I only made five hundred piasters, barely enough to buy rice and salted fish.

104. What do you wish for yourself now?

I hope to get the daily allowance of seven piasters and the building money soon. At harvest time, I'll send my wife back to the village to get the paddy.

105. Do you plan to stay here for good?

No. When the GVN set up a post in my hamlet, I'll return there to make a living. There's no land to work on out here.

106. Would you like it if the GVN set up a post and establishes a New Life Hamlet in your area?

To have a post is good. To have a New Life Hamlet is even better.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

Subject's intelligence is below average. His memory is poor. His reaction is slow but sure. He is calm, careful, but easy to communicate with. He seems to be sincere and, in general, cooperative. He was never reluctant or refused to answer the interviewer's questions.

No. AGR 50

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

1. Name of interviewer [redacted]
2. Name of subject [redacted]
3. Time and date of interview :
   From 10:00 AM to 12:00 on Dec. [redacted] 1965
   From 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM on Dec. [redacted] 1965
   From _____ to _____ on _____ 196___
   Total time 2 hours
   Interview based on : tape ( ) hand written notes ( )
4. Place of interview : [redacted] Village, Cai Be District, Dinh Tuong Province
5. Sex of subject : Male (x) Female ( )
6. Age of subject : 36
7. Ethnic background : Vietnamese
8. Place of birth :
   hamlet _____
   village [redacted]
   district Cao Lanh
   province Kien Phong
9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :
   hamlet [redacted]
   village [redacted]
   district Giao Duc
   province Dinh Tuong
10. (a) Length of residence in last location : over 4 years
    (b) Who controlled the place of residence:
    GVN ( ) VC (x) Contested ( )
    (c) Since when controlled or contested ? over 3 years

11. Number of brothers (2) and sisters (1)

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : 2

13. Marital status : Married

14. Number of children : 3

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age : _____

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject (x)
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject( ) or not with subject (x)
Wife with subject (x) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject(x) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion : Cao Dai

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : Farmer, laborer

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation Very Poor Farmer
(b) Landowner ? _____ How much land _____

20. Education :
illiterate ( )
literate (x)
schooling completed : _____

21. Any relatives in VC : _____

22. Any relatives in GVN : _____

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by :
(a) French
(b) GVN
(c) VC

24. When became a refugee : October [redacted] 1965

25. Where took refuge first _____

26. Present residence _____

AGR

INTERVIEW

51

THE RAND CORPORATION

[redacted]

STUDIES OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT
OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR-51

Date of Interview : December [redacted] 1965

Subject's Category : Refugee: November [redacted] 1965

Former Residence : [redacted] Hamlet
[redacted] Village
Giao Duc District
Dinh Tuong Province

1. How long have you been here?

I came here on November [redacted] 1965.

2. Where did you come from?

I came from [redacted] Hamlet. It belongs to [redacted] Village, Giao Duc District, Dinh Tuong Province.

3. How did you get here?

Around 2 PM on November [redacted], 1965, I rowed the sampan to [redacted] Island. It was located on the other side of Cuu Long River and belonged to [redacted] Village, Vinh Long Province. We lived on the other side of Cuu Long River. I stayed at the island for two days. At 6 AM on November [redacted], 1965, I rowed the sampan to [redacted] I went along the river and the trip took 7 hours.

4. Did your family come here with you? How many members were there in your family?

I went alone. There were 8 members in my family -- my parents, my wife, myself, and 4 children. Two months before I came out here, I had sent the two older children to their uncle's who lives here so that they can continue their schooling.

5. Why did you leave your hamlet?

I came out here to get away from doing military duty.

6. Why did you leave your parents, wife and children behind?

Because I didn't want to lose the land and orchard I owned.

7. Have your received any news of your family since you have been here?

I heard that the Front had forced my wife to attend a study course held in the hamlet for 4 days. She wasn't permitted to go home at night so she had to take the two children along with her. Before that, the Front had forced my wife to come out here to get me back. When they found out that I wouldn't return, they made my wife study. Before I came out here, I had discussed the situation with my parents and my wife. To my wife, I told her to stay behind until the VC became too rough,

then she should join me at [redacted]. I asked my parents to remain in the hamlet to look after the land and orchard in case my wife and children had to join me. And if they too found living in the hamlet had become impossible, they should come and join us all.

8. How big was your village? How many people lived there? How many hamlets were in your village?

I don't know how big my village was or how many people lived there. I know that there are [redacted] hamlets in the village. My hamlet and [redacted] Hamlet were the two biggest ones and with the largest population in the entire village.

9. How big was your hamlet and how many families lived there?

I don't know how big my hamlet was, but there were around 300 families living there.

10. How many families in your hamlet have come out here?

Most of these families moved to [redacted] Island at night, and in the morning they came back to look after their land and orchard. Only the young men had to go far away because they wanted to get away from doing military duty. About 20 young men in my hamlet have left to go to faraway places.

11. Why did the families in your hamlet have to move to [redacted] Island at night time?

They went there to get away from cannon and mortars that shelled the hamlet at night.

12. From the beginning of 1965, how often was your hamlet shelled by cannon and mortars? When was the shelling most intense?

The shelling occurred often -- 25 days out of 30 in a month -- cannon and mortar activities have become more intense since June 1965. The shelling occurred mostly at night time. Very seldom did it occur at daylight.

13. What damage was inflicted upon your family and others in the hamlet by cannon and mortars?

My family suffered no damage. Many families in the hamlet suffered great damage -- their orchards were ruined.

Some houses caved in because they were hit by shells. One night four months ago, around August 1965, a shell hit a trench and killed an entire family of 6 in my hamlet.

14. From the beginning of 1965 till the day you left your hamlet, was your hamlet ever attacked by aircraft?

My hamlet was bombed and strafed only once -- sometime during July of this year.

15. What damage was done to your family and others in the hamlet?

Our house was hit by a butterfly bomb. There was a hole in the roof, some furniture was destroyed but no one was wounded. Besides that, 10 trees were damaged but they weren't dead. Other people in the hamlet suffered great damage. About 20 other families in the hamlet were hit by butterfly bombs and bullets. Two adults and two children were killed. Four adults and 10 children were wounded.

16. Did you hear the Front troops and cadres had suffered any damage during the air attack and the cannon and mortars shellings?

I didn't see or hear that any Front troops or cadres had been killed or wounded.

17. Did you hear broadcasts or see leaflets dropped from the airplanes to warn the people that their hamlet would be shelled by cannon and strafed by aircraft?

We weren't warned in advance. Once, about one month before I left the hamlet, I had heard broadcast from a "grasshopper" airplane the one with one propeller. (Note: a helicopter.) It urged the people to be calm and go about their business as usual and not to listen to the VC's propaganda. The broadcast was long but I couldn't hear it all because the airplane flew very high and the sound wasn't clear. As to the leaflets, sometime in February I picked up one and read the following: there was conflict between Russia and China. The Nationalist side was winning, the VC were losing. It urged the Front troops to return to the Nationalist side. There was more but I don't remember it now.

18. Before and after the day when the airplane broadcast the appeal to the people to remain calm and to go about their business as usual, was there any shelling from cannon and mortars?

The shellings continued as usual. I didn't see any change at all.

19. After the airplane had dropped leaflets and urged the Front troops to come to the Nationalist side, did you see or hear of anyone from your village or hamlet who had left the Front for the Nationalist side?

I didn't see or hear of anyone coming out here at all.

20. In your opinion and according to other people in your hamlet, why was your hamlet attacked by airplane?

I suppose because the Front people operated in my hamlet that was why it was attacked by airplane and cannon. If they hadn't been there, there wouldn't have been any attack.

21. What did you and other people in your hamlet think about the damage caused by airplane and cannon?

I think because of the Front people operating in my hamlet so the airplane and cannon attacked it and the people had to bear the damage. Because of the war, the fighting and so forth that the people had to suffer. What could we do but to resign ourselves! I found that many people in the hamlet had the same thoughts. On the other hand, a few families had to suffer great damage such as some members of their families killed or wounded, then they blamed both the Front and the GVN. They said because the Front troops camped here that was why the GVN attacked the hamlet. They said the GVN shelled at random, their shellings didn't kill any Front troops, only civilians, and ruined their houses and orchards.

22. What was the main occupation of the people in your hamlet? What was your occupation?

I worked on the ricefield and on the orchard. Most of the people in my village did the same thing. They spent more time tending their orchard than in farming. They transferred the soil from the ricefields to their orchards to grow fruit trees such as guava, mangoes, etc.

23. Were most of the people in your village rich, medium, or poor?

The majority of the people in my village were rich.

24. In your opinion, how rich was your village?

The soil in our orchards was good for growing fruit trees. The fruit that was frown in our orchards, such as mangoes, were famous for their favor and were greatly in demand. Each family in my village had an orchard to grow fruit trees. The small ones were about 3 or 5 "cong" of land and the large ones one or two "mau" of land. Many families took in an average of 30,000 or 40,000 piasters of fruit per year.

25. How much land did you work on? Did you own the land and orchard or rent from someone else?

I worked on 4 "cong" of orchard and 3 "cong" of ricefield. I owned the orchard and the ricefield.

26. What was your income per year?

On the average, with 3 "cong" of ricefield, we got about 30 "gia" of paddy each year. As for my 4 "cong" of orchard the fruit sale for this year was 8000 piasters. Generally speaking, the fruit trees in my orchard didn't bear much because they were planted only 3 years ago. Beginning next year, I am sure the yield will be much higher.

27. If the people in your village had been classified in 10 categories, with those in Category 1 being the richest and those in Category 10 the poorest, where, in your opinion, did you stand?

I guess I was in Category 7.

28. How did the Front classify your family?

We were classified as Middle Class.

29. How long has the Front been in control of your village and hamlet?

The Front has been in control of my village and hamlet for two years.

30. From the time the Front took over the control of your village, did it give land to the poor farmers in your village and hamlet?

I didn't see the Front give land to anyone.

31. Before the Front took over your village, how much in taxes did you have to pay to the GVN for your ricefield and orchard?

I had to pay 160 piasters a year.

32. How much did you have to pay to the Front during the 2 years your village was under its control?

In 1964, the Front forced me to pay 370 piasters. It was called troop-support taxes. Besides that, the Front asked us to contribute one liter of rice per month. In 1965, the Front made us pay for troop support on the basis of our income. We had to pay 1000 piasters, and each month we had to contribute one liter of rice.

33. Would you describe how the Front figures out taxes on the basis of income?

The Front organized a meeting in which the people evaluated the income of each family -- how much each family took in in terms of paddy and fruit sales each year. The Front cadres sound out how many members were in each family and they decided what ratio each particular family had to pay. I am ignorant, I don't know how they figured out how much each family had to pay. We were told that my family had 8 members. We had to pay 7o/o of my income -- 1000 piasters. I saw that in my hamlet the highest ratio any particular family had to pay was 25o/o.

34. What did you and other people in your village think about the Front taxes which you had pay and which were higher than those you paid to the GVN?

I felt very unhappy. I'm sure other people felt the same but none of us dared to say anything for fear the Front cadres would accuse us of working against the Front and arrest us. I prefer to pay taxes to the GVN because the amount would remain the same even through the income was higher. With the Front, the taxes would be higher if the income was raised. The fruit trees in my orchard will give more fruit next year and it will mean that we will have to pay more taxes to the Front. It won't be 1000 piasters like this year.

35. Did you have to fertilize your ricefield and orchard? Where did you buy the fertilizer?

Last year I put chemical fertilizer on my land and I found the paddy and fruits were much better. So, I did the same thing this year. I bought the chemical fertilizer from Cai Be and brought it home.

36. Could you and other people in your village go freely back and forth to the GVN-controlled areas, or did the Front forbid you to do so?

The Front let us go freely back and forth to the GVN-controlled areas. We didn't have to ask for their permission. If we stayed in the GVN-controlled areas for two or three days, then when we returned, the cadres would interrogate us to find out why we stayed there for so long.

37. Did you see anyone in your village or hamlet who had been arrested by the Front cadres because he went to the GVN-controlled areas?

No.

38. Could the people go freely from one liberated village to another? Did they have to get permission from the Front?

They could go freely. They didn't have to ask for permission or for any kind of paper. But when you passed by the guards and if they asked where you were going, you had to tell them to whose house you were heading for, and why, and they would let you go. If you were going to stay overnight there, the master of the house had to report your presence at the control station. The Front did so to protect against the GVN security agents.

39. Was there a market in your village?

There has never been a market in my village.

40. If you wanted to buy necessary items, where did you buy them?

We could buy small items at the store. There were two stores in my hamlet where they sold sundry goods such as kerosene, fish sauce, tobacco, etc. If I wanted to buy clothing material, pork, farming equipment and chemical fertilizer, I had to go to the market at Cai Be.

41. Where did you or other people sell paddy or fruits?

During the harvest time, merchant boats came to the village and bought paddy from the villagers. The villagers might take their paddy to Cai Be and sell it there. As for fruit, the merchants from Cai Be would come and buy them from the villagers. Others would take their fruits to Cai Be and sell them there.

42. Could the merchants from Cai Be come freely to your village to buy paddy and fruits?

I didn't see the Front causing them any trouble.

43. Did you hear that these merchants had to pay taxes to the Front? How did they pay them?

I heard that they had to pay taxes to the Finance and Economy section but I don't know how much they had to pay.

44. Did you and other people in your village have to pay taxes to the Front when you brought your paddy and fruits to sell at Cai Be? How much did you have to pay?

If we brought paddy and fruits to sell at Cai Be we had to pay taxes. We paid 10 piasters for each "gia" of paddy. As for fruits, the cadres would make a guess as to how much we could sell them for and tax us on the basis of their guess. Say for example, if they guessed that we could sell those fruits for 100 piasters, they would tax us 5 piasters.

45. What did you and other villagers think about having to pay taxes when you brought your paddy and fruits to sell at Cai Be?

We felt bad. If we sold 10 "gia" of paddy we had to pay 100 piasters for taxes. If we sold fruit for 500 piasters, we lost 30 piasters in taxes. We had already paid heavy taxes on our income and still had to pay some more. Although we felt bad, none of us dared say anything, for fear we might be arrested or warned.

46. Did the GVN build a school in your hamlet for the children to study?

There was no school in my hamlet, but there was one in my village. The children in my hamlet went there to study. It was a public school and free.

47. Was that school still open after the VC had taken over the control of your village?

When the Village Council members left, the teachers left also. The school was closed down for a while. The children in my hamlet had to stop their schooling for almost 3 months. The Front cadres came to my hamlet, held a meeting with the people in the hamlet and suggested that we should have a school for the children. Each family was willing to contribute to building a new school. Some families gave 50 piasters, others 20 piasters each. Some contributed wood, others their labor. The school had two classes -- 1st and 2d grade -- with over 30 children. The students in the 1st grade paid 10 piasters each, and those in the 2d grade, 15 piasters. This money was used to pay the salary for the teacher. The teacher was a native of the hamlet. He had a physical handicap but was well learned.

48. Did the people make any complaints about having to contribute money to build a school?

The rich ones didn't say anything. The poor ones did make some complaints, but they continued to make their payments and send their children to school.

49. Was the school still open after the hamlet had been attacked by airplane and cannon?

The school was closed down right after the day the airplane had dropped butterfly bombs that hit my house in July. That day 4 children were wounded. My older boy was there too, but fortunately he wasn't hurt. A few months after the air attack I sent him and his younger brother to their uncle's here, so they could continue their schooling.

50. Did the Front organize popular classes to teach illiterate adults?

I didn't see the Front doing that.

51. Did the Front organize a medical aid station in your hamlet? When was it organized and how was it organized?

The Front organized one medical aid station serving the entire village. It was organized at the end of 1964.

The Front chose a literate person, sent him away to study to become a first-aid man and then took him back to take charge of the medical station. The villagers had to pay for the medicine. Very seldom did the people come to the Front first-aid man for help, because they thought he wasn't good enough. If someone was sick, he was taken either to [redacted] for treatment.

52. Did the first-aid man receive a salary from the Front? How much did the Front pay him?

I didn't pay attention, so I don't know whether he received any salary from the Front.

53. Did the first-aid man give treatment and take good care of the wounded during the air and cannon attacks?

He gave shots to stop hemorrhages, and put bandages on. The badly hurt ones had to be taken to the public hospital at Cai Be for treatment.

54. Did you see or hear of airplanes spraying chemical sprays?

The spraying wasn't carried out in my area, but I heard the Front cadres mention it.

55. What did they say?

They said the Americans sprayed chemicals to destroy crops, fruit trees and, in one word, the people's economy, so that the people would starve.

56. Did you and other villagers believe what the Front cadres said?

I thought there would be no such thing as people dying of starvation. The two sides were fighting with each other, and the people were in the middle. What did they do to deserve all the sufferings?

57. If under the GVN your village had the Village Council and the Hamlet Chiefs, what were they replaced by after the Front had taken over the village?

There was an Area Chief in each hamlet. The Area Chief held meetings with the people in the hamlet and collected taxes. After the taxes were paid, each family would get a receipt. The signature on the receipts wasn't from the Area Chief; it was from somebody else, but I don't

remember his name. The village had the Front Committee and the Party Chapter. I don't know how the Front Committee and the Party Chapter were organized. I only heard that there were such organizations, and every now and then when there was a meeting, someone would be introduced to the people as a member of the Front Committee or the Party Chapter.

58. Why did the Front hold those meetings?

They held meetings on the occasion of great holidays such as August 19 to commemorate the August Revolution, or the uprising of the Front, or others which I can't remember now. They also held meetings after the air or cannon attacks, which caused the people to suffer great damages in property and human lives.

59. Do you remember what the cadres said during those meetings?

I don't remember much. Generally speaking, they said that the Americans had invaded the South, that the Americans and their lackeys killed the innocent people, that the Americans would lose and the Front would win for sure. After that, the cadres urged people to pay their taxes and to do their military duties.

60. What did the other people think about the cadres' statements that the Americans had invaded the South?

I thought the Americans didn't want to take over the South but wanted to help the Nationalist Government to fight against the Front. I don't know how other people thought. Some believed that the cadres were telling the truth. These were the ones who had relatives serving in the Front troops.

61. How many young men in your hamlet have left to join the Front troops?

I think about 30.

62. Of these 30 men, how many of them volunteered to join the Front and how many were doing their military duty?

About 5 or 6 of them volunteered to join the Front troops. The rest had to do their military duty.

63. What was the age-group of men who had to do their military duty?

I heard that they were from 18 to 45.

64. Was there anyone in your hamlet forced to do their military duty for the Front when they were only 16 or 17 years old?

No.

65. Were those who had to do their military duty enthusiastic or reluctant to go? Did some of them run away?

Only one or two were happy to go. The rest were reluctant and tried to beg off until they absolutely had to go. Others didn't want to go, so when they received notice they left for the GVN-controlled areas. This is also my case.

66. Would you tell me why these people didn't want to do their military duty?

I myself wondered, if I went to do my military duty and if I were killed, who would take care of my family? I think others thought the same way. That was why they ran away.

67. Was there anyone in your hamlet killed while he was serving in the Front troops?

Two. They didn't die in the village but somewhere else.

68. Were their families informed by the Front about their deaths?

I heard that the families were informed, but I don't know whether they were told immediately or only long afterwards.

69. You said before that the Front sometimes held meetings in your village. Were they held during the day or at night time?

From the time the Front took over the village, I have never seen it hold a meeting during the day. They used to organize meetings at night, usually at 8 PM.

70. Was everyone required to attend these meetings?

We all had to attend. If anyone refused to go he would be interrogated, criticized and warned by the cadres.

71. Did the Front display flags and pictures during meetings? What flags and pictures were displayed?

I saw them display the Front Flag. It was red and blue, with a yellow star. I didn't see any picture at all.

72. Do you know who holds the highest position in the Front?

I don't know.

73. Did you hear of Mr. Ho Chi Minh and Mr Nguyen Huu Tho?

I heard only of Mr. Ho Chi Minh. I've never heard of Mr. Nguyen Huu Tho.

74. When the GVN was in control of your village, did you know who held the highest position in the Government then?

I remember that at that time Mr. Ngo Dinh Diem was the President. I heard he had been overthrown.

75. Did the Front cadres ever mention the name of the man who held the highest position in the Nationalist Government?

I never heard them mentioned the name of the man who headed the Nationalist Government. I only heard them say: "the Americans and their lackeys" all the time.

76. Do you know who is head of the Nationalist Government now?

Since the time I came here, I've been able to read Saigon newspapers every now and then, and I learned that Brigadier General Nguyen Cao Ky is head of the Government now.

77. How many families in your hamlet had radios?

Two in my hamlet had radios. The Front cadres forbade them to turn on Radio Saigon. I think they turned on that station secretly anyway, so the could listen to the news and "Cai Luong," although they didn't dare to admit it for fear they might be arrested.

78. Did the Front organize groups in your village and hamlets? What were these organizations?

In my hamlet, the Front organized The Farmers' Association, the Youths' Liberation Association and the Women's Liberation Association.

79. Did you belong to any of these organizations?

The cadres urged me to join The Farmers' Association. I thought to myself: I was a civilian working to earn a living, why should I join any organization and have to go to meetings, to carry out missions all the time. I would only waste my time. I told the cadres that I had too many young children and I was afraid I mightn't be able to fulfil my duties for the association. They didn't insist after that.

80. How did the Front organize The Farmers' Association? Do you know its purpose?

I'm not so sure I know it well. According to other people in my hamlet, there were many Farmers' Cells in the hamlet, and there was a Farmers' Committee in the village. The members had to pay 2 piasters per month. That is all I know.

81. Were there many people in your hamlet who, like you, didn't join any association?

As far as I know, except for very young children and old men and women, the majority of the people joined some association. Seven or 8 out of 10 people had joined.

82. Did your wife join the Women's Liberation Association?

The cadres urged my wife to join The Women's Liberation Association at the same time as they told me to join the Farmer's Association. My wife also excused herself saying she had too many young children to take care of. They didn't insist after that.

83 Did you have to do labor work for the Front? How many times did you have to do it a month? How long did it last each time? What kind of work did you have to do?

I, like any other person in my hamlet often had to do labor work for the Front. We had to do it at least 5 or 7 times a month and sometimes the work took the entire day. But usually the work lasted either the whole morning or afternoon. We had to dig trenches to protect against air attacks along the village route, sharpen spikes, dig spike traps, and string fences around the village.

84. Did you have to go on transportation missions, destroy roads, and build blockades for the Front?

I never had to do those things.

85. What did you think about having to do frequent labor work for the Front?

I felt very bad. It wasn't the hardship of doing such work that I complained about. It was that I had to take time out of my own work to labor for the Front. But, if I was told to carry out my missions, I had to do it. What could I do?

86. What are your plans now?

I only wish that the Nationalist Government would come back to my hamlet. I don't care about the Front any more. Then, I will return to my family and take care of my land, orchard, and children. At the present time, I am at a loss. I don't dare to go back to my hamlet because I hate to have to do my military duty. If my wife, children, and my parents all join me here, there won't be anybody left behind to look after the land and orchard. As of now, my wife still continues to sell fruits and send money here to me. (Interviewer's Note: Subject seemed confused and sad when he answered this question).

87. How would you feel if the GVN came back to your hamlet and organized a New Life Hamlet there?

I would welcome it. The Front cadres used to tell the people that the New Life Hamlet was a prison. I found that they were lying. I'm staying with my brother in a New Life Hamlet. I find that the people can go in and out freely, that they can easily make a living. There is no difficulty of any sort.

88. What would you think if the GVN organized a New Life Hamlet and everyone in the hamlet had to take turns standing guard to protect it against the Front?

(Subject deliberated before answering the question.)
I think it would be all right.

89. What have you received from the Government since you came out here?

One time the Hamlet Chief here told me to go and get my relief money. I didn't go. I would rather work to earn my living.

90. Would you tell me why you didn't want to take that money?

Because I was afraid the Front agents might have followed me and then killed me. One time, in July, I went to [redacted] to get away from doing my military duty. While I was there the airplanes dropped butterfly bombs and strafed my hamlet. Standing on this side and watching the airplanes attacking my hamlet I got so excited that I shouted: 'Let the airplanes strafe and kill them all.' Someone heard what I said and reported me to the Front cadres. The latter forced me to confess in writing. They made me sign a paper that said if I was found guilty of being against the Front again I would be killed. Now, if I received relief money from the Government, the Front cadres might know about it and they might kill me. The paper on which I had signed my name was given to the Area Chief, and I'm sure he still has it now. To tell the truth, I want to take the money the Government gives very much. I need it badly, but I don't dare.
(In answering this question, subject seemed very frightened.)

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

At first, when the Hamlet Chief introduced the interviewer to the subject at the home of the subject's brother, the subject seemed reluctant. But he agreed at last, out of respect for the Hamlet Chief. After the subject had found out that the interview was part of a sociological research, he became more cooperative.

Generally speaking, subject seemed sincere in his answers. There were times when the subject seemed excited and scared -- scared because he believed himself and his family might be punished by the VC for dodging his military duty and living in the GVN-controlled area -- excited because of his family situation. On the one hand, he wanted them to stay in the VC-controlled area to look after the land and orchard. Such contradictory thoughts

are natural to a farmer who lives close to his land and to his family. He wished only that he and his family would be left alone.

The subject's intelligence was below average, and his reactions were slow.

No. AGE 51

QUESTIONNAIRE II
For Refugees

1. Name of interviewer [redacted]
2. Name of subject [redacted]
3. Time and date of interview :
   From 2:30 PM to 5:30 PM on Dec [redacted] 196 5
   From _____ to _____ on _____ 196___
   From _____ to _____ on _____ 196___
   Total time _____
   Interview based on : tape ( ) hand written notes ( )
4. Place of interview :
   Hamlet [redacted] - Village [redacted] - Dinh Tuong
5. Sex of subject : Male (x) Female ( )
6. Age of subject : 32
7. Ethnic background : Vietnamese
8. Place of birth :
   hamlet [redacted]
   village [redacted]
   district Giao Duc
   province Dinh Tuong
9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :
   hamlet [redacted]
   village [redacted]
   district Giao Duc
   province Dinh Tuong
10. (a) Length of residence in last location : From birth
    (b) Who controlled the place of residence:
    GVN ( ) VC (x) Contested ( ) How long? 2 y.
    (c) Since when controlled or contested ? _____

11. Number of brothers ( ). and sisters (1)

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : _____

13. Marital status : married

14. Number of children : 4

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age : _____

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject (x)
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject( ) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject ( ) or not with subject (x)
Children with subject( ) or not with subject (x)

17. Religion : Cao Dai

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : Tilling - Farming

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation Middle Class
(b) Landowner ? owned 7 "cong" How much land _____ of land

20. Education :
illiterate ( )
literate (x)
schooling completed : 2 years in school

21. Any relatives in VC : None

22. Any relatives in GVN : None

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by :
(a) French Mother-in-law killed by French aircraft during the war against the French
(b) GVN None
(c) VC None

24. When became a refugee : November [redacted] 1965

25. Where took refuge first _____

26. Present residence _____

AGR

INTERVIEW

52

THE RAND CORPORATION
[redacted]

STUDIES OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT
OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR-52

Date of Interview : December [redacted], 1965

Subject's Category : Refugee: November 11, 1965

Former Residence : [redacted] Hamlet
[redacted] & District
Kien Phong Province

1. When did you come here as a refugee?

I came here on the [redacted] day of the 10th month (lunar year). (Interviewer's Note: That is, on Nov. [redacted] 1965.)

2. Where did you come from?

I came from [redacted] Hamlet, [redacted] Village, My An District, Kien Phong Province.

3. Were you born there, or did you just live there?

It's my native land. I lived there since I was born, to the day I came here.

4. Your village belongs to My An District, Kien Phong Province. Why didn't you go there instead of Cai Be District, Dinh Tuong Province?

My village is next to Dinh Tuong. I saw many villagers in Dinh Tuong go to Cai Be. I followed them because I thought, since many people came there, maybe they can make a living easily and receive more help from the GVN in Cai Be.

5. How did you go to Cai Be?

I used our sampan, from a little canal next to our house all the way to Nga Sau Market, then I took Canal 20 to Cai Be.

6. When did you leave and when did you arrive?

I left at the end of the day, and arrived in Cai Be early the next day.

7. You passed by Nga Sau Market. Who had the control of the market at that time -- the Front or the GVN?

It was under the Front control.

8. In Nga Sau, how could you avoid the Front control?

The river is large at Nga Sau. I was lucky to pass by unobserved.

9. Did your family leave with you? Who were they?

My family left with me: my wife and our 8 children.

10. Is your first child a boy or a girl? How old? What about your youngest child?

My first child is a boy, 15 years old. My youngest child is a girl, only 2 years old.

11. What did you bring with you when you left?

I had with me a small sampan for 40 gia — 1/2 gia of rice, 1 cooking-pot, good clothes, and 200 piasters. (Interviewer's Note: the sampan can carry 700 kg.)

12. What did you leave behind?

I left behind 2 camp beds, 1 wooden bench, old clothes, a 3-room straw-house, and a hen with 7 chicks.

13. Why didn't you bring the hen and chicks with you?

I was afraid to catch them. They would make noise and the cadres would know we were leaving.

14. When you were in your hamlet, what did you do to earn a living?

I was a farmer.

15. What did most of the people living in your hamlet or village do?

We were all farmers.

16. How many cong of ricefields did you work on?

I worked on 40 cong.

17. Did you own these ricefields or did you rent them?

These ricefields were owned by [redacted] a practitioner of Oriental medicine in Vinh Long Province Town. Four years ago, the GVN confiscated these ricefields; the Village Council sold them to me on credit. I had been paying it off for 2 years at 2,000 piasters a year. The Village Council told me I had 4,500 piasters more to pay, and after that the ricefields will belong to me. But the Village Council withdrew before I had time to pay more, and the Front came.

18. In your village, how many people could buy confiscated ricefields? And how large was the total of confiscated ricefields they bought?

My village was very big, I don't know how many villagers could buy confiscated ricefields. I don't know how large was the total of confiscated ricefields they bought.

19. Do you know why the GVN had confiscated [redacted] ricefields?

I don't know.

20. Do you know why at that time the GVN sold confiscated ricefields on credit to the villagers?

I don't know. I only heard the GVN wanted to help poor farmers to have ricefields.

21. What do you think of the fact that the GVN wanted to help poor farmers to have ricefields?

I think the GVN was good to the people, and I am very grateful for that.

22. Were there any poor farmers in your hamlet, or in your village who couldn't buy confiscated ricefields?

I don't know about my village, but in my hamlet there were some poor farmers who couldn't buy confiscated ricefields.

23. Do you know why?

I don't.

24. You don't have any title on your ricefields because the last installments are still unpaid, are you afraid you will lose them when you return?

Yes, I'm very afraid of it.

25. Do you know when the Front started to control your hamlet?

I don't remember. I only remember that the Front started to control my hamlet after the withdrawal of Nga Sau Post, maybe more than a year ago, about the 9th month of the lunar year (Interviewer's Note: in October 1964.)

26. Under the Front control, did you see the Front take confiscated ricefields away from the buyers to give them to those who didn't have any ricefields?

No, I didn't see such things.

27. Did you see the Front take ricefields away from the landlords and give them to those who didn't have any?

No I didn't.

28. Did you see how the Front had helped poor farmers?

I don't see any help from the Front. Only those who were really poor, they didn't have to pay taxes.

29. Do you know on what basis the Front taxes were? And how much did you have to pay?

I am uninstructed and don't know how they made them. They told me to pay just as I did to the GVN before they came. That was 40 gia of paddy. But I lied by saying I didn't have any paddy left, and I didn't pay. They bound up my eyes and put me in prison for 8 days right in the village. They organized a meeting and accused me of being a GVN Public Security agent. I said it was an unjust condemnation. They threatened, then released me.

30. How much did you get each year from your 40 cong?

In a good year, I got 10 gia from each cong. In a bad year, I got only 7 gia from each cong.

31. If we divide the villagers into 10 categories, the richest in category 1, and the poorest in category 10, in what category do you think you belong to?

I am in category 9. We are poor, with many children; that is why we are always in debt. When I have paddy, I pay my debts. Then I run into debt again. That is why I never had more than I needed.

32. In your village, to what category did the Front assign you?

They assigned me to the poor farmer class.

33. Did you and other villagers have to transplant rice or did you just sow the seeds?

We just sowed the seeds.

34. Did you and other villagers have to fertilize the fields? If yes, what kind of fertilizer did you use?

In our area, there's alum in our ricefields, and we had to fertilize them. We used to buy Than Nong fertilizer.

35. How much fertilizer did you use for your 40 cong last year? How much did you pay for it? Where did you buy it?

Last year, I used 600 kg of Than Nong fertilizer, each 100 kg cost 220 piasters. People in the hamlet went to Dai Be to buy fertilizer and sold it to us.

36. How much work did you need, and how much paddy did you get from the last crop?

I needed 40 man-days and got 400 gia of paddy.

37. How much paddy did you keep for yourselves, and how much paddy did you sell?

I kept 300 gia for seed and to eat, and sold the rest.

38. To whom did you sell your paddy? For how much did you sell each gia?

The buyers came by sampans to Nga Sau Market, I brought paddy there and sold it at 65 piasters a gia.

39. Do you know whether the sampans came from GVN or from Front-controlled areas?

The sampans came from GVN-controlled areas.

40. When did you and the other villagers sell most of your paddy? Right after the crop, or when?

We sold most of our rice during the harvest season.

41. After the harvest season, did you see sampans come to Nga Sau Market or your village to buy paddy from the villagers?

The sampans didn't come to my village to buy paddy. After the harvest, from time to time they came to Nga Sau Market to buy paddy. A few months before I left the hamlet, I didn't see them come anymore. Perhaps they didn't come because the villagers didn't have any paddy left.

42. You said the sampans bought your paddy at 65 piasters a gia. Did you sell your paddy during or after the harvest?

I reaped in the 1st and 2nd months of the Lunar year. (Interviewer's Note: that is, from February to March.) I sold paddy at that time; I didn't sell any after that.

43. Do you know whether the price of 65 piasters a gia had been fixed by the Front or by the buyers?

I didn't hear that the Front fixed the price; maybe the buyers did.

44. Under the Front control, was your village or hamlet ever attacked by aircraft? If so, do you remember when?

I don't remember the exact date. I only remember that aircraft bombed once around the 5th month of the past Lunar year. In the 6th month of the Lunar year, they strafed 3 times more. Later on, they didn't attack.

45. Did the bombing in the 5th month of the Lunar year inflict any damage or casualty to your family or people in the village?

This bombing didn't cause any damage or casualty to my family. Aircraft bombed our hamlet and the hamlet next to ours and killed 2 and wounded 5 of the population. Trees were damaged and 7 houses were blown up.

46. Do you know the loss caused to the Front forces?

That time, I didn't see any Front forces in my hamlet. People in the hamlet next to mine also said they didn't see any Front force in their hamlet. Only the people had to suffer.

47. What about the other 3 times in the 6th month of the Lunar year? Did they inflict any damage and casualty to the villagers? To the Front forces?

Only the third time did they cause casualties. During the other 2 times, aircraft strafed at random then left, and didn't cause any damage. The third time they killed one and wounded another among the civilian population, there was no damage. This time also, the Front force wasn't in the village.

48. What did you and the villagers think of the losses inflicted by aircraft to the people?

I only think that during the war if we aren't lucky, we have to suffer. The people who had to suffer casualties or damage had much to complain about. After the third attack, there were 10 people who went to the District and asked the District Chief not to let aircraft attack, so the people could earn their living. I heard that the District Chief had said: "Just stay in your village to earn your living. The aircraft made a mistake. I guarantee from now on they won't attack again." After that, aircraft didn't attack anymore.

49. After each air attack, in your village or hamlet, what did the Front cadres say?

After each attack, the cadres organized a meeting and said the Americans flew aircraft and killed the people.

50. What did the cadres do for the dead and wounded?

The cadres told the people to help the victims' families to bury the dead, and to bring the wounded to the district for medical care.

51. When the people went to the District Chief and asked him not to let aircraft attack their village, did the Front cadres meet with the people before? Did the cadres go along with the people?

I heard that the cadres met with the people before, but they didn't go to the district. Only the people did.

52. Did the GVN pay money to the victims of air attacks?

I didn't hear of it.

53. Did you see the victims' families wait for the GVN to indemnify?

No, I didn't.

54. You told me during the air attacks in your village, no Front forces were there. Then in your opinion, why was your village attacked?

I think because there were many children pasturing buffaloes and playing, and people from airplanes thought they were the Front soldiers. There weren't any Front forces in our area.

55. Was your hamlet ever attacked by artillery? If so, what damage did it do to the population and to the Front?

My hamlet was never attacked by artillery.

56. Did you see aircraft conducting defoliation operations in your area?

Yes, once in the 7th month of the lunar year.

57. Did you see aircraft drop leaflets or broadcast warnings to the people about the spraying?

I didn't see any aircraft broadcast or drop leaflets to warn the people. They just suddenly sprayed.

58. Before aircraft conducted defoliation operations, did the cadres tell the people about the powder used in the defoliation?

No, the cadres didn't say anything about it.

59. Right after the defoliation operation, what did the cadres tell the people?

They said that the Americans sprayed chemicals to destroy the crop and made the people starve to death. As the cadres had said, a few days later, all trees and rice plants along the canal dried up.

60. Did the defoliation inflict any damage to your orchards and ricefields?

We lived next to the canal, we had a few mango and guava trees, and they were all dried up. My ricefields weren't affected because they weren't on the canal sides.

61. What did you and other villagers think of the defoliation?

I suffered only very light damage. I was only worried if aircraft sprayed my ricefields, we wouldn't have anything to live on. Other people in my hamlet were also very much worried, especially those who had their orchards along the canal, they had much to complain. Other people who suffered light damage like I were only worried that aircraft would conduct defoliation operations again, and on their ricefields.

62. Were you and other people afraid that the spraying would hurt your health?

No we didn't, because it couldn't do anything to our health.

63. Before the Front control, was your hamlet a Strategic Hamlet?

Yes, it was.

64. When your hamlet was still a Strategic Hamlet, did it have a school for children? If yes, how was it organized? Did the parents have to pay? Was the teacher paid by the Government or by the villagers?

When my hamlet was still a Strategic Hamlet, we had a school for 5th and 4th grades. The School had about 30 students. The school was built by the GVN, the villagers didn't have to pay. The teacher was brought in and paid by the GVN.

65. Was the school still operating under the Front control?

When the Nga Sau Post withdrew, the Village Council, the Hamlet Chief, and the teacher withdrew and the school was abandoned until the day I left.

66. When the Front controlled your hamlet, did the villagers ask the Front for a teacher to replace the one who had withdrawn?

Yes, the villagers asked for a teacher, but the Front didn't send anybody in. Even if we had a teacher, the school wouldn't stand long because nobody dared send their children to school while there were air attacks.

67. Did any of your children attend school in the hamlet?

One of my children, 13 years old, went to this school.

68. What do you think of the fact that under the GVN control you had a school, and under the Front control you didn't?

I think we are citizens. If the Government organized a school, we are grateful for it. If the Front didn't have a school, our children would have to be uninstructed. There's nothing we can do about it.

69. Did you send your child to school here?

Yes I did. I sent my child to a private school and had to pay 10 piasters a month. I was trying to send him to a public school, but I didn't succeed, because I didn't have a birth certificate for him.

70. Did you get birth certificates for your 8 children? If yes, how much did you have to pay the GVN?

I already paid the [redacted] Village Council 50 piasters for each child for birth certificates.

71. When the Front controlled your hamlet, did it organize public education for adults?

No, it didn't. I'm illiterate and quite advanced in years, but if there were night classes I'd try to study. Very often I was annoyed because I didn't know how to read. When I have some papers, I have to ask somebody to read them to me.

72. When your hamlet was still a Strategic Hamlet, was there any GVN First Aid Station?

Yes, my hamlet had a First Aid Station.

73. Did people have to pay when they went to the First Aid Station for medical care?

The nurse gave consultations and medecines free of charge.

74. Did the hamlet First Aid Station tak care of serious cases of sickness and birth?

For serious cases of sickness and difficult birth, the nurse introduced the patient to the district hospital for free care.

75. When the Front came, did it provide the hamlet with a nurse to take care of the hamlet First Aid Station?

When the Nga Sau post withdrew, the nurse did so too. The Front didn't send in any nurse, and the First Aid had been abandoned until now.

76. Then what did the villagers do when they were sick?

When the people weren't too sick, they got oriental medicines from Nga Sau Market, if they were very sick, they were brought to a GVN hospital in My An District for care.

77. Did you see the Front cadres or their families go to the GVN hospital in the district for care?

I don't know. I think if they did, they did it secretly, so that the GVN wouldn't capture them.

78. When your hamlet was still a Strategic Hamlet, did the people blame the Strategic Hamlet Administrative Committee for anything?

The people didn't have anything to complain about because members of the Strategic Hamlet Administrative Committee behaved well, and were ready to help the people.

79. Were the people troubled because they had to work in the building of the Strategic Hamlet, such as putting up fences and digging ditches?

I didn't see that the people were troubled. We were the ones who would benefit from our own work -- not somebody else.

80. Under the GVN control, you had the Village Council and the Strategic Hamlet Administrative Committee. When the GVN withdrew and the Front came, what did it organize to replace the Village Council and the Hamlet Administrative Committee?

I don't know how they were organized.

81. When the man came and asked you to pay taxes to the Front, whom did he refer to?

He referred to "the Liberation" and told me to go and see the Front cadres.

82. Did you hear about the Front Committee, the Party Chapter, and underground cadres?

No, I didn't.

83. Did the Front form any group organizations in your hamlet?

No, it didn't.

84. Did you hear of the Farmers' Association, the Liberation Youths' Organization, or the Liberation Women's Organization?

No, I didn't.

85. How many mau or ricefields and how many households did your hamlet have?

My hamlet was very big, it had many households, but since I am illiterate, I don't know how many mau of ricefields and how many households it had.

86. Maybe you know how many households your quarter had.

My quarter had 8 households, including ours.

87. Tell me why you became a refugee.

I became a refugee because I was afraid of aircraft. If I didn't leave, and if aircraft fired at me, I'd die. Here we can earn our living because we aren't attacked by aircraft.

88. You told me aircraft had attacked your hamlet in the 5th and 6th months of Lunar year, and afterward they didn't attack anymore. Tell me why you waited until the 10th month of the Lunar year to become a refugee?

At that time, I'd just completed the sowing. I tried to stay home to weed the ricefields and to roof off the rice plants where there were too many and to plant them where there weren't enough. Even though aircraft didn't attack afterwards, we were so afraid of seeing or hearing aircraft coming that we couldn't do anything.

We were afraid of going fishing in the ricefields. Finally, we decided to leave. When I left, I didn't dare to ask anybody to leave along with us. We were the first to leave in our quarter. Lately, I saw a few families in my quarter take refuge in Dai Be.

89. Do you know why other families in your quarter left the hamlet?

They told me they were afraid of aircraft like I was.

90. What do you do now to earn a living? Do you have enough to eat?

I'm now a hired worker. I dig ditches or work on orchards. I have enough work every day; I earn 50 piasters a day and have enough to eat.

91. What did you get from the GVN?

I received half a bag of wheat, a barrel of salad oil, 1 can of condensed milk. I haven't yet received the allowance of 7 piasters a day and the amount designated to the building of a house. But I already built my house. The Hamlet Chief bought wood and leaves on ticks for me. As soon as I receive allowance from the Government, I will pay. I filled all formalities for the allowance. The Hamlet Chief is very good to me. The District Chief comes to see us every 3 or 5 days.

92. Is there anything you would like to have now?

I only wish to receive the allowance of 7 piasters a day and the set amount for building a house. I wish there would always be enough work to do. I don't care much for the 40 cong of ricefields I left behind. I want to stay here to earn my living in security.

93. If the ARVN were to came in [redacted] and the GVN to reorganize the Strategic Hamlet, would you go back to your hamlet?

If they were to do that, I'd go back. In my hamlet, I have paddy to assure our lives. Besides, everybody wants to return to his homeland. Even if I had to put up fences and build the Strategic Hamlet again, I'd be willing.

INTERVIEWERS COMMENTS

The subject seemed stupid and slow to understand. No matter how short and simple the questions were, the interviewer had to repeat the questions so that the subject could understand before he answered them. Even so, the interviewer thinks the interviewee was not sincere in some questions. For example:

- The subject's economic and social class. If we look closely at some of his answers (Q. 11, 17, 31, 32, 36, 70, and 90), we find that the subject may not have been as poor as he said, and his social class assigned by the Front shouldn't be "poor farmer", but "middle farmer". If he was lying, one motive might have been to quickly receive his allowances.

- Taxes paid to the Front. The subject's story in Q.29 is not wholly credible. He may well have paid taxes to the Front, then denied having done so because he was afraid of being accused by the GVN as a supporter of the Front.

- The Front's administrative organization (Q. 80-81) and popular group organizations (Q. 83-84). Though the subject denied any knowledge of this subject, the Front's control in his hamlet probably lasted long enough to begin such hamlet organizations. Total ignorance on the part of the subject seems unlikely.

- Motivations for becoming a refugee. The subject said he left his hamlet because he was afraid of aircraft (Q. 87-88), but he also said aircraft had stopped attacking 4 months before he left for Cai Be. It the subject did leave because he was afraid of aircraft, the interviewer thinks it more likely that he would have left during or right after the attacks, and not on Nov. [redacted] 1965, as he stated. If he did so, he most likely had taken refuge in some other place before coming to Cai Be. According to a member of the Rural Development Committee in Dinh Tuong, there were cases in Cai Be of the refugees declaring a wrong date of arrival. The interviewer thinks any lack of sincerity in the subject may well have derived from a suspicion that the interviewer was a GVN cadre, capable of blocking any aid due to him.

No. AGR 52

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

1. Name of interviewer [redacted]
2. Name of subject [redacted]
3. Time and date of interview :
   From 8:30 AM to 12:30 on Dec. [redacted] 1965
   From _____ to _____ on _____ 196___
   From _____ to _____ on _____ 196___
   Total time 4 hours

   Interview based on : tape ( ) hand written notes (x)
4. Place of interview : [redacted] Hamlet, [redacted] Village, Cai Be District, Dinh Tuong Province
5. Sex of subject : Male (x) Female ( )
6. Age of subject : 54
7. Ethnic background : Vietnamese
8. Place of birth :
   hamlet [redacted]
   village [redacted]
   district My An
   province Kien Phong
9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :
   hamlet [redacted]
   village [redacted]
   district My An
   province Kien Phong
10. (a) Length of residence in last location : _____
    (b) Who controlled the place of residence:
        GVN ( ) VC (x) Contested ( )
    (c) Since when controlled or contested ? October 1964

11. Number of brothers ( ) and sisters ( )

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : _____

13. Marital status : married

14. Number of children : 8

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age : _____

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject (x)
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject ( ) or not with subject (x)
Wife with subject (x) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject (x) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion : Cao Dai

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : Farmer

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation Poor Farmer
(b) Landowner ? _____ How much land 40 cong

20. Education :
illiterate (x)
literate ( )
schooling completed : _____

21. Any relatives in VC : _____

22. Any relatives in GVN : _____

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by :
(a) French
(b) GVN
(c) VC

24. When became a refugee : November [redacted] 1965

25. Where took refuge first _____

26. Present residence _____

AGR

INTERVIEW

53

THE RAND CORPORATION

[redacted]

STUDIES OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT
OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR-53

Date of Interview : December [redacted] 1965

Subject's Category : Refugee: September, 1965

Area of Former Residence : [redacted] Hamlet, [redacted] Village
Cai Be District, Dinh Tuong Province

1. Where did you come from?

I came from [redacted] Hamlet, [redacted] Village, Cai Be District, Dinh Tuong Province.

2. Is [redacted] your native hamlet?

[redacted] is my native hamlet; [redacted] Village also belongs to Cai Be District. My ancestors' tombs are in [redacted] Hamlet. I came to [redacted] Hamlet 3 years ago. [redacted] Village is next to [redacted] Village.

3. Why did you leave [redacted] Village, your fatherland, for [redacted] Village?

An aunt of mine lived in [redacted] Hamlet, [redacted] Village. I moved there because my aunt promised to help me make a living.

4. When did you come here as a refugee?

I don't remember the day, I only remember it was in mid-September 1965.

5. Who are members of your family? Did your family leave with you?

My family includes my mother, my wife, and 2 small children -- one 5 years old, the other 3 years old. The whole family left for Cai Be with me. But a few days later, my mother went to Dinh Quan (of Long Khanh Province) to live with my aunt.

6. How did you come here?

We left at midnight. We left by sampan from [redacted] Canal in front of our house. We went to Ba Gan Canal, then to Cho Giong Canal. At An Cu Bridge we followed Cai Be River to reach Cai Be. The next morning at around 7 AM/we reached Cai Be.

7. What did you bring with you when you became a refugee?

My family and I, we left empty handed. We had only 200 piasters in our pockets, and nothing else. We didn't dare bring our clothes along because we were afraid the Front cadres seeing our clothes would know we became refugees. We left empty handed. If they inquired, we would lie by saying we were going to buy medicines for my wife, or we were going to visit our relatives in such or such place.

8. What did you leave behind?

We left behind a one-room straw-house, bamboo beds, cooking pots, 12 gia of paddy, and a hen.

9. You lived in [redacted] Village, [redacted] Hamlet. Tell me how big was [redacted] Village, and how many people did it have.

My village was very big and it had many people, but I don't know exactly.

10. What about [redacted] Hamlet? How big was it? How many people did it have?

I don't know how big my hamlet was. My hamlet stretched out along [redacted] Canal about one and a half kilometers. Houses were built on the two canal sides. Some houses were built a little away from the canal. I think we had about 300 households.

11. Did your hamlet have that many households?

Yes, many. Before, it had about 100 households, but since 1964 and 1965 many people from hamlets far away from the canal moved in and built their houses there. That was why my hamlet had so many households.

12. Do you know why in 1964 and 1965 many people left their hamlets which were far from the canal to move in your hamlet?

I heard there was no security in these hamlets. People were afraid of the "Liberation" and left for my hamlet.

13. Why did you and your family leave your hamlet to become refugees?

Since the Front controlled my hamlet, aircraft and artillery attacked my hamlet very often, I left because I was afraid.

14. When did the Front start to control your hamlet?

The Front started to control my hamlet from the day the [redacted] Area Post withdrew. The Hamlet Chief and the Village Council withdrew the same time with the post. I remember they withdrew 5 months ago. And I left after 2 months under the Front control.

15. From the day the Front controlled your hamlet to the day you became a refugee, how many times did aircraft come and attack your hamlet?

Aircraft attacked my hamlet 8 or 9 times in all. The heaviest attack was about 10 days before I left. That day aircraft bombed and shelled, killing 2 old women, a middle aged woman, a pregnant woman, and 2 small children. They destroyed and blew up 5 houses, killed 3 buffaloes and wounded 3 others. They also inflicted much damage to the orchards.

16. Besides those you just mentioned on the civilian side, what damage and casualties did the Front forces suffer during this attack?

I heard that the Front forces suffered 4 dead. I didn't dare ask for more details. I was afraid the Front thought I kept them under surveillance.

17. What about the other air attacks? Did they inflict any damage or casualties to the people in your hamlet and to the Front forces?

Only a few air attacks didn't cause any damage. All the others inflicted some damage or casualty to the people, sometimes wounded one villager, sometimes killed buffaloes, sometimes uprooted fruit-trees. They bombed and fired so many times that I couldn't remember them all. On the Front forces' side, after one attack (I don't remember the date) I saw with my own eyes they carried away 2 men covered with blankets, maybe already dead.

18. Under the Front control, was your hamlet ever attacked by the ARVN artillery? If so, what damage and casualties did it inflict to the population and to the Front forces?

Artillery shelled very often. Sometimes they shelled 3 successive nights. Sometimes they stopped for 7 or 8 nights then shelled again. Usually artillery shelled at 2 or 3 AM or at cock-crow. More than a month before I left, artillery attacked my hamlet and wounded 2 civilians. Once I heard people whisper there were 2 guerrillas wounded by artillery in the Front forces. Artillery attacked during night-time. The people stayed in their houses and took cover in trenches and didn't know for sure the damage and casualties caused to the Front forces.

19. What did you and other people in the hamlet say about damage and casualties caused to the population?

People whispered to each other: "How can we stand it? They go to and fro, and if aircraft detected them, the planes would fire and kill the people. They (VC) better go and fight in other places. If they keep going to and fro in the hamlet, people will get killed."

20. Did anybody dare say that to the Front cadres or troops?

Only those who had their family members killed or wounded by aircraft or artillery dared talk like that to the Front cadres or troops.

21. When someone complained so, what were the Front cadres' and troops' answers?

I heard the villagers say the Front people answered: "Now that we have the control, we should have the troops here permanently so that when soldiers (the ARVN) came we will fight them out. If we don't stay here, the soldiers come and control like before, will you give in?"

22. Did you and other people in the hamlet blame the ARVN because their bombings and shellings inflicted damage and casualties to the people?

Other people and I, we didn't blame the ARVs. We all thought the ARVN attacked because of the Front people. Before, when the Nationalists controlled the hamlet and there were no Front people there, the hamlet had never been attacked.

23. Back there, did you ever pick up the leaflets dropped by the aircraft? What did they say in those leaflets?

I picked them up four or five times. The Front cadres told us to hand them over to them. They said they were going to burn those leaflets. But I still got a chance to read some before handing them over to the cadres. The leaflets said a lot of things, but I don't remember the details. I only remember they said: "All the people are advised to move to Cai Be. The government will help you. If you stay in the VC-controlled areas, the government will not assure your safety. If you were hit by the bombs, do not blame on the GVN." There were also leaflets calling on the VC cadres and fighters to rally to the GVN. The GVN promised leniency to all the ralliers.

24. Back there, did you ever hear loudspeaker broadcasts from the aircraft over the hamlets? What did they say?

I heard broadcasts from the aircraft three times. They all took place at night. I guess it was the helicopters, but I'm not sure because it was dark. The broadcasts said: "The GVN cannot assure the people's safety in this area. If anyone wants to live, he should move to Cai Be. If you stay back there and get killed, do not blame it on the GVN. The GVN promised to lend a helping hand -- that is, to distribute money, rice, condensed milk, clothing, mosquito nets, and blankets."

25. After reading the leaflets and listening to the broadcasts, what did you think about the GVN appeal to the people to move to the Cai Be Resettlement Center?

I thought the GVN was concerned about the people by warning them about the upcoming bombings and shellings and so minimized damage. That's why I didn't blame the GVN for all the artillery shellings and aircraft bombings which inflicted damage on the people.

26. After airplanes had dropped leaflets and made broadcasts, what did the Front cadres tell the people?

I didn't hear them say anything myself. But my neighbors told me they heard them say: "The puppet government, those servants of the Americans' lies."

27. Did you hear the cadres tell the people why the Americans came here?

The Front cadres always said the Americans came here to take over Vietnam and kill her people.

28. When you were still in your hamlet, what did you think of the cadres' statements that the Americans came here to take over Vietnam and kill her people?

I thought the Americans came here to help the Government fight the Front people. When I become a refugee here I found that the Americans are nice, and ready to help refugees.

29. Did airplanes conduct defoliation operations in your hamlet?

No, they didn't.

30. What did the Front cadres say about the chemical powder sprayed from airplanes?

The Front cadres said the Americans will use airplanes to spray poison and kill all crops as well as men. They advised us to cover noses and mouths with a wet cloth when there is spraying to keep the poison away.

31. Do you believe the powder kills crops and men?

I don't, because I've never seen powder sprayed.

32. What did most of the people in your hamlet do to earn a living?

Most of the people were farmers, they also worked on their orchards.

33. What did you do to earn a living?

I was a farmer and hired worker.

34. How many ricefields did you work on? Were they sowed or transplanted ricefields?

I worked on 5 cong of transplanted ricefields.

35. Did you own or did you rent these ricefields?

I rented the ricefields from my aunt. I paid 1 gia of paddy for each cong.

36. How much paddy did you get from a good year? And what about a bad year?

In a good year, I get 10 gia from each cong, in a bad year I get only 7 gia.

37. Before you became a refugee, had your ricefields been transplanted?

I had transplanted all 5 cong. Now the rice-plants are haveing grains, and we can reap them on the first month after Tet.

38. What about the others' ricefields? Had they been transplanted or still uncultivated?

All ricefields in the hamlet had been transplanted, there had been no uncultivated ricefields. That was why everybody tried to stay in. Only when aircraft conducted fierce attacks did they have to leave.

39. Out of the 300 households in your hamlet, do you know how many families left as refugees? Did the whole family leave or did anybody stay behind to take care of the ricefields, orchards, and houses?

Many of them left. I don't know exactly how many, but I think 6 or 7 out of every 10 families left. A great number of families having many orchards and houses left one of their member behind. Only very poor families like ours, or families with a few adults, all had to leave as refugees.

41. If we classified people in your hamlet in 10 categories, category 1 had the richest people, and category 10 the poorest, in what category do you think you would be?

I was the poorest, and was no doubt in category 10. I worked on 5 cong of ricefields only and I didn't have any orchard. How could I have enough to live on? That was why I had to be a hired worker in the hamlet for some more money.

42. How many ricefields and orchards did the richest family in your hamlet have? How was its house?

The richest man in my hamlet was [redacted] He had up to 10 mau of ricefields -- so much he couldn't work on them all and had to rent them. He had almost 1 mau of orchard, and get up to 100,000 piasters from it each year. His house was very big, and made of wood and covered with tiles. His house wasn't a straw-house like mine. Besides, he had 5 or 6 buffaloes.

42. To what class did the Front assign you?

The Front people assigned me to the poor farmer class.

43. Did ricefields and orchards in your hamlet need fertilizers? If yes, what kinds did you use and where did you buy them?

Yes, they did. We used fertilizers bought in [redacted] Market in the GVN-controlled area. Fertilizers give good rice-plants and more fruits.

44. Before the Front control, had your hamlet been a Strategic Hamlet?

Yes, it had been a Strategic Hamlet. It was built 2 years before Mr. Diem's death.

45. What had you and other people in the hamlet have to do to build the Strategic Hamlet? And what did you have to do afterwards?

When the Government started the building of the Strategic Hamlet, every family had to contribute to the setting up of fences. After the fence was built, men had to stand guard.

46. Why did you have to fence the hamlet and stand guard?

To provide security and keep the VC away.

47. Did people in the hamlet complain because they had to fence the hamlet and to stand guard?

Some did complain. They said they were losing their time, and the work was hard. The village council kept urging and finally they went and did their job.

48. Had the Front cadres come before and after your hamlet became a Strategic Hamlet?

Before my hamlet became a Stategic Hamlet, the cadres had not come in. And after my hamlet became a Strategic Hamlet, the cadres didn't come either. But after the fall of Mr. Diem, at night-time they came and pulled down the hamlet fence. At the beginning, the village council told the people to repair the fence, but they kept destroying it, and we gave up. Then they came and said they were the Liberation cadres. They came only at night. Lately, when the village council and the hamlet chief withdrew, they really came to the hamlet.

49. When your hamlet was still a Strategic Hamlet, how did members of the Hamlet Administrative Committee and the Village Council behave toward the people?

They were nice: they didn't force or threaten the people. For example, when the people were right, they said we were right; when we were wrong, they said we were wrong. They spoke gently, and didn't shout or insult the people.

50. Did the Hamlet Chief and members of the Village Council ask you for money when you came to them for something?

They were ready to help and didn't ask for money. But when we got what we wanted, we were grateful to them and brought them some fruits or a package of tea. They were glad to take them, but they never asked for them.

51. Under the Front control, how did the cadres behave toward the people?

They didn't behave well. For example, when they asked us to do something, they shouted at us. If we were busy and asked to work the next day, they would shout: "Do you want to object and not to go to work? If you don't work here, go away with the Americans." It was the Area Chief who said so.

52. What did the Front people force the villagers to go?

To set fence, cut spikes, dig spikes-pits, destroy roads from Dai Be to Hau My, destroy wooden bridges and replace them by bamboo bridges.

53. How many times did you have to go and destroy roads? When did you go and when did you return?

We, people in the hamlet, had to go and destroy roads from Dai Be to Hau My twice. We left early in the evening and returned at mid-night.

54. Do you think the people had to work more or less under the Front control than in the Strategic Hamlet?

Under the Front control, the people had to work twice as much as in the Strategic Hamlet.

55. Were the people happy and ready to work for the Front?

How could people be happy? They wanted to avoid the work, but they couldn't. We had to work because we were afraid.

56. Did you and other people in the hamlet have freedom of movement under the Front control? For example, movement from your hamlet to GVN-controlled areas, or from your hamlet to other places under the Front control?

We were free to go to GVN-controlled areas, such as to Ba Ton Market. But we should have good reasons to do so. For example, men were allowed to go for medical care or to buy fertilizers or a heavy jar. For smaller things, women had to go. We didn't have to ask for permission to go, at the post when asked, we had to tell them we were going to buy such-or-such things. They would check when we came back. If we lied, we would be suspected, and might be arrested.

In the Front-controlled areas, we didn't have freedom of movements: for example, if I liked to go to Hau Ly and visit my relatives. At Hau Ly Post, they asked me who were the people I was visiting and for what reasons. Then they would accompany me to my relatives' house to see whether I was telling the truth or not. If I lied, they would arrest me right away because they thought I was a GVN spy.

57. In your opinion, did people in your hamlet have more freedom of movement under the GVN control or under the Front control?

The people had more freedom of movement under the GVN control.

58. What did you hear of the Front aims? Who told you about them? And what do you think of these aims?

I heard the Area Chief say the Front rose up to fight the Americans out of Vietnam, because they were taking over South Vietnam. I don't think the Americans are taking over Vietnam, but that they're coming here to help the Nationalists to fight against the Front.

59. What organizations did the Front have in your hamlet and village to replace the former Village Council and Hamlet Administrative Committee?

I heard there were the District Civil Affairs Committee, the Village Party Chapter, and the Village Party Committee. In the hamlet the Area Chief and his deputy took care of everything. I only saw the Area Chief and his deputy get in touch with the people. I didn't see other men in the District Civil Affairs Committee, in the Village Party Chapter, or in the Village Party Committee. In low echelons, the Front organized people in sapper squads to set fences, destroy roads, and dig trenches. The Area Chief and his deputy supervised sapper squads. Other than that, I saw a guerrilla squad of about 12 men in the hamlet, but they had only 5 or 6 rifles -- long and short rifles.

60. Did the Front form popular group organizations? If yes how did they called these organizations and what were their duties?

The Front did form group organizations: the Old People's Association cut spikes; the Women's Association supplied food when people had to destroy roads or set fences; and the Farmers' Association took care of the transporting the dead or wounded and supplies for the troops.

61. Did you have to join the Farmers' Association?

I didn't have to join the Farmers' Association because I was in the Sapper Squad already.

62. Do you know how the Farmers' Association was organized? Did its members have to pay a fee?

I don't know how it was organized. I only heard people had to pay one piaster a month. I didn't have to pay the Sapper Squad.

63. Did you and other people have to pay taxes to the Front?

Everybody had to pay taxes. Last year I had to pay 200 piasters; this year I had to pay twice as much -- 400 piasters.

64. You told me the Front started to control your hamlet only 5 months ago. Why did you have to pay any tax to them last year?

Last year, we had the Hamlet Administrative Committee, but members of this Committee stayed in the post at night, and the Front cadres came in and forced the people to pay taxes.

65. Do you know how the Front cadres figured out the tax you had to pay?

I heard we had to pay proportional taxes, but I don't know how they figured them out.

66. Did you have to pay tax to the GVN?

I didn't have to pay tax to the GVN. I only had to pay paddy to the landlord, my aunt. But now I had to pay both my aunt, and the Front.

67. What did you and other people think and say of the increase in Front taxes?

We were all sad about it, but we only whispered to each other and didn't dare tell the truth for fear of being threatened.

68. Under GVN control, did your hamlet have schools for children?

At that time, our hamlet had a school teaching "ABC's" to small children.

69. Did the GVN open that school and send teacher there? Or did the villagers open the school and hire a teacher?

The school was organized by the people, and had almost 100 children. Each child had to contribute 5 piasters to pay the teacher.

70. When you left the hamlet to become a refugee, was the school still open?

The school was closed when the [redacted] Post withdrew.

71. Do you know why the school closed?

The school was built in the open, and people were afraid aircraft would fire and kill children. Besides, when [redacted] Post withdrew, the teacher left with the Hamlet Chief and the village council, and there was nobody to take care of the teaching.

72. Did the GVN have a school for your village? If so, what was the highest grade it had?

The GVN had a school for the village, in [redacted] Hamlet, not far from my hamlet. The school had up to the highest grade in elementary school. Some students were 14 or 15 years old. The school had almost 200 students. And it was free of charge.

73. Was the school still open when you became a refugee?

This school also ceased to operate when the [redacted] Post withdrew. The teachers too left when the post withdrew. Later on, the Front demolished and burned the school.

74. Do you know why the Front demolished and burned the school? And what did the villagers think of it?

I asked a few friends of mine in [redacted] Hamlet, but they didn't know why the Front destroyed the school anymore than I did. I didn't hear people say anything about it. Even if the Front didn't destroy the school, it would be abandoned because nobody dared send their children to school. Aircraft fired very fiercely, and if they fired at the school, children would die.

75. Did you hear the Front cadres say they will open school for children in your hamlet?

They said: "You will have school for your children. There will also be classes for illiterate adults." They said so, but we didn't see anything. Besides, even if they opened a school, I don't think anybody would dare send their children to school. Aircraft during the day, artillery at night, how could they study? What a pity if they'd be hit by bombs or shells! They were better off staying uninstructed.

76. Under the GVN control, did your hamlet have a First Aid station?

There was a GVN First Aid station. There was a nurse, and also pills and liniments, but no vials of medicine. When the Thien Ho Post withdrew, the nurse left for the district at the same time as the village council.

77. When the Front came, did it have a First Aid station for the villagers?

No, it didn't. I saw the Front had a nurse but the nurse took care of the Front cadres and troops only. If the people asked, they said they didn't have medicines.

78. What did the people do when they were sick?

They bought Chinese medicines in the groceries in the hamlet or they asked the practitioner in [redacted] Market to sell them herbs. If people were very sick, and couldn't be cured by Chinese medicines and herbs, they had to go to [redacted] Market -- then to the Government hospital in My Tho.

79. If the Front cadres were very sick, where did they go?

I heard they asked somebody to bring them to My Tho. I don't know whether what I heard was right or not.

80. Did people convene the market in your village and in your hamlet?

They never convened the market in my village and hamlet.

81. Then where did the people go when they wanted to buy necessary things, or to sell paddy and fruits?

If we wanted to buy such things as petroleum, tea, sugar, tobacco, salt, nuoc mam, needles and thread, paper and pencils, we could buy them at the grocery stores in the hamlet. For other things, such as fertilizers, materials, clothes, etc., we had to go to [redacted] Market in the GVN-controlled area. If we wanted to sell paddy or fruits, we went to the markets in the GVN-controlled areas, or sold them to people who came to the hamlet from GVN-controlled areas.

82. Did people have to pay tax when they brought paddy, fruits, poultry, pigs to sell in the marketsin GVN-controlled areas? If so, how did they pay tax?

I don't know because I didn't have anything to sell. But I heard that the Front charged 5 piasters/each gia of paddy. For 10 piasters of fruits, poultry, or pig, they charged 1 piaster.

83. Did the Front give freedom of movement to merchants from GVN-controlled areas to go to and from the village to buy paddy, fruits, poultry, etc? Did they have to pay tax to the Front? If so, how did they pay?

[redacted]

The Front gave the freedom of movement to traders. I heard they had to pay tax, but I don't know how.

84. From the day the Front came, to the day you became a refugee, did the Front organize any meeting in your hamlet? If so, did the meeting take place during the day or at night?

They organized a meeting only once, about one week after the village council had withdrawn and the Front had controlled the hamlet. The meeting was held at the dayfall, about 8 P.M.

85. Did the Front hang flags and photographs during the meeting? If so, how did they hang flags and whose photographs were they?

I didn't see any photograph. I only saw flags. Half of the flag was red; the other half was yellow, with a star in the middle. (When asked again, the interviewee said half green, half red.)

86. Did any of the Front high-ranking cadres attend the meeting?

I saw 2 strangers. They were introduced as from the District Civil Affairs Committee, and from the Village Party Committee.

87. What did the cadres tell the people during the meeting?

They said many things. They talked for almost one hour. I only remember they said: "The Front comes to liberate the hamlet and the village. From now on, the Americans and their puppet army and government cannot oppress people in the hamlet and in the village. The Front has many victories, the Americans are losing everywhere. The South would soon have its independence." They also said everybody has to strive to build a combat hamlet. And finally they asked people to shout: "Down with the Americans!" and "Long life to the Front!"

88. What did you and other people think and say of the cadres' talk after the meeting?

At that time, I thought maybe the Front really won and the Nationalists really lost. If the Nationalists didn't lose, why did the [redacted] Post, the village council and the Hamlet Chief all withdraw?

89. When you were still in your hamlet, did you know who had the highest position in the Front rank?

I heard the Area Chief say Mr. Ho in the North had the highest position, then came Mr. Pham Van Dong, also in the North.

90. Do you know what the lawyer Nguyen Huu Tho does in the Front?

I never heard of his name.

91. Do you know who heads up the GVN?

I know that Mr. Ngo Dinh Diem headed up the GVN. But he was overthrown and killed long ago. I don't know who now has the highest position in the government.

92. Since you became a refugee, what help did you get from the government?

I only got a mosquito-net, and two cans of milk.

93. Do you know why you didn't get the allowancesof 7 piasters a day and the amount destined to build the house?

I heard the [redacted] Hamlet Chief say the Government planned to have only 50 refugees' families build their houses here. When I came, there were already 50 families who had received their lot of land to build their houses. They'd built their houses, and the Government cadre came and checked them. That was why they received the whole amount destined to the building of houses. Next to this refugee camp, there's an old house. The owner worked far away. I borrowed 3,500 piasters from my brother and bought the house. I thought, "after I've bought the house I can fill in formalities and ask the Government to give me the amount of money destined to build the house, so I can pay my brother." But after I'd bought the house, the Government cadre finished checking the 50 houses in the [redacted] refugee camp and left and didn't come back, and my petition is still waiting. The Hamlet Chief told me that as a refugee, I'll surely receive the allowance to build the house, but I'll have to wait for the next checking. I wish they'd come soon for the checking so that I'd have the money to pay my brother.

Also, I did fill in the formalities for the allowances of 7 piasters a day and sent them to the Hamlet Chief long ago. He promised me to tell the district to take care of the matter so that I'd have the money soon.

94. What do you and your family do to earn your living?

I'm a hired worker. I dig up the ground and cut the grass. There are also days where I don't have any work to do. When I have work, I can earn up to 60 piasters a day. I don't have enough to eat, because I don't get work every day.

95. Then how do you solve the problem?

I have to borrow rice from my cousin. He settled here long ago. It's fortunate for us that my cousin has an easy life, he's been able to help me since the day I came here. If not, I don't know what I'd do. I want to receive the allowance of 7 piasters a day soon, so that I could pay him back the rice I've borrowed.

96. Are you thinking of going back to your hamlet at the next harvest to reap rice-plants?

I'll try to follow people back to reap rice-plants and bring them here. I'm afraid to go back, but I just have to. If I can't bring the rice-plants here, I don't know how I can manage to live out here.

97. What are your wishes and expectations now?

I wish I'd soon receive the allowances of 7 piasters a day and the amount destined to the building of the house, so that I could pay back the money and rice I've borrowed. I wish I could go back to cut and bring the rice-plants here. And I wish I had regular work to do.

98. If there's security in your hamlet, would you go back or would you rather stay here?

If there's security, from time to time I'll go back just to visit my relatives. I've made up my mind to stay and earn my living here.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

The subject seemed frank but slow. He had a weak memory. He was quite cooperative and never refused to give an answer. His knowledge was limited, however, by his low intelligence and brief time spent with the VC.

No. AGR 53

QUESTIONNAIRE II
For Refugees

1. Name of interviewer [redacted]
2. Name of subject [redacted]
3. Time and date of interview :
   From 2:00 PM to 6:00 PM on Dec. [redacted] 1965
   From _____ to _____ on _____ 196___
   From _____ to _____ on _____ 196___
   Total time 4 hours
   Interview based on : tape ( ) hand written notes ( )
4. Place of interview : [redacted] Hamlet, [redacted] Village, Cai Be District, Dinh Tuong Province
5. Sex of subject : Male (x) Female ( )
6. Age of subject : 32
7. Ethnic background : Vietnamese
8. Place of birth :
   hamlet [redacted]
   village [redacted]
   district Cai Be
   province Dinh Tuong
9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :
   hamlet [redacted]
   village [redacted]
   district Cai Be
   province Dinh Tuong
10. (a) Length of residence in last location : 3 years
    (b) Who controlled the place of residence:
    GVN ( ) VC (x) Contested ( )
    (c) Since when controlled or contested ? July 1965

11. Number of brothers (2) and sisters (1)

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : 1

13. Marital status : Married

14. Number of children : 2

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age : _____

16. Mother ~~xxxxxx~~ with subject (x) or not with subject ( )
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject( ) or not with subject (x)
Wife with subject (x) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject(x) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion : Ancestral worship

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : Farmer

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation Poor farmer
(b) Landowner ? _____ How much land _____

20. Education :
illiterate ( )
literate (x) knows how to read, but doesn't know how to write
schooling completed : _____

21. Any relatives in VC : _____

22. Any relatives in GVN : 2

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by :
(a) French
(b) GVN
(c) VC 3 (1 mother's younger brother, 2 mother's younger half-brothers, all 3 were in the Buddhist Hoa Hao Army and killed by the Viet-Minh during the war between Vietnamese and French.

24. When became a refugee : Sept. 1965.

25. Where took refuge first _____

26. Present residence _____

AGR

INTERVIEW

54

THE RAND CORPORATION

[redacted]

STUDIES OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT
OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR-54

Date of Interview : December [redacted] 1965

Subject's Category : Refugee: July [redacted] 1965

Former Residence : [redacted] Hamlet, [redacted] Village,
Cai Be District, Dinh Tuong Province

1. How long have you been here?

I came here as a refugee last July [redacted]

2. Where did you come from?

I came from [redacted] Cathedral area, [redacted] Hamlet, [redacted] Village, Cai Be District, Dinh Tuong Province.

3. What is your religion?

I am a Catholic. Most of the people living in the [redacted] Cathedral area were Catholics. I was the [redacted] in my area.

4. Was your position as [redacted] similar to that of [redacted] (another name for the [redacted]) in a Catholic area?

We didn't have [redacted] we had only [redacted] Below the Parish Priest we had the [redacted] which was me.

5. How many are there in your family? Did they leave at the same time as you?

There were four in the family: my wife and myself, our 17-year-old daughter, and our 40-year-old grandaughter (the daughter of my oldest daughter). Our 17-year-old daughter left with us; our grandchild stayed behind to take care of the house.

6. Why did you come here?

That day, I heard the post in [redacted] Agroville withdrew. I and other people were afraid that after the ARVN withdrew, the Front forces would come, and GVN aircraft would bomb. So we came here. The post withdrew in the morning; I left in the evening. We left by sampans, through [redacted] Canal, and [redacted] then to Cau Keo, and followed Thong Luu River to Cai Be. We left in the evening and reached Cai Be at midnight.

7. Do you know why the post in [redacted] Agroville withdrew?

I don't know why. I know the Captain Commander of the [redacted] post. A few days before the widrawal, I had seen the Captain, and he had told me he would be transferred to another place. I thought the Captain would be the only one to be transferred. I hadn't thought of the withdrawal of the whole post. Before they withdrew, the soldiers burned a village public house and a maternity clinic. They withdrew very quickly. Late in the afternoon of the same day, aircraft came and bombed the post. The population didn't suffer any damage, but we were very afraid. We were afraid that after the post withdrew, the Front would come and we couldn't live with it. And if they came to the Agroville, aircraft would surely bomb it and the people would have to leave. When people in trading area saw the soldiers burn the public house and withdraw, they knew right away that the Government had abandoned tne agroville. We, in [redacted] Hamlet, found out about it only at noon.

8. What did people in [redacted] Agroville think of the withdrawal of the [redacted] post?

They complained much about it. You see, when the ARVN withdrew, how could they stay? Everybody regreted the property they had to leave benind.

9. What about you? What did you and people in [redacted] Hamlet think of the withdrawal of the [redacted] Post?

We all complained that when the Government left, we were just like crabs without pincers. How could we stay?

10. Before the ARVN withdrew from [redacted] Agroville, who really had controlled your hamlet? The GVN or the Front?

From the middle of 1964, the Administrative Committee in my hamlet, always threatened by the Liberation forces, withdrew to the Agroville with the [redacted] Village Council which was right in the Agroville. Since the withdrawal of the Hamlet Administrative Committee, the Front cadres openly conducted their activities. The Village Council and the Hamlet Administrative Committee didn't dare come back to the hamlet. Therefore, we can say the Front controlled our hamlet since the middle of 1964.

11. Your hamlet had an Administrative Committee, was it a Strategic Hamlet then?

Yes, it was. It was built during the days where Mr. Ngo Dinh Diem was still living. At that time, there was security, and people had a happy and active life. When Mr. Ngo Dinh Diem was overthrown, during the night the Front guerrillas came to pull up iron stakes or barbed wires around the hamlet. Each time the Front people came to break the hamlet hedge, the next morning soldiers from the Agroville Post told the people to repair it. But they kept breaking it, and finally there was nobody to repair it.

12. Do you know how large [redacted] Village was and how many people it had?

My hamlet was very big. But I don't know exactly how big it was and how many people it had.

13. What about [redacted] hamlet? How large was it and how many people lived there?

I don't know how large it was. I only know about the Catholic people in the hamlet: 130 households with about 1,000 people, including men, women, old, and young people.

14. Among the 130 [redacted] Catholic families, how many families took refuge like yours?

We all took refuge in Cai Be, but usually each family left one member behind to take care of the ricefields, orchards and property.

15. What about the Buddhist families? How many of them left as refugees?

They all left as the Catholic people. Each Buddhist family also left one member behind.

16. When the Front had the control of your hamlet, did the Parish Priest stay in the hamlet? If yes, how did the Front cadres behave toward him?

He had left a few days before the Hamlet Administrative Committee. I think because the Front broke the barbed wires that he had to leave to avoid all danger.

17. Before the hamlet came under the Front's control, how did the members of the Strategic Hamlet Administrative Committee behave toward the people?

They all behaved well. When people had to go to them for letters of acknowledgement or formalities for loans from the Agricultural Credit Office, they were eager to help.

18. What did you and other people in your hamlet think of the fact that the Ngo Dinh Diem Government made your hamlet a Strategic Hamlet? Did the people have to contribute in money or in labor work?

I think it was a good idea. They built Strategic Hamlets to have security. They didn't hurt the people. Most of the people in my hamlet were Catholic, they shared my opinion, nobody objected. The people contributed in money and in labor to build the Strategic Hamlet.

19. Did the people complain because they had to contribute?

How could you keep some people from complaining? But they were a minority; the majority were willing to contribute. Those who complained were very poor people. They complained because they lost a few working days to dig ditches, or set a hedge.

20. Under the Front control, did people in the hamlet have the freedom to go to and from the Agroville?

We all had freedom of movement ; the Front didn't forbid people from doing anything.

21. Under the Front control, was your hamlet ever attacked by GVN aircraft or artillery?

Aircraft attacked my hamlet once on the 16th of the second month of this lunar year. (Interviewer's note: March 18, 1965.) My 20-year-old son was killed by a bullet during this attack. (The subject wept silently for a minute, stopped, then resumed talking.) Six other people were burned to death. Fifteen houses were damaged. After this attack till the day I became a refugee, aircraft didn't attack anymore.

22. Do you know why aircraft attacked your hamlet?

I think the Government suspected the Front forces were stationed in great number in the hamlet and attacked it.

23. Did the Front forces conduct operations in your hamlet? Did you see or hear that the Front forces were in your hamlet when aircraft attacked it? If so, what damage caused to them?

They did pass by during the night, but not often. They didn't dare stay in my hamlet because most of us were Catholic and they didn't have confidence in us. Besides, our hamlet wasn't too far from the Agroville. I think they were afraid of the ARVN attacks. From the air attack in the second month, I didn't hear of any dead or wounded in the Front forces.

24. What did you and the other people in the hamlet think of the loss you had to suffer because of the air attack?

I think it was because of war's misfortune. The Government and the Army would never kill the people. My son was unlucky, he was killed. My wife and I, we are old already, and he was the only son we had. We loved him very much. But during a war like this, there are many dead. He wasn't the only one. Other families whose members were killed were also Catholic. I think they shared my opinion.

25. Did you hear the GVN will indemnify the victims of its attacks?

A few days after the air attack, the District Chief visited the Agroville. The Village Council sent us word that they had gone and seen the District Chief. The District Chief had offered his condolence to the victims' families, and said they should fill out formalities to receive indemnity from the Government. But so far, we haven't received anything.

26. What do you and other people think of the District Chief's promise?

A few months ago, I went to the District to ask about the indemnity. They told me they were still making investigations. I wasn't angry for that. If the Government pitied

us and gave us money, we would be grateful. If it didn't, that would be all right. The Government has all the power, if it gives, it will be good for us. If it doesn't give, there is nothing we could do about it.

27. Did the Front make people in your hamlet work for them?

They asked the people to go and destroy the road from Cai Be to Hau My. On the average, people had to go and do that type of work once a month.

28. Did you and your wife had to work? What about your daughter and grandchild?

My wife and I, we were old and they didn't ask us to work for them. Whenever people in the hamlet had to go, a member of our family had to join, either my daughter or my grandchild had to go.

29. Were people in your hamlet eager to work for the Front, or did they try to avoid the work?

At the beginning, people did try to avoid the work. For example, they said they were sick. But this happened only once; the next time the Front cadres arrested one man, bound up his eyes and took him away for four days. The people got scared and didn't dare avoid the work anymore.

30. When your hamlet was a Strategic Hamlet, it had a Hamlet Administrative Committee. When the Front came, what Committee did it organize to replace the old Hamlet Administrative Committee?

I didn't see them organize any Committee.

31. Whenever the Front asked the people to go and destroy the roads, who was the one who went to the people's house? What position did he have?

In every case, the Front sent cadres to the people's houses, and they only said they were cadres.

32. One cadre or more than one came to the people's houses? Were they people in the hamlet, or village, or were they from other places?

There were two or three cadres. Whenever they came to the people's houses to ask them to go to work or to pay taxes, they were accompanied by an armed guerrilla. The cadres were all from other places; none of them were people in the hamlet.

33. What about the guerrilla who accompanied the cadres? Was he among people in the hamlet or was he from other places?

The guerrilla was also a stranger.

34. Tell me how the Front figured out taxes?

I heard the cadres made the people pay proportional taxes, but I don't know how they figured them out.

35. During 1964 and 1965, how much taxes did your family have to pay each year?

People didn't have to pay tax in 1964. They only paid in 1965. I didn't have to pay tax; I was exempt because my house was destroyed and my son killed by air attack. Fourteen other families in the hamlet to whom aircraft inflicted damage or casualties were also exempt from tax.

36. Do you know how much was the highest tax and how much was the lowest tax paid by people in the hamlet?

The highest tax paid by people in my hamlet was 2,000 piasters, and the lowest was 300 piasters. But not everybody paid all his part. Some families complained they didn't have any paddy left. They asked for a reduction or an extension of payment. I didn't see the cadres arrest anybody; they only urged people to pay.

37. Did the Front form any group organizations in your hamlet?

No, it didn't. Most of the people in my hamlet were Catholic. Even if the Front wanted to, it would have been difficult for them to do so. Catholic people don't like Communism.

38. Did the Front ever invite you to a meeting? If yes, what did the cadres tell the people during the meeting?

Once the cadres went to the people's houses and asked them to go to a meeting. When they passed by my house I asked them whether or not I had to go to the meeting.

They said I was among the elderly people and didn't have to go. Even though I didn't have to attend the meeting, my daughter and grandchild had to take their turn to go when the cadres ask the people to do so. When I asked them after the meeting, they told me the cadres had figured out the amount of tax that people had to pay and that it was also a study session.

39. Did you hear your daughter or grandchild say what they'd studied?

They said they learned that the Americans came to South Vietnam to take over Vietnam and to kill the people, and that the Front was winning and the Americans and the ARVN were losing.

40. What did you and the people in the hamlet think of the cadres' saying that the Americans were taking over Vietnam and killing her people?

I didn't believe the cadres. I think other people in my hamlet didn't believe them either. Our Parish Priest used to tell us that the Americans came to South Vietnam to help us fight against the Communists who are without family, without native country, without religion. We always believe that our Parish Priest was right.

41. Did the Front say anything which might offend the Parish Priest, or hinder the people's religious activities?

The Front didn't dare say anything which might offend the Parish Priest. They didn't do anything which might hinder our religious activities. At that time they didn't hurt religion, but they will, because they're Communists.

42. Did you and other people believe that the ARVN and the American army were losing and the Front was winning?

I didn't. You see, how could the Nationalists lose? We get help from the Americans. We have many weapons: aircraft in the sky, cannons, tanks. How could the Front win against all these weapons? In a war, there are victories and defeats. I believe the Front suffers many defeats and the Nationalists enjoy many victories. I think other people in my hamlet shared my opinion too. If they didn't, why did they come to Cai Be with the Nationalists?

43. Was your hamlet ever attacked by the ARVN artillery? If so, what damage was inflicted to the population and to the Front forces?

They shelled the hamlet every two or three months. They shelled the ricefields and didn't cause any damage to the people. I didn't hear about damage inflicted to the Front forces.

44. Did your hamlet have a school for children?

My hamlet had one school with five classes. Children were taught from the alphabet up to the first grade (the highest class in elementary school). Each year the school had 300 students. It was a Catholic school, and we had children from many other hamlets.

45. Did the students have to pay?

Yes, they did. Students in the highest class had to pay 15 piasters a month, the ABC grade (lowest class) 7 piasters a month.

46. After the Hamlet Administrative Committee had withdrawn, was the school still open?

The school was still open till the day the people left to become refugees, when the post in the Agroville withdrew. The school had been opened by our Parish Priest under the Diem regime. The teachers were nuns. When our Parish Priest left, the nuns left too. People in the hamlet asked some Catholic learned men to take care of the teaching.

47. When the Front come, did the Front ask the teachers to change their program and teach as they would like them to do?

They didn't ask teachers to change their programs. The teachers followed the nuns' programs, and the cadres didn't say anything.

48. Did your hamlet have a First Aid Station?

Yes, it had one. The First Aid Station was also organized by the Catholics. Our Parish Priest sent an instructed man to study nursing then took care of the First Aid Station for him.

49. Did the people have to pay for consultation and medicines at the First Aid Station?

Sometimes people had to pay medicines. If there were medicines in the First Aid Station, the Father gave them free. If there were no medicines, we had to buy them in the Agroville and asked the nurse to cure us. If people were very sick they would have to go to the Agroville.

50. Before you became a refugee, what did you do to earn a living? What did most of the people in your hamlet do to earn their living?

I was a farmer. Most of the people in my hamlet were also farmers.

51. How many ricefields did you work on? Did you sow or did you have to transplant the rice-plants?

I worked on 20 cong that was on 2 mau of ricefield. They all were sowed ricefields.

52. Did you own ricefields or did you rent them?

I rented them from the Church.

53. How much rent did you have to pay to the Church?

I had to pay 15 gia of paddy to the Church for the 20 cong I rented.

54. When the Front came to your hamlet, what category did it assign you to? Rich farmer, middle farmer, poor farmer, or what?

They didn't assign me to any of these categories; they only said I was among the elderly people.

55. Did the Front assign other people in the hamlet into rich farmers, middle farmers, poor farmers?

I didn't see the Front assign the people in these categories. I only heard the cadres call them elderly people and youths (if they were young) and farmers (when they were older). They didn't divide them into rich and middle farmers.

56. How were most of the people in your hamlet? Rich, middle, or poor?

They were neither rich, nor poor, they were in the middle.

57. If we can classify people in your hamlet in 10 categories, category 1 has the richest people, and category 10 the poorest. In what category do you think you were in?

I was in category 4.

58. How many gia of paddy did you get each year from your 20 cong of ricefield?

In a good year, I get 200 gia, sometimes up to 220 gia. In a bad year, I got 150 gia.

59. Did you have any other income besides paddy?

I raised two sows. They gave each year two litters of suckling-pigs. Some of them died, but I still had up to 20 of them that I could sell at 300 piasters a pig. That means I could get 6,000 piasters more each year from suckling-pigs.

60. Did ricefields in your hamlet need fertilizers? If yes, what kind of fertilizers did you use? Where did you buy them?

My ricefields were all good. I didn't have to use fertilizer. Some people in my hamlet used fertilizers because there was alum in their ricefields. They used "Than Nong" chemical fertilizer bought from the Agroville.

61. What did your family bring here with you when you became refugees?

We brought with us clothes, 10 liters of rice, some firewood, a rice cooking pot, and 300 piasters. Four days later I returned to the hamlet and brought with me 50 gia of paddy and two chickens.

62. What did you leave behind then?

I left behind 20 cong of ricefields ready to be reaped at Tet (Lunar New Year), a main house with three rooms, a little house, furniture, beds, an altar, wardrobe, and two sows that weighed 150 kg each.

63. Why didn't you bring the 2 sows here when you came back for paddy?

I'd have liked very much to bring them here, but I was afraid the Front cadres would charge heavy taxes on them. I heard they charged up to 500 piasters a sow, and I didn't have the money to pay. As for paddy, when I reached Canal 28, the Front cadres stopped me and asked me to pay tax. I had to sell 4 gia in order to have the money. I had to pay 250 piasters, that was 5 piasters a gia. I asked my grandchild to take care of the two sows, houses and furniture.

64. At harvest time, do you think you'll go back to the hamlet to reap the rice-plants and bring the paddy here?

Yes, I'm thinking of going back to reap the rice-plants. If the cadres forced me to pay tax, I'd pay them some, and bring all the rest here.

65. Since you've been here, what help did you get from the Government?

We get allowances for one month at 7 piasters a day for each of us. Besides, I received a mosquito-net, a blanket, three cans of milk. I didn't receive the allowance to build the house. Now Reverend Father in An Thai A allowed me to stay in the District Chief's old house. Sixteen other families live with us here.

66. What does your family do now to earn a living?

My wife and I, we are too old to work now. We are counting on the paddy we brought with us. Our daughter, now 17 years old knows how to take care of her parents. She is doing small trading in the district market. She earns 50 piasters a day. With a capital of 200 piasters she earns 50 piasters.

67. What are your wishes and expectations now?

I only wish there would be security in my hamlet, that our Parish Priest would go back to the hamlet, and people follow him back and work in peace as before.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

Subject was an old man, 72 years old, but nevertheless still discerning. He was sincere and ccoperative. The following points characterized the subject:

1. As a Catholic, he believed more in the Priest, his spiritual leader, than in anyone else. Because of his faith, he and many other Catholic people in his hamlet weren't affected by Communist propaganda.

2. As a Catholic, he had strong endurance for all the hardship the friendly army unwillingly brought to his family. He bore it without any reaction, without any complaint.

No. AGR 54

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

1. Name of interviewer [redacted]
2. Name of subject [redacted]
3. Time and date of interview :
   From 9:00 AM to 12:00 on Dec. [redacted] 1965
   From _____ to _____ on _____ 196___
   From _____ to _____ on _____ 196___
   Total time 3 hours
   Interview based on : tape ( ) hand written notes ( )
4. Place of interview : [redacted] Hamlet, [redacted] Village, Cai Be District, Dinh Tuong Province
5. Sex of subject : Male (X) Female ( )
6. Age of subject : 72
7. Ethnic background : Vietnamese
8. Place of birth :
   hamlet _____
   village [redacted]
   district Loc Thanh Ha
   province Cho Lon
9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :
   hamlet [redacted]
   village [redacted]
   district Cai Be
   province Dinh Tuong
10. (a) Length of residence in last location : From 1906 to 1965
    (b) Who controlled the place of residence:
    GVN ( ) VC (X) Contested ( )
    (c) Since when controlled or contested ? Middl[redacted]

11. Number of brothers (3) and sisters (1)

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : 2

13. Marital status : Married

14. Number of children : 5 (3 girls alreay married)

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age : 1 (dead)

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject (X)
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject( ) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject (X) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject(X) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion : Catholic

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : Farmer

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation None
(b) Landowner ? No How much land _____

20. Education :
illiterate ( )
literate (X)
schooling completed : 3d grade in elementary school

21. Any relatives in VC : None

22. Any relatives in GVN : None

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by :
(a) French None
(b) GVN 1 son victim of bombing
(c) VC 1 younger brother killed by the Viet Minh under the Resistance

24. When became a refugee : July [redacted] 1965

25. Where took refuge first _____

26. Present residence _____

AGR

INTERVIEW

55

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THE RAND CORPORATION

[redacted]

SUBJECT OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR-55

Date of Interview : May [redacted] 1966

Subject's Category : Refugee: April [redacted] 1966

Area of Residence : [redacted] Hamlet, [redacted] Village, Phu Yen Province

[illegible] points of interest

[illegible] elections # 24-30
Behavior of GVN troops # 33-36
[illegible] topic [illegible] # 37-43
VC land reform # 89-98
VC [illegible] # [illegible]-108
VC restriction on movement # 111
VC organizations in hamlet # 116-118
Assassinations and reeducation # 136-138
Forced labor # 139-142
The Combat Hamlet # 143-147
Views of GVN, # 169-173
Subject's views on most effective way for GVN to counter the VC # 192-193; on warning before attack # 195-196

1. How long had you and your family lived in your village before you became a refugee?

My family and I had been living in my village since my childhood.

2. How big was your village and your hamlet?

My village consisted of [redacted] hamlets including over four thousand inhabitants. My hamlet was the smallest one with above three hundred people living near the mountainous part of the area.

3. How did you earn your living there? How did most of the villagers earn their living?

I was a farmer and most people in my village lived by farming.

4. Were most of them well off or poor? Did they have enough to eat?

Between 1954 and 1962 people had plenty of food. Many of them were able to put away enough money to build brick houses or to buy more land. But from the end of 1962, due to bad crops and heavy taxes, most of the villagers have been left with only enough rice for four months in the year and so usually they had to mix potatoes and manioc with rice in their daily meals. My family has been in the same situation. In the months before I became a refugee, I think 98% of the villagers in my hamlet lacked food; only the 2% who were cadres or members of their families had enough to eat.

5. Did you own any land? How did you get it?

I had 2 hectares of land, half in orchard and half in rice fields. I inherited it from my parents.

6. How many of the other villagers owned land?

For the whole village, about one hundred families had from one to five hectares, only a few families owned more than five hectares.

7. Usually, how much paddy did you get per crop? How many crops a year?

In my village, there was only one rice crop a year. Between 1954 and 1962, the rice crop was usually good and I could get nearly 400 gia of paddy each year (about 2,400 kilos). In addition to this, an auxiliary crop yielded about 50 gia of green peas (300 kilos). But since 1963, the rice crop has been very poor. For three consecutive years, I could get only 100 to 150 gia of paddy and no green peas. In my area, there was no crop spraying until recently; I don't know why the rice crops were so bad in the past three years; many villagers were unable to collect enough paddy to pay VC taxes.

8. How many members are there in your family? How old are they? What did they do in the village?

My family consisted of myself, my 26 year old wife, my mother, 55, my brother, 17, and my two children. Except for the children, all the other people helped me with the farming.

9. What is your religion?

I practiced ancestor worship.

10. What religions did the other villagers practice?

99% of the villagers were Buddhists and 1% practiced ancestor worship.

11. What is your ethnic background?

I am a Vietnamese and so are all the other villagers.

12. How much education have you had?

I had six years of school.

13. What education did the other villagers have?

In my village most of the villagers had one or two years of school in their young days. Except for about 3%, very old people who were illiterate, all the other people were at least able to read and write Vietnamese.

14. Was there a school in your village?

There was a five year elementary school in my village. In addition, each hamlet had a two year school for small children. Since the schools were placed under the Front authorities, children have wasted a lot of time in studying and reciting communist slogans.

15. Did all the children go to school?

All the children went to school except those belonging to poor families who left right after they were able to walk; they left to guard buffaloes for the other people.

16. Who were your best friends in your hamlet?

Most of the well-off people of my age were friends of mine in the hamlet, but there weren't very many. My best friend, to whom I could talk freely about everything, was a very old man. After the Front people came he was the only man I could talk to about what I was thinking. Everyone was on their guard because they suspected one another, even among best friends and relatives.

17. Which people in your village were the most important?

The most important man in my village was the Party Secretary whose name was [redacted] But he was killed by the Americans when they attacked the village the first time at the beginning of February. The second most important man was [redacted] the chairman of the village administrative committee, also in charge of village security.

18. Who was the most respected?

The most respected man was an old teacher named [redacted] He was shot by the VC in 1963 while working in his classroom in a strategic hamlet. The reason for his being killed was that he had disobeyed the Front's order that the school be closed down. Two other well known people were [redacted] They were members of the Viet Nam Quoc Dan Dang (VN Nationalist Party) and also members of the Resistance against the French. Since the French took over the village, they have been detained in the mountains.

19. Which people were the best informed about what was happening in the district, in Saigon, in North Vietnam, and outside of Vietnam?

Only the high VC village cadres were informed about what was happening in the district. Information about Saigon, North Vietnam, and outside of Vietnam was given to them, I think, by the district authorities after they had been advised.

20. How was life in your village before 1954 (before and during the Resistance)?

Before and during the Resistance, life was as miserable as it was at the beginning of 1966. The reason was that most of the male villagers were active in the Resistance that lasted 9 years. After 1954, everyone seemed to live in peace under the GVN until 1962 despite the differences in their political views.

21. Did life in your village improve after 1954?

In the years from 1954 to 1962, rainy and dry seasons alternated regularly and influenced food production favorably; 1962 was the best year and people lived in prosperity in spite of the fact that the Front had started its clandestine activities in the village.

22. How did the local officials behave?

The local officials behaved properly toward the villagers. There was no conflict between the population and the authorities.

23. Were they local people or strangers? Were they elected or appointed?

They were local people appointed by the government.

24. Have you ever had an election in your village?

In 1956 people in my village participated in a referendum for the President of the RVN between Ngo Dinh Diem and Bao Dai and, in 1961, in a presidential election. The population had to make their choice between Nguyen Thanh Phuong, a Caodaist general, Ho Nhut Tan, an oriental medicine practitioner and Ngo Dinh Diem. They also participated in the election of Parliament members for Phu Yen Province. The elected member at that time was Cao Van Chieu.

25. Did everyone vote?

Everyone in my village voted, except those who had criminal records.

26. How many candidates were there in the Parliament election?

Three candidates.

27. What qualifications did one have to have in order to vote? to be a candidate?

A voter had to be 20 years old and had to have an election card. A candidate had to be 25 years old and have at least two years residence in the province he would represent in the Parliament.

28. Were the elections honest?

The elections weren't honest. One of the candidates was a stranger to us, while the others were local people. Through leaflets and bills we were informed of the personal history of those people and so were supposed to be able to choose the candidate we liked. But on election day, the village officials, under pressure from district or province authorities, requested almost publicly that the villagers vote for a designated name.

29. You said the village officials were appointed and not elected. Which would be better?

An elected official would be better because he would be listened to by the villagers and also, the villagers wouldn't be afraid to show their true feelings toward the government and their wishes. So any differences between the population and the authorities would be easily settled.

30. Did those officials promise any social improvements? Did they keep their promises? Did you trust them?

Although appointed by the government, the officials in my village were trusted by the population because they were honest and incorruptible. They were always cooperative with reasonable requests from the villagers. This situation lasted only until 1962 when the Front people started their activities in the village.

31. What did you know about the Diem Government?

At first I had great confidence in the Diem Government, because he strengthened the authority of the National Government in preventing subversion by the Communists and the French colonialists. But he made a mistake later in obeying too much the members of his family and the religious people; thus he jeopardized what he had achieved for the country.

32. What did you and the other villagers think about the fall of that government?

Had Ngo Dinh Diem not been influenced by his entourage, his government wouldn't have fallen and the situation in South Vietnam would be much better than it is now.

33. Were there any GVN Military forces near your hamlet?

In 1963, there was a platoon of SDC for the whole village. But when the eight hamlets were concentrated into three strategic hamlets, each one had an additional platoon of village youths for its protection.

34. How did they behave during the time of the Diem Government?

During the time of the Diem Government, the SDC behaved badly toward the villagers. They got into the habit of abusing the poor villagers, sometimes taking money from them. After the fall of the Diem Government, the SDC platoon disintegrated rapidly because the Front increased their terrorist activities in the village. The Front was in control of the village only a few months after the fall of the Diem regime. In a hamlet meeting, a villager asked the cadres, "Who is the revolution proposing to serve?" The cadres said, "The revolution is serving our compatriots." To which the villager retorted, "The people have just enjoyed peace after a nine-year resistance. Why do you make further trouble while the USA calls for peace. I don't the Americans are genuine in their appeal." The latter was arrested by the VC and detained in a mountainous area.

35. How did the villagers feel about the SDC?

The illiterate and poor villagers disliked the SDC because they always had trouble with them.

36. Did any other GVN soldiers ever pass through your village?

The GVN regular forces passed through my village often. For the most part, they behaved properly toward the villagers who, in return, appreciated their behavior. About the end of 1963 a squad of GVN regulars was ambushed by the Front fighters near my hamlet. One of them was unable to rejoin his squad in its retreat and was left behind in the hamlet. Although he was a stranger he had no difficulty in taking refuge in any villager's house. A lady who gave him protection was arrested later by the VC and sent to a reeducation camp.

37. Did you ever live in a strategic hamlet?

The strategic hamlets in my village were set up at the beginning of 1962. My family contributed to the setting up of a strategic hamlet, but we only stayed there for three days in a friend's house and had to return to my house located outside the strategic hamlet.

38. Why didn't you and your family live in the strategic hamlet?

My initial hamlet was located in the extreme western part of my village, a bit away from the other hamlets. When the nearest strategic hamlet was set up, we were left outside its perimeter and were requested to move in. But we were unable to do so unless we agreed to abandon our land and our house.

39. Did you have to contribute to the building of the strategic hamlet?

My family was supposed to live in the strategic hamlet, so we had to contribute 420 poles and labor for the fence. In addition, each person in my family had to pay 11 piasters to be used for the lighting of the fence during the night.

40. What did you (and others) like about it?

I lived there only three days but I can say that I, and other people too, felt more secure in the strategic hamlet. They were no longer afraid of the GVN artillery shelling which had been caused mostly by the presence of Front forces in the village. Also, the villagers weren't disturbed by VC tax collectors.

41. What did you (and others) dislike about it?

The villagers met with difficulties in their daily work. Compelled to live away from their land, they spent most of the day moving the instruments and buffaloes from their houses to the ricefields and vice-versa, not having much time left for the farming. The fence around the strategic hamlet compelled the villagers to take the long way round before entering or leaving the village.

42. What happened to it?

At the end of 1963, the strategic hamlet near my place was raided by the Front forces. The VC forced the villagers to burn down the fence before the arrival of the GVN troops. The fence was repaired right afterwards and reinforced with barbed wire. But in September 1964, the Front forces came back again and succeeded in taking the whole village; then they ordered the dismantlement of all strategic hamlets.

43. How do you feel about it now?

I regret now that the strategic hamlet was destroyed because, as far as I know, it was quite useful in isolating the VC from their source of income and labor.

44. In those days, before the Front came, how did you feel about your life and future?

Before the Front came, I felt very satisfied with my life, particularly after many years of good crops. Most of the young people in my village had a bicycle and European clothes.

45. What things dissatisfied you most?

Nothing dissatisfied me; I owned land that yielded enough rice for the year. In addition I had been a clerk in the village council until the middle of 1962 when the Front arrested me and sent me to a "reeducation" camp for one month and ten days. After that, I had to resign from my job with the village council.

46. What did you think about your opportunities to improve your life?

Before the Front controlled the village, I could occasionally engage in small trade in sugar with the Duy Hoa merchants. This gave me a source of income in addition to earnings from my land.

47. What did you think about the chances of your children having a better life?

I always thought of giving my children a good education to give a better chance of success in life. Formerly, we had more medical facilities in the village to provide care for our children. Medicine was plentiful in first aid stations. Since the Front took over the area, even a quinine tablet has been unavailable.

48. When did you first hear of the Front?

I first heard of the Front at the beginning of 1962.

49. How did you hear about it? What did you hear?

At the beginning of 1962, a Front armed propaganda unit infiltrated the village at night and gathered the villagers for a meeting during which VC cadres told them that the Liberation Front had been set up in South Vietnam to fight the mercantile bourgeoisie protected by the Americans and Ngo Dinh Diem and to help the poor peasants get land to farm.

50. What kinds of people belonged to the Front in those days?

There were a few former Viet Minh cadres who succeeded in persuading a number of young people to follow them and live with them in the forests.

51. What activities did they engage in?

These people formed the first armed propaganda group charged with informing the villagers of the Liberation Front and its aims.

52. Did they come secretly to your hamlet at first?

I don't know the people who came secretly to my hamlet. I know that some VC cadres had first established contact with the leader of a youth platoon in charge of protecting

[redacted], hamlet whose name was [redacted]. Under VC persuasion or threat, he defected to the Front in 1963 along with eleven members of his platoon; they took eleven carbines and two cases of hand grenades. Thanks to that defection, the Front in my area could begin to equip their men. It seems as though he worked for the Front from 1962 to 1965. Then he was discarded by the Front because he had been a rich farmer. And like other people in the village, he couldn't escape working as a laborer for the Front. [redacted] while serving with the Front, established contact with the GVN village representative, [redacted]. The latter, in July 1964, cleared the way for the VC to attack [redacted] Hamlet and then went over to the other side, taking a pistol, two cases of hand grenades, and some other weapons and ammunition. That man was also discarded by the Front at the beginning of 1966 because he came from the bourgeoisie. He was killed later during an American attack on the village, while he was working as a laborer for a Front unit. Usually when the Front succeeded in establishing contact with GVN leaders, most of the men under their leadership followed them. Those who showed signs of resisting were kidnapped and secretly killed by the VC. About 80 men in my village were killed that way.

53. When the Front people first came to your hamlet, what did the GVN officials do?

My hamlet was located apart from others. When the Front people first came to my hamlet, the GVN officials got scared and collaborated with them while still working for the government.

54. When did your village or hamlet become contested or controlled by the Front?

My hamlet became contested in 1963; other hamlets became contested in 1964 and the whole village was controlled by the Front in 1965.

55. Were there battles in or near your village at that time between the Front and the ARVN?

There were no battles in my village at that time between the Front and the ARVN because there were no Front forces in the village except for the guerrillas. The GVN district troops swept my village many times but the guerrillas

only sniped at them and then ran away to their hideouts in the forests. In 1965, ARVN troops, sometimes one regiment strong, passed through the village but encountered no Viet Cong because all the guerrillas, cadres, and young people faded away.

56. Why couldn't the GVN forces control your village and hamlet?

In my village the Front could keep tight control over the population because of its various organizations and particularly their terrorist activities. When the GVN troops came to the village, the villagers were afraid of approaching them or trading their farm produce with them. Everyone feared being watched by their neighbors and being betrayed by them.

57. What did the Front people do to the people's GVN identification cards?

All the people's GVN identification cards were seized except those belonging to the cadres' relatives or trustworthy men.

58. How did the Front cadres, soldiers and guerrillas behave?

The Front soldiers only passed through the villages. They didn't stay there for fear of causing the village to be bombed by the ARVN. They seemed to be well-disciplined. The guerrillas were almost all village youths and usually behaved properly towards the villagers. The village cadres were very severe and everyone was afraid of them; the higher cadres who came from the district or province always pretended to be kind and helpful to the villagers.

59. How did the villagers feel about them?

Except for those who had close relations with VC cadres or a few poor peasants who had benefited from the land distribution, all the other villagers disliked the Front people.

60. What did you learn about the aims of the Front?

The cadres in my hamlet gathered the villagers very often in meetings to tell them about the Front's aims; they also gave lectures on Communist ideology and the Socialist

ideology in North Vietnam; they talked about South Vietnam and the adverse conditions caused by the Americans, the landlords and the mercantile bourgeoisie, and finally about the people's duty to resist American imperialism. The aims of the Front were: to crush American imperialism, to crush the landlords, to crush the bourgeoisie, the liberation of South Vietnam by the people's revolution, and the unification of North and South Vietnam.

61. What did you think of these aims?

I don't believe in Front propaganda.

62. Which of these aims did you like best?

The unification of the country.

63. Which of these aims did you like least?

None of the other aims made sense to me.

64. What are the names of the leaders of the Front?

I know that the leader of the Front is Nguyen Huu Tho. He was detained by the GVN in Tuy Hoa in 1960. At the end of 1960, he succeeded in escaping from prison and it seems as though a company of Pathet Lao were sent there to take him away. He then became the leader of the Liberation Front which was founded on December 20, 1960. As far as I know, Nguyen Huu Tho is the leader but the VC cadres often said that he has been only a puppet in the Front, as he isn't a Party member, and all the Front's activities have been controlled by the Labor Party.

65. When the Front controlled your village, which of the following words would you use to describe them?

peace-loving, dangerous, patriotic, treasonous, brave, cowardly, sympathetic, ruthless, well disciplined, rigid.

I have never sympathized with the VC because when the Front controlled my hamlet, they arrested my father and sent him to a mountainous area for "reeducation" despite the fact that he was ill and unable to move around by himself. Ever since that my feelings toward the Front have been the same. The Front pretends to be peace-loving but it is actually dangerous. It is treasonous, ruthless and rigid.

66. [illegible] the Front send him away for re-education?

He had been a member of the village council.

67. Did the Front hold meetings in your village? How often?

The Front held meetings in my village almost everyday.

68. What did they say about your village?

About my village they said, "The villagers have to prepare for more hardships in order to help the Front achieve the people's revolution as soon as possible."

69. What about the GVN?

They said, "The GVN does the most abject thing in inviting the Americans to come here as their masters."

70. What about the Americans?

They said, "The Americans come here to transform South Vietnam into a new type of colony different from that conceived by the French but worse for the people's interests."

71. What about North Vietnam?

They said, "Ho Chi Minh is a leader of talent. Thanks to him, North Vietnam becomes more and more powerful with its factories which make it independent of foreign countries, particularly from the economic standpoint."

72. What about Communist China?

They said, "China now is one of the most industrialized countries in the world; it has a powerful army and an atomic bomb. It is giving aid to North Vietnam, whatever they need, say weapons, ammunition, aircraft, rice, wheat, flour and also troops. This enables North Vietnam to give more assistance to the Liberation Front."

73. What about Russia?

They said, "Russia gives assistance as a matter of form only. Because of the revisionist ideology, Russia is now

deviating from the initial Marxist line and drawing near the capitalist countries, especially the USA."

74. What did the Front say about the war?

The cadres said, "The Front is sure to win the war."

75. What did you think about what they said?

I only listened to the Front cadres; I had no opinion on what they said, except about the war outcome. I never thought the Front would win the war.

76. What did the other villagers say?

I was unable to find out what the other villagers thought.

77. Did the Front ever take any villagers away for reeducation?

Most of the people in my village have been taken away for reeducation. Those who didn't pay taxes or contributions in time were usually sent to a place set apart in the village for seven days as a first warning. If they were unable to pay when they returned, they would be taken away for a longer time to a mountainous place. A man who showed any signs of disapproval would be regarded as a reactionary and sent for reeducation. In October 1965, some financial cadres came to my home to collect taxes. I had neither paddy nor money left to give them so I said, "I have nothing to eat now, how can I pay taxes? Would you please take away what you find that is valuable in my home?" For saying that, I was arrested and sent to a reeducation camp for nearly two months and when I was released, I had to sell my furniture and also my father's coffin to pay the taxes. Last of all, those suspected of spying for the GVN were kept almost permanently in a detention camp. They were about 100 people. There were in my village about 4000 adults, some 3000 were sent away for reeducation for seven days or so, some 100 were sent for three months or so and about 100 were permanently imprisoned.

78. How did the villagers feel about it?

I only know that they were angry about it.

79. What did the cadres say?

The cadres said, "The brainwashing is quite necessary for people to get rid of their bad feelings."

80. How many men over 16 were in your hamlet?

My hamlet was the smallest one in the village. There were only 15 young men over 16. Six joined the Front forces but only one was still living. Two men were serving in the ARVN; they joined it before the Front controlled the village. All the remaining people were hamlet guerrillas.

81. What do you think made them choose one side rather than the other?

They had no choice.

82. Did those who joined the Front always do so of their own free will?

The two people who joined the ARVN did so of their own free will. They were poor and needed money to support their families. As for those who joined the Front forces, they had been persuaded by Front propaganda. The Front first indoctrinated the young people by lectures, then they usually prepared the village girls to move on their pride at meetings or make them feel ashamed by their provocations.

83. Did they ever force any young men to join the Front?

Until now, the Front hasn't drafted young people in my village, but once they had volunteered they would be arrested if they tried to flee the ranks.

84. How did the villagers feel about the young men joining the Front?

They felt very unhappy because they knew that many of young men had died in battle.

85. How did they feel about young men joining the ARVN?

I don't know how they felt but I know that they were persecuted by the village cadres. They were often asked

by the Front to call their children back from the ARVN. If they didn't succeed in doing so, they were sent for a study course for ten or fifteen days and they kept repeating this many times in the year.

Between 1963 and 1964, the young people in my village used to be arbitrarily arrested by the Civil Guards or the SDC and beaten up by them. So their parents and wives always asked them to stay away from all GVN agents. But in 1965 and 1966, due to the fact that the GVN authorities have treated the ralliers and prisoners well, the families became confident when they learned that their children or husbands were in GVN hands.

86. Were families with sons in the Front treated differently in your village? Explain.

The families with sons in the Front weren't treated differently in my village. The only difference in treatment was that they were well-seated at the meetings.

87. How many Front guerrillas were in your village?

They were about a platoon strong.

88. What did they do?

They were in charge of the village police, they watched over the population and they sniped at the GVN troops when they passed through the village.

89. Did the Front ever promise to take land away from some villagers and give it to others?

They actually have taken land from some and given it to others.

90. If so, from whom did they take it?

They took it away from those who had left the village for GVN-controlled areas, from the communal properties, and also from the landowners who left their land uncultivated. Half of my land was taken away for distribution in 1965 because I had been unable to farm it for two years. That was an effective way to isolate the landowners in my village. They were unable to hire laborers and had to leave their land mostly uncultivated, as the village's Work Exchange Association didn't work with them.

91. How did the villagers feel about it?

Before the promulgation of the agricultural tax, the beneficiaries of the land distribution felt satisfied but they changed their minds when they found that they would be unable to benefit from their labor because the Front would collect a larger part of their crop.

92. Was it done fairly?

Most of the land was fairly distributed to the village's share croppers.

93. Was the land given permanently, or as a loan to be paid for later, or did the people have to pay rent?

The beneficiary had no ownership rights on the land distributed to him. But nothing had to be paid for later by him either as a loan or rent.

94. Did you or your family receive or lose any land this way?

I lost one hectare, the part of my land that was good only for an orchard.

95. How was your family classified by the Front?

Middle class farmer.

96. What do you think would happen to the land if the GVN returned to your hamlet?

I think if the GVN returned to my hamlet the distributed land would be returned to its owner.

97. Were those who received land satisfied or better-off than before?

In my hamlet, the poor people who received land seemed to be satisfied but they weren't better off, compared with the years prior to 1963. Now every villager is living a miserable life except for a few Front cadres.

98. Had there been a land reform before the Front came?

No.

99. What taxes did you (and the others) have to pay the Front when it first controlled your hamlet? Who controlled the taxes?

The Front first came to my hamlet at the end of 1963, however, I started to pay contributions only in 1964. For the years of 1964 and 1965 I paid, as contributions for troop support, 500 kilos of paddy. The amount was based on my two hectares of land that normally yielded about 400 gia of paddy (2,400 kilos) for each good crop. Unfortunately in 1963, 1964, and 1965, my family could obtain only an average of 110 gia of paddy (660 kilos) because of the drought. And according to a new scale for agricultural taxes to be applied in 1966, my family would have to pay 800 kilos of paddy. Most of the people in my hamlet had to eat manioc, potatoes, or whatever they found that was edible in the surrounding forests to keep aside paddy for contributions to the Front.

100. Did you pay taxes in money or in rice, food, etc?

Until 1965, I paid taxes in paddy, but this year the Front requested the villagers to husk three quarters of it into rice before handing it over to them.

101. What did the Front cadres say about the taxes?

The cadres said: "Due to circumstances, we have to be self sufficient. North Vietnam is able to send only weapons and ammunition to the troops in South Vietnam, not food. It is the duty of the people here to feed them sufficiently."

102. What did the villagers say?

The villagers were dissatisfied and many cried in public.

103. What did you think?

I thought it was inhuman to collect taxes that way and let people die of hunger.

104. Did the Front state what percentage of your income was to be taken in taxes?

No. But I have to say that I paid 500 kilos of paddy out of 660 kilos from my last year's crop. Only 160 kilos were left for my family with 7 persons for the year.

105. How did the Front determine the size and output of taxable land holdings?

I know only that the Front determined the size and output of taxable land holdings; I don't know how they did it.

106. Did a family with, say, 5 children have to pay the same taxes as another family with the same amount of land but with only 2 children?

A family with 5 children had to pay less because each family member was entitled to a certain amount of tax-free paddy.

107. Were the taxes justly applied, or did some have to pay more or less than their share?

In 1964 and the first 9 months of 1965, the taxes and contributions were collected by the hamlet or village cadres. Due to their prejudiced intentions or their ignorance, the taxes weren't justly applied. The former landowners or middle class farmers usually had to pay more than their share. But at the end of 1965, the district authorities took charge of determining carefully the size and output of each villager's taxable land and made correct calculations of the amount of taxes to be paid by each one. The taxes for 1966 were higher but more justly applied.

108. What happened to a villager who refused to pay his taxes?

He could be taken away for reeducation for 7 days and if, upon his release, he was again unable to pay, he would be detained longer in a remote reeducation camp, say one to three months.

109. How did the villagers usually sell their produce?

The villagers weren't authorized to sell their produce in GVN-controlled areas, except for sugar cane and fruit. The sugar carried out was subject to a commercial tax of 30% of the current selling price.

110. What happened to the cost of living?

The cost of living wasn't so high; rice in my area cost 11, 14 or 16 piasters a kilo according to the quality, while in GVN areas a kilo of fair quality rice cost 20 piasters.

111. Were the villagers allowed to go to the GVN markets?

Only non-suspect women having children and very old people over 70 were authorized to go to GVN markets.

112. If the Front had restrictions on selling produce, did this have any effect on the villagers' production of food?

There was no effect on the production of food.

113. Were all kinds of food and goods available?

No. People in my village were deprived of everything; most commodity goods were unavailable.

114. Did you have to give food to Front soldiers?

We gave food to Front soldiers in particular circumstances. About the end of 1965, every family in our village had to give food to a company of North Vietnamese soldiers who were going to launch an attack against a Civil Guard post in [redacted] Village, Duy An District. Each family had to feed seven soldiers for a day. I had to supply three chickens and seven rice balls.

115. If you sold food to the soldiers, was the price fair?

In my village, after paying taxes and contributions, no one had enough rice left to eat.

116. Did the Front set up any organizations in your hamlet?

My hamlet was governed by an administrative committee headed by a chairman. Under him were cadres in charge of security and economics and finance, a squad leader in charge of guerrilla warfare, an assistant squad leader in charge of labor, a political cadre in charge of ideological indoctrination and a cadre in charge of propaganda, culture and education. Everyone in my hamlet, from small children to very aged people, had to become active in a Front organization. They were classified in separate groups as follows:

the aged men had to weave baskets,
the aged women had to provide and care for wounded troops,
the farmers had to do labor,
the women had to husk paddy,

the male youth had to serve in the Army,
the female youth had to take part in guerrilla warfare,
the teenagers had to make propaganda for the Front.

Each group was headed by a leader and an assistant. The following were special groups which included more active people:

Liberation Youths' Association
Liberation Farmers' Association
Liberation Women's Association

Then came the Labor Youth Group, made up of trustworthy young people, male and female, who would be able to become Party members in the future. And above all was the Party chapter made up of all the Party members and headed by a man whose name is [redacted]

117. Were the people in the village better-off because of these organizations?

These organizations weren't set up for the purpose of bettering the villagers' living conditions. On the contrary, they were for the purpose of intensifying the war effort at the villagers' expense.

118. Were there any secret organizations?

I wasn't aware of any secret organizations in my village.

119. Tell me about the Front cadres in your hamlet and village? What sort of persons were they? Where did they come from?

They were hard-hearted people, even toward their relatives. They were natives of the village and came from poor farmers' families.

120. What were the most important cadre positions in your hamlet and village?

The most important cadre in my village was the Party secretary whose name is [redacted] the highest cadre in my hamlet was [redacted], who presided over the hamlet committee.

121. Which cadres or groups had the most influence on Front administration and policies in your village?

All the village's Party members and the Labor Youth Group.

122. Were there any female cadres? What positions did they hold?

There were some female cadres in my village, most were in charge of military proselyting. But they worked in secret and very few people knew about their performance.

123. How did they behave? What did you and the other villagers think of them?

They were very rigid in the performance of their duties, everyone was afraid of them.

124. Who belonged to the Party chapter in your village?

I knew only the Party Secretary, [redacted], and some members living in my hamlet, [redacted]

125. What did the Party do? What was its role in the affairs and administration of the village?

The Party chapter directed the affairs and administration of the village.

126. What were the relationships between the Party members and the other cadres?

I know that the other cadres only carried out orders given by the Party members; they weren't authorized to discuss the affairs and administration of the village.

127. What do you think the relationship is between the Party and the Front? Between the Party and Hanoi?

In my opinion, the Party directs the Front, and there are no differences between the Party and Hanoi.

128. What did you and the villagers think about the way the Front cadres behaved in your village?

Most of the villagers disapproved of the way the Front cadres acted in my village.

129. Did the villagers dislike them?

The villagers disliked them because they were unceasingly kept under surveillance by them.

130. Were they honest and fair?

They were liars.

131. Did they help the villagers?

The villagers helped themselves.

132. Were the cadres in the village been changed? Why were they changed? What differences were there between the old and new cadres?

Only the cadres who did their utmost to carry out the orders of their superiors were able to hold their posts for a long time. Inefficient cadres would be discarded sooner or later. I saw no differences between the old and the new cadres.

133. Did you ever see or hear about any conflicts between the cadres?

I know that there were conflicts between the cadres, but they kept them secret.

134. Were there different factions among the cadres?

There were no factions amongst the cadres.

135. Have there been any changes in the attitudes of the villagers towards the Front cadres?

Ever since the VC came, it has been the same; there has been no change in the attitudes of the villagers towards the Front cadres, they were always afraid of them and fully cooperated with them. The villagers suspected one another and dared not show their feelings to each other. When the Front first came, the cadres said that there would be no labor required but, finally, the villagers were forced to work for them. So they complained. Labor tours sometimes lasted up to six or seven months or even one year, and laborers got sick or killed. Another factor was heavy taxes.

136. Did the Front ever arrest, punish, or kill any villagers?

In my hamlet, a GVN hamlet leader, a landowner, and a medic's family have been killed by the Front. Besides,

most of the villagers have been taken away for reeducation. The GVN hamlet leader had been suspected of being a spy. The landowner was arrested while preparing to flee to a GVN-controlled area; his children succeeded in escaping some days earlier. He was killed because he had refused to give support to the VC during the past few years. As for the medic's family, husband and wife were killed by the Front because of personal revenge by a cadre.

137. And do you think about it?

I think most of the Front cadres were cruel and inhuman. They liked violence and weren't afraid of shedding blood.

138. What did the other villagers say about it?

Most of the villagers were angry about it, particularly the murder of the medic's family, but no one made any comments.

139. Were you or the other villagers ever made to work without pay?

Yes.

140. What did you do?

I was forced to work for the Front forces in Son Hoa District where I carried rice for three months. I was classed in the A category for civilian laborers from 18 to 35 years old; these people had to work from 3 to 6 months. Then came the B category for people 35 to 45 years old; they had to work from 20 to 30 days. Finally, the C category laborers, people from 45 to 55 years old, had to work for 20 days.

141. What did you think about it?

I thought it was the hardest and most dangerous work, as most of the laborers became ill before returning home. It was one of the main reasons why people fled the areas controlled by the Front.

142. What did the other villagers say about it?

All the villagers, with no exceptions, complained bitterly about it.

143. Was your hamlet a combat hamlet?

My hamlet was a combat hamlet. There was a fence and moat around it like the strategic hamlet. But, inside the hamlet, communication trenches had been dug everywhere. There were two kinds of trenches, the ones about 80 cm deep, which were open, and the others which were about 1.60 meter deep and were covered with a bamboo framework with dirt piled on top. The deep trenches were covered in ten-meter lengths, leaving one meter open for breathing. The villagers were urged to prepare spikes and lay them everywhere. They were also recently requested to dig underground communication trenches leading up to the foot of the mountain, but this hadn't been done when I left the village.

144. What did you like best about the combat hamlet?

I liked nothing in a combat hamlet.

145. Were any villagers ever injured by the spike pits?

No one was injured by spike pits.

146. How well was your hamlet protected from military attacks?

The defenses were prepared for the Front troops, and not for the population. The villagers didn't think of using these defenses during a GVN operation.

147. How would you compare it to the GVN's strategic hamlet?

The strategic hamlet could, to some extent, protect the villagers against the Front fighters' attacks, but the combat hamlet could do nothing against the ravaging GVN-American artillery shellings or aircraft bombings.

148. In your village, had you heard about conditions of life in the Front forces?

I was told that the Front forces stationed in my area suffered great hardships. They lacked everything -- food, medicine and clothes.

149. Who told you about them?

I had been a laborer carrying supplies to the Front troops, so I knew much about the conditions in the Front forces.

150. Did you speak with any villagers who had returned from service with the Front forces? What did they say?

I have seen some villagers who had returned from the Front forces because of illness, but they said nothing about it. Some others had fled from the Front forces and taken refuge in the village. They were arrested by the district authorities and sent away for reeducation.

151. Did any crippled Front soldiers return home? What did the Front do to help them?

There were four crippled Front soldiers living in the village. The Front was supplying them rice to eat.

152. Did you know how many villagers from your hamlet serving in the Front forces had been killed or wounded?

About fifteen people had been killed and four wounded.

153. Did you think a soldier's chances of surviving were better in the Front or the GVN forces?

I think a soldier's chances of surviving are better in the GVN forces.

154. Which did you think suffered more casualties, the GVN or the Front?

I can't say which side suffered more casualties because, in my village, I have been informed only of casualties suffered by the GVN.

155. Did you ever meet any soldiers or cadres working with the Front who weren't Southerners?

The Northern troops stayed in my village for two days. They had grey khaki uniforms and modern individual weapons.

156. What did they do? What did you think of them?

During their moves, they just stayed there for a few days. They left the area hastily, because their presence seemed to have been detected by the ARVN, as the GVN aircraft flew in and strafed the village. Most of those soldiers were young and behaved politely toward the villagers. The villagers had nothing to complain about concerning their behavior, but they were so afraid of their presence, particularly when they fired back at the GVN aircraft.

157. Did the Front's activities in your village changed in any way in the last year or so?

The Front became more active in 1965 and succeeded in controlling, almost entirely, Tuy An District. Due to the presence of an increasing number of Northern troops in Phu Yen Province, the Front seemed to have been in bad need of food. That was the reason why the Front cadres became more and more exacting toward the villagers about taxes.

158. Have you ever heard about defeats suffered by Front units?

I never heard about defeats suffered by Front units. During last February when the Americans came for the first time to Tuy An District, they occupied some hills near my village. From there, they sent a patrol to my village and a clash occurred with the guerrillas who lost two dead, one of them was the Party secretary, [redacted]. The Americans also sent small groups of Special Forces to the nearby forest in search of Front fighters.

159. What has happened to the Front units in that area?

There were no encounters with the Front's main force units in the area, but I know that the presence of American Special Forces in the forest demoralized the guerrillas who used to take refuge there. Many of them got so scared that they left their squads and returned to the hamlet just to stay inactive there.

160. What did the cadres say about Front victories?

They always talked about the heavy losses suffered by the American forces in all the battles. Once they said, "In a single battle in Binh Dinh Province, the Americans suffered 800 dead. They were unable to carry away the corpses for burial and had to throw them into the sea."

161. Did the Front ever set up a school in your village?

The Front never set up a school in my village. The cadres used the former GVN schools for the education of the children and adults. But as soon as they knew how to spell Vietnamese words the children were indoctrinated about the Liberation Front's aims and American imperialism.

162. How many children went to school?

Less children went to school than when the village was still under GVN control.

163. Why?

Because the children's families had to pay the teacher in rice, while they had difficulty in providing food for themselves.

164. How much rice did a teacher receive for salary?

From 12 to 15 kilos a month.

165. Did adults go to school?

They attended school in the evening. But many were absent often or left after a few classes, as most of them had no energy left after having toiled from morning till night to provide food for their families.

166. What subjects were taught?

All the usual subjects of education were taught but they were always mixed with politics.

167. Did you have a hospital or doctors in your village?

My village had a first aid station, a nurse and a midwife. But the midwife had left the area when I became a refugee, as she was unable to endure the hardships.

168. Was it better or worse than the medical facilities before the Front came?

It was worse than the medical facilities before the [illegible] care, many newborn children died from lack of medicine.

169. [illegible] in your village, what did you hear about the present Saigon Government? Who told you?

The cadres said, "The present Saigon Government is very weak since its leaders are unpopular. It may be toppled by a coup d'etat any time. And in the future, coups will follow one another until the Americans feel so disheartened that they will leave the country for good."

170. Do you know the name of any of the GVN's leaders?

I know that the leaders are now Nguyen Van Thieu and Nguyen Cao Ky.

171. What are their airs?

They aim at clearing South Vietnam of Communism.

172. Which of the following words do you now think best describe the GVN?

strong/weak? compassionate/cruel? just/corrupt? wise/confused? dedicated/lazy?

I am not able to answer that question.

173. What do you know about the more recent behavior of local, district, and provincial GVN officials?

I think the GVN officials should have done their utmost to give assistance to the war refugees. But I have seen that they have been quite indifferent to our misfortune. The refugees were deprived of everything, and they have been anxious to be given the necessary papers so that they may go in search of employment. Yet many have waited for two or three months in Tuy An district-town, without being able to leave that place for the refugee camps around Tuy Hoa city. I have been told that some have thought of returning to their villages out of despair. The present village representative is to be blamed most, because the refugees sometimes had to wait for many days before being able to see him.

174. How did you get information in your village on what was happening in Saigon?

Information in my village on what was happening in Saigon was given by the Front cadres in meetings, on bulletins published by them, or though the few radios the hamlet owned.

175. Did the Front forbid certain sources of information?

Villagers were forbidden to listen to Saigon Radio or read Saigon papers.

176. Did you ever hear things that contradicted what the Front said?

About the end of 1965, the Front forces launched an attack against a GVN Civil Guard post in An Dan Village and succeeded in destroying, by mine, two trucks from a convoy which had been sent to the rescue of the troops besieged in the GVN posts. Radio Liberation, however, announced the destruction of 35 trucks. As the villagers knew the truth from people coming from An Dan Village, they became more skeptical about the Front information.

177. Did you get mail in your village?

No one could get mail in my village, except maybe the cadres who communicated through the Front's commo-liaison agents.

178. Did you or the other villagers ever listen to Radio Saigon?

I had no radio and so I was unable to listen to Radio Saigon. But I think a few people in my village, who owned radios, had been listening in secret to it, as there were always rumors about the Saigon Government and, also, about Front defeats.

179. Did you or the others read newspapers? Which ones?

I used to read the Front paper, "Giai Phong," in the hamlet's information station.

180. Which was the more reliable source of information, the Front or the GVN? Why?

I think GVN information was relatively more reliable because I know that the Front was only telling lies. When I first came to Tuy Hoa City, I was surprised to see people living so happily, unlike what the Front cadres had told the villagers.

181. Did you ever see or hear entertainment such as "cai luong" or "vong co"?

The villagers, from time to time, could see presentations given by a Psy-war Entertainment group. They used to stage folk dances, perform tragi-comedy theatre and, also, sing vong co. The subject matter for the theatre and the songs was always hatred of the landlords, the mercantile bourgeoisie and the foreign imperialists.

182. What have you heard about life in North Vietnam?

In every meeting the cadres praised the happy life of the people in North Vietnam. They said the Northerners were living in freedom and prosperity. There was no want, no unemployment, no beggars, no prostitution. According to them, industries were developing rapidly in North Vietnam. Due to the increasing number of factories, the state could provide all commodity goods to the population, and due to collective farming, harvests were better and food more than sufficient for the population.

183. Did you ever hear about the Chieu Hoi program?

At the end of last year, people in my village found a lot of leaflets, dropped by aircraft, about the Chieu Hoi program.

184. What did you learn about it?

It is a GVN organization which welcomes the Front fighters or cadres who rally to the GVN and gives them assistance in order that they may change their way of living under the National Government.

185. Did you and the other villagers believe what you heard?

Only at the end of 1965 were the villagers well aware of the Chieu Hoi program; then they believed in it. This was due to the fact that many Front fighters had rallied

and told the truth about the Chieu Hoi program to their wives and children who had succeeded in seeing them. The latter then told this to the villagers.

186. What do you think of the program?

In 1963 I didn't believe in it, but in 1965 I began to believe in it because many VC had defected to the GVN.

187. Did Ly Tui Chanh ever return to your village?

No.

188. Was your village ever attacked by the ARVN or by its allies?

My village was attacked many times by the ARVN and its allies.

189. When, by whom and how was the village attacked?

The first attack was made in May 1965, by artillery from the district town. My village was attacked because the Front fighters had shelled a GVN post with a mortar placed in the village. Then my village was bombed by aircraft in September, when they mistook the villagers, who had been digging shelters, for the Front soldiers. The third attack was made by both artillery and aircraft in November, when Northern troops were staying in my village. And finally, in February 1966, it was attacked by a group of American soldiers on patrol, when the latter were sniped at by village guerrillas.

190. Were any Front soldiers killed or wounded when your village was attacked?

During the last attack in 1965, five North Vietnamese soldiers were killed and three wounded.

191. Were any of the villagers killed or hurt? Was any property destroyed?

In all, ten villagers were killed and three wounded, many dwellings were destroyed by bombs and napalm. Had we had underground shelters been dug, more villagers would have been killed.

192. Which attack was the most effective against the Front?

The most effective attack against the Front was the occupation of important high positions, around the areas controlled by the VC, by airborne troops and the dispatching of Special Forces deep into the forest for counter-guerrilla operations. I know that, due to American Special Forces counter-guerrilla operations in my area, most of the VC guerrillas from my village got scared and left their squads to take refuge in their family homes. The Front main forces gradually lost contact with the local guerrillas and had to move to a more secure place. Then the villagers found no difficulty in moving to the GVN-controlled areas.

193. Which was the least effective?

The least effective was the GVN sweep operation over the village by ground troops, during which Front cadres, guerrillas, and young people usually succeeded in escaping to their hideouts in the forests.

194. Which attack was the most destructive against the villagers?

The napalm attack.

195. Before the attacks, was your village given any warning?

No warning was given.

196. Would such a warning have been useful to the villagers?

Such a warning would have helped reduce the villagers' casualties.

197. How did these attacks make you feel about the GVN and its allies?

I felt very sorry about the casualties suffered by the villagers after the attacks. But I had been expecting stronger attacks so that the GVN would be able to control the area entirely and enable the people to live and work in peace.

198. What did the other villagers say?

Except for the people whose children or relatives worked actively for the Front, I think all other villagers felt as I did.

199. How do you blame for the attacks? Explain.

I blamed the Front, because without it, I would have lived in peace and in better conditions.

200. Has the cutlers asked anyone join the Front?

No.

201. Have you seen or heard about the use of chemicals to destroy vegetation or crops?

When I was still in the village it was not sprayed. I have just heard, though, that it was sprayed ten days ago.

202. Before you came here, had you seen any Americans in Vietnam?

Before I came here, I hadn't seen any Americans, although they have been camping on the hills near my village.

203. What did the Front say about the Americans?

The Front said the Americans were ruthless, selfish and aloof toward other people.

204. Was the Front correct in what they said?

I think the Front wasn't correct in what they said. The [illegible] seen in Thuy Hoa seemed to be very polite, compassionate, and fond of the children.

205. What do you think the Americans really want in Vietnam?

I think they really want to help the GV defeat Communist aggression through the Liberation Front.

206. What makes you think so?

Before the Front controlled my village, I knew through the papers that the Americans had helped other countries which were, like Korea and Germany.

207. Have you seen or heard about American gifts to the villagers?

I have received gifts from them in the refugee camp, such as soap, clothing, and rice.

208. What did you and the others think about these gifts?

All of us felt very happy to receive the gifts.

209. Which do you think is stronger: the GVN with its allies or the Front with its allies? Why?

I think the GVN with its allies is much stronger, because the USA is the most wealthy country in the world, and so is able to supply, unceasingly, the most modern and powerful weapons.

210. What were the reasons that made you leave your village and come here?

I found that the VC didn't serve a good cause, they were very bellicose, and would never stop the war until they have been satisfied in their ambitions to rule over the whole country. Besides, I felt I was going to starve soon, and I would be able to have peace and food in the GVN area.

211. Did you ever hear broadcasts from planes or read leaflets asking you to leave?

More than one month ago, I heard broadcasts from planes asking the villagers to leave the area. They said: "The Allied forces are going to launch a big operation in the area and the villagers are requested to leave to avoid casualties."

212. What did you think?

I felt happy to have an opportunity to leave my village.

213. What reasons made you not want to leave your village?

I didn't want to part from my land, I was afraid of being unable to maintain my family and, also, of the difficulties and dangers encountered during an escape from the VC area to the GVN one.

214. Which was the strongest reason?

The strongest reason was the fear of being arrested or killed during the escape by either side.

215. [illegible]n't you leave earlier?

I always expected that the ARVN would come and expel the VC from my village.

216. [illegible] you ever taken refuge before?

I haven't.

217. [illegible] you left your hamlet, what had you heard about present conditions in GVN areas?

I had heard that the present conditions in GVN areas were much better than those in the Front areas and that salaries paid to workmen and even coolies were very high.

218. [illegible] did you hear it?

My wife heard it in the village market from the more

219. [illegible] you told what the GVN would do for you and other [illegible]es?

The GVN would provide lodging and food to the refugees until they have been able to earn their living.

220. [illegible] you believe what you were told?

I believed it.

221. [illegible] any one in your village try to stop you from leaving?

Due to the presence of allied troops in the nearby hills, the Front cadres' morale seemed to be affected and the cadres found less difficulty in fleeing the village. So no one tried to stop me from leaving.

222. [illegible] preparations for leaving did you and your family make?

I had nothing valuable left except for two oxen I had been able to sell two days before I moved.

223. [illegible]ggy did you bring? What did you leave behind?

I was able to bring 2 suit-cases full of clothes and [illegible] of rice.

224. [illegible] with you?

[illegible]arents, my wife, two children and a brother.

225. Describe your trip?

I encountered no difficulty; I had to walk seven kilometers from my hamlet to Tuy An District-town, it took me 30 hours from 5.30 AM to 10 AM. I went there along with six members of my family. We stayed in the district-town for about two weeks to make inquiries before moving to Phuoc Hau refugee camp three kilometers away from [illegible].

226. Did you expect to leave your hamlet for a long time or a short time?

I expected to leave my hamlet for a long time, at least until the time when I would be able to return to my village to live there in peace without being disturbed by any VC. So I am now seeking a new means of livelihood.

227. How many families have left your village/hamlet?

Only five families have left my hamlet. But I know that most of the population in [redacted] Hamlets have moved to the GVN areas. The reason was that the American troops had been camping near those hamlets and so facilitating the villagers in their move.

228. How many remained there? Why did they stay?

About 40% still remain there. Most of them either had close relations with the Front cadres or lived in remote hamlets where they found it difficult to avoid VC surveillance.

229. How many families leave your hamlet or village for other Front-controlled areas?

[illegible] families have left my hamlet or village for other Front controlled areas because they didn't want to become more miserable.

230. When did people first start leaving your village?

About the middle of March.

231. At what time of day did most of the refugees leave?

From 5.00 to 5:30 AM.

232. Which were the first to leave?

The families with relatives in the ARVN were the first to leave.

233. Have any people who left your village to come here now gone back?

No.

234. What would happen to you if you went back now?

If I went back now, I would be taken away for reeducation forever.

235. What have the GVN authorities here done for you?

Nothing has been done for me yet except for shelter.

236. Have you enough food, money, medicine?

Until now I have been given neither food nor money. I have had to buy rice with my own money and, now, my savings are nearly exhausted. I am supposed to be given 7 piasters a day, but I have received nothing yet.

237. Are your shelter and sanitation facilities good enough?

We are seven hundred refugees who have to live in a camp large enough for 150 persons. How can we have good enough shelter and sanitation?

238. Have you been given identification cards?

I am anxiously waiting for my identification card so that I may go out to seek employment.

239. How is the leadership of this camp organized?

For the present time, the leadership of the camp is ill-organized. I think the leaders have been overrun by the circumstances, as too many refugees have come to Tuy Hoa during a short period of time.

240. [illegible] the children of the refugees do here?

[illegible] are staying idle in the camp.

241. [illegible] suggestions about the children would you make to the authorities?

The authorities are not able to solve problems for the adults because of the increasing number of refugees. And can they do for the children?

242. [illegible] you blame for your troubles?

I blame the central government; it hasn't given the local authorities the necessary means to carry out their duties.

243. When you leave here, where would you like to go?

When I leave here, I would like to go to the province town or another city.

244. Why do you want to go there?

I want to go there to seek a job with the Americans to earn my living. I would start to work as a coolie and learn some other profession afterwards.

245. Here is a picture of a ladder. The bottom rung is numbered ten, and the top rung is numbered one. Now let's say that the top rung represents the best life you can imagine, and the bottom rung represents the worst life you can imagine. Where on this ladder would you say that your life was before the Front came to your village? After it came to your village? At the time you left your village? How about right now -- where on the ladder would you put your life now?

I'd say that before the Front came, my life was at rung No. 9. After it came to my village, my life was at No 8. At the time I left my village, it was at No. 10 and, right now, at No. 9.

246. Where do you think your life will be five years from now?

I can say nothing about it.

247. How could you describe the worst life you can imagine yourself living back in your village? What would it be like?

If I lived back in my village, I would have to follow the Front cadres to hide all the time in the forests and live like animals. How can I do production work to earn a living for my family and to pay taxes to the Front? So my family would have nothing to eat in the very near future and would die of hunger or illness.

248. How can you to describe the best life you can imagine for yourself? What would it be like?

I would like to live in peace in my village under a good national government which would take more care of the rural population. I would like more irrigation work to be done in my area to prevent drought and to improve agricultural production. I only wish to have three more hectares of good ricefields in addition to the two hectares I owned before. That is the best life I can imagine for myself.

249. If you could ask three things of any Vietnamese government, what would they be?

The three things I would ask of any Vietnamese government would be:

a/ to be given the necessary means to build a house to shelter my family,

b/ that the government take care of my children's education,

c/ that I be offered a job with an American construction firm.

250. How long do you think the war will last?

According to what I can see now, I think the war will last no longer than one or two more years. As the Americans and other allied countries are sending more troops here, the GVN is now in a position to speed up the pacification of the rural areas.

251. Which side do you think is winning now? Why do you think this?

The GVN is winning now because it has received so many American and allied troops on its side. They are now everywhere in Vietnam, even in the very remote areas like my village.

252. If the Front wins the war, what do you think life in Vietnam will be like?

If the Front wins the war, I think life in Vietnam will be like that I had been living before I left my village. The Front would keep the people in misery to serve the party and International Communism maybe for a hundred years more.

253. If the GVN wins the war, what do you think life in Vietnam will be like? Explain.

South Vietnam is a rich country. If the GVN wins the war, I think the living conditions of the population would improve rapidly with American aid.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

The subject was a middle class farmer who had been a member of the village council and had enjoyed an easy life. He seemed to have magnified things in asserting that under the Front's regime no one in his village had enough rice to eat or that, before the Front came, every young villager wore European dress and had a bicycle. He was, however, co-operative.

MASTER COPY

No. AGR-55

QUESTIONNAIRE II
For Refugees

1. Name of interviewer [redacted]
2. Name of subject [redacted]
3. Time and date of interview :
   From 9:45 AM to 11:45 AM on May 1966
   From 2:00 PM to 5:00 PM or May 1966
   From 9:00 AM to 11:30 AM on May 1966
   ~~2:30 PM~~ ~~4:30 PM~~
   Total time 9:30 hours

   Interview based on : tape ( ) hand written notes (X)
4. Place of interview :

   Tuy Hoa Youth Center
5. Sex of subject : Male (X) Female ( )
6. Age of subject : 36
7. Ethnic background : Vietnamese
8. Place of birth :
   hamlet [redacted]
   village [redacted]
   district Tuy An
   province Phu Yen
9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :
   hamlet [redacted]
   village [redacted]
   district Tuy An
   province Phu Yen
10. (a) Length of residence in last location : From childhood
    (b) Who controlled the place of residence:
    GVN ( ) VC (X) Contested ( )
    (c) Since when controlled or contested ? End of 19[redacted]

11. Number of brothers (2) and sisters ( )

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : 1

13. Marital status : Married

14. Number of children : 2

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age :

16. Parents with subject (X) or not with subject ( )
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject(X) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject (X) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject(X) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion : Ancestor worship

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : Farmer

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation Middle class
(b) Landowner ? Yes How much land 2 hectares

20. Education :
illiterate ( )
literate (X)
schooling completed : 6 years

21. Any relatives in VC : Cousin working in Tuy An district

22. Any relatives in GVN :

23. Any relatives (how many? when?) killed by :
(a) French
(b) GVN
(c) VC one brother killed by VC

24. When became a refugee : April [redacted], 1966

25. Where took refuge first Tuy An district town

26. Present residence [redacted] Hamlet, [redacted]
Phu Yen Provin[redacted]

AGR

INTERVIEW

56

GMI
15

THE RAND CORPORATION
[redacted]

STUDIES OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR-56

Date of Interview : May [redacted] 1966

Rank or Function : Refugee -- January [redacted] 1966

Area of Residence : [redacted] Refugee Camp,
[redacted] Village,
Hieu Xuong District,
Phu Yen Province

LIMITED TO RAND STAFF
This information is available only to persons affiliated with RAND and is for RAND use only.

POINTS OF INTEREST

152, 192 -- Subject's image of the GVN while back in his village.

151 -- Behavior of GVN officials encountered by refugees while en route to point of refuge.

152 -- Further comments on officials.

193, 194, 197 -- Account of Korean operation in his area.

195, 191 -- Attitudes toward Koreans.

197, 206 -- Conditions experienced when he first arrived in refugee camp.

210 -- Hope for the future.

1. How long had you and your family lived in your village before you became a refugee?

   Before I became a refugee, I had lived in my village since my childhood.

2. How big was your village/hamlet?

   My village was very big and consisted of [redacted] hamlets. The hamlet in which I lived had more than two thousand people by itself.

3. How did you earn your living then? How did most of the villagers earn their living?

   I earned my living by farming my land. Most of the villagers were farmers. The remaining people earned their living as charcoal-burners. Their jobs consisted of going up to the hills in the morning where they cut tree branches and burnt them in small furnaces they had built for the purpose, then they came back home in the evening with a load of charcoal from the furnaces. Most of the charcoal they produced was to be sold to blacksmiths in the village.

4. Were most of them well-off or poor? Did they have enough to eat?

   Most of them were poor and didn't have enough to eat.

5. Did you own any land? How did you get it?

   I had eight hectares of land, 6.3 hectares of which had been an "inherited land title" given from my ancestors and 1.7 hectares had been inherited from my parents. The last portion of land was confiscated by the front in 1973 because I was unable to farm it by myself.

6. How many of the other villagers owned land?

   About nine out of ten villagers in my hamlet owned land.

7. Normally, how much paddy did you get from your crops? How many crops a year?

   Normally, I got 70 buckets or so of paddy per year (about 4,200 kg). There was only one crop a year.

8. How many members are there in your village? How old are they? What did they do in the village?

I have now four sons and three daughters left, since one of my sons was killed in 1964 by the VC. My eldest daughter was a married woman and lived apart from the family. My third son, 24, has been in the ARVN for four years. The remaining sons now 36, 20, and 14 and the remaining daughters now 12 and 9 had lived with me in the village until all of us left it to take refuge in GVN areas.

9. What is your religion?

I am a Buddhist.

10. What religions did the other villagers practice?

70% of the villagers practiced Buddhism while the remaining 30% were Cao Dai.

11. Were there ever conflicts between members of different religions?

There were no conflicts in my village between Buddhists and Confucists.

12. What is your ethnic background?

I am a Vietnamese and so are all the other villagers.

13. What education have you had?

I had two years of school.

14. What education did the other villagers have?

all the other villagers had one or two years of school, except the very old people.

15. Was there a school in your village/hamlet?

There were five-form elementary schools in my village. During the Ngo Dinh Diem regime, popular courses were

But since the Front controlled the village, adults have spent most of their spare time in meetings and doing corvee labor so that they gradually lost their eagerness in attending night courses. This was particularly so when they lacked writing paper and lights to use at night. Moreover, many children from poor families had to abandon their studies in order to help their parents earn their daily meal.

16. Who were your best friends in your hamlet?

My best friend in the hamlet was Mr. X to whom I could talk freely about everything.

17. How about after the Front people came: Could you then talk freely or less freely?

After the Front came I could still talk to him freely for some time. But when he became leader of the Aged People's Association I avoided seeing him as much as possible.

18. Which people in your village were the most important? Who was the best-informed person?

[redacted] seemed to be the most important man in my village, although he wasn't the Party Chapter's president. He was a member of the Resistance under the Viet Minh Movement and was arrested and jailed in 1956 by the GVN. [redacted] been a VC underground cadre before he showed up as a District Committee member at the [illegible] the Front started controlling the area. [redacted] were the best informed about what was happening in the district, in [illegible] and in [illegible] Vietnam.

19. Which people in your village were the most respected?

[illegible] the Front controlled the village, I had been the most respected man in the village. I can say that seven out of ten villagers had regard and consideration for me. [redacted] didn't like me and at the end of 1964 proposed to the VC cadres that they send me away for re-education. So I was detained in the mountains for three months.

20. How was life in your village before 1954?

Before 1954, most of the people in my village participated in the Resistance against the French. After nine years of merciless struggle, life in my village had became most miserable.

21. What kinds of people in your village fought against the French?

Most of the people participated in the Resistance but under the direction of [redacted] and [redacted] who were Viet Minh cadres.

22. What happened to those people after 1954?

Those two Viet Minh cadres were arrested and jailed in 1956 by the GVN because of anti-government activities.

23. Did life in your village improve after 1954?

After 1954, the villagers started tilling their land again which, for the most part, had been left uncultivated for a very long time. Around 1956 the villagers became better-off and life in my village continued to improve steadily until the end of 1962. Even the poorest people who had left the village to earn their living elsewhere have come back with extra money.

24. How did the local officials behave?

They all showed good behavior towards the villagers.

25. Were the local people or strangers? Were they elected or appointed?

They were both local people and strangers, but they were elected by the population. [redacted] was the village head between 1954 and 1956. He wasn't a native of the village, but had been, for many years, an employee of a French sugar factory located in my area, and, so, was well-known to the population. That factory was closed sometime before 1954. In the following period, between 1957 and 1959, my village was placed under the leadership of [redacted], a stranger and a former employee of the sugar factory. That man was killed by the VC in 1959, and was replaced by [redacted], native, who kept the job until 1963, when the Front started its control over the village. [redacted] is still my village's representative in the GVN, holding office in Tay Ninh city.

26. Have you ever had an election in your village?

All the representatives were elected by the villagers and the elections took place in the village conference hall located in my hamlet.

27. Describe how the election was conducted.

In each hamlet, the leader was given the task of gathering all the people, male and female, who were holders of identity cards, to go to the polls on election day.

28. Did everyone vote?

Almost everyone went to the polls, except those who were too ill to go to the village conference hall.

29. How many candidates were there?

In each election, there were many candidates, from two to ten people.

30. What qualifications did one have to have in order to vote?

All those who were holders of an identity card could vote, except those who had lost their civil rights.

31. What qualifications did one have to have to be a candidate?

A candidate had to be at least twenty five years old, and he also had to be a village resident.

32. A resident for how long?

I am not sure exactly.

33. Were the elections honest?

The elections for the village representative were honest, as I know there was no pressure from higher authorities and the villagers were quite free to choose the men they liked. But may I say that the elections for the province representative to the National Assembly were quite dishonest.

34. How were they conducted in your village?

I remember that there were, in the last election, many candidates for the province representative to the National Assembly. Before election day, we received, for the villagers' information, posters advertising the candidates' personal histories and so we were supposed to have been free to make our choice. But on that day, the village officials, under pressure from higher authorities, requested us to vote for one name only, that of Dr. [redacted].

35. Did the province representative promise any improvements for your area? Did they keep their promises?

As peasants living far from the cities, we never saw our representative, either before or after the election, and also, we didn't pay any attention to their promises.

36. What did you know about the Diem Government?

I know that the Diem Government did a lot about strengthening the national authority in uprooting almost all the communist networks in South Vietnam and crushing the Binh Xuyen and some religious insurrections.

37. What did you and other villagers think about the fall of that Government?

During the time of the Diem Government, people in our village experienced a long period of prosperity. The sudden fall of that government first brought consternation to all the villagers, who viewed it as a bad omen for the coming years. Most of the villagers expressed regret about the Dinh Diem's death until they were informed of his mistake in having listened too much to his family.

38. Were there any GVN military forces near your hamlet?

Before the Tet offensive, there was a company of Civil Guards in my village. They established camp right in my hamlet.

39. How did they behave during the Diem Government?

Most of them behaved badly toward the villagers. They were all bad-natured men, gamblers, licentious. The villagers were afraid of them and had to do their best to treat them with kindness, so as to avoid getting into trouble with them.

40. How did they behave after the Diem Government fell?

There were no changes in their behavior after the Diem Government.

41. Did either ARVN soldiers ever pass through your village?

The ARVN, from time to time, passed through my village.

42. How did they behave?

They were polite and always in good humor toward the villagers. In return, the villagers liked to approach them and give them help.

43. Did you ever live in a Strategic Hamlet?

Strategic Hamlets were set up in my village at the beginning of 1964 only. The hamlet [redacted] where I was living, became a strategic Hamlet. It lasted just six months until the Front began to control the village.

44. How much labor and time did you have to contribute to it?

Each family had to contribute to the construction of the fence around the Strategic Hamlet; this usually meant contributing enough for a 30 to 40 meter segment. If a family had bamboo trees, its members just had to cut the necessary number of trees and put them up in their designated portion. Those families which had no bamboo at their disposal had to buy them and also provide labor for the fence construction.

45. What did you and the others like about it?

What all the villagers liked about it was that they were able to live in security without being afraid of the Front's subversive activities.

46. What did you and the others dislike about it?

What most of the people disliked was the waste of time in moving the buffaloes and equipment back and forth to the ricefields located outside the Strategic Hamlet fence.

47. What happened to it?

One or two months after the Front came, the Strategic Hamlet fence was burned down.

48. What do you feel about it now?

I think the Strategic Hamlet is one of the best methods of fighting Communist subversion in the rural areas.

49. In those days, before the Front came, how did you feel about your life and future?

Before the Front came, my family and I lived a well-to-do life, as my eight hectares of land yielded us more than we needed. Besides, I had two large brick houses, many buffaloes and cows. All this would have secured my life and my future.

50. What things dissatisfied you most? How could the Government have helped you then?

What dissatisfied me most in those days was the bad behavior of the Civil Guards. They gave too much trouble to the population. The Government should have reorganized them and given them better pay.

51. What did you think about your opportunities to improve your life?

I didn't think of any opportunities to improve my life, because I felt better-off than most of the other people in my village.

52. What did you think about the chances of your children having a better life?

I only thought of giving my children, particularly the young ones, a good education.

53. When did you first hear of the Front? How did you hear about it? What did you hear?

In 1962, [redacted] came, from time to time, along with some Front officers, to the outskirts of my hamlet and used a loud-speaker to tell the population about the establishment of the Liberation Front and urge them to rally to what they called the just cause.

54. What kind of people belonged to the Front in those days?

All were former Viet Minh cadres who had stayed behind in the area after the Geneva Conference instead of

regrouping to the North. They succeeded in rallying to their side a number of young people, mostly those from the poorest families, and secretly lived in the mountainous areas.

55. What activities did they engage in? Did they first come secretly to your hamlet? How many of the villagers knew who the Front people were?

Since the Front people announced by loudspeaker the establishment of the Liberation Front, the villagers have become more and more afraid of it. The Front people first came secretly to my hamlet and whispered to a few people that many well-equipped troops had already arrived from North Vietnam. They were staying here for a time here and were waiting for an opportunity to liberate the area from the Diem Government. The villagers got so scared of the reprisals that they remained totally passive to the Front's activities. Because of the villagers passiveness, the Front people became more and more active and, almost every month, under [redacted] leadership, they gathered the villagers in meetings during the night and gave lectures on North Vietnam and particularly on Ho Chi Minh, the national hero who had brought good food and good clothes to the North Vietnamese people and who was preparing to do the same for the South Vietnamese people.

56. When the Front people first came to your hamlet, what did the GVN officials do?

Most of the GVN officials remained passive for fear of being killed by the VC.

57. When did your village first become controlled by the Front?

My village first became controlled by the Front in the middle of 1964.

58. Were there battles in or near your village at that time, between the Front and the ARVN?

There were no battles in or near my village at that time between the Front and the ARVN. The Front fighters only carried out guerrilla attacks against the GVN Civil Guards until they completely disintegrated.

59. Why couldn't the GVN forces control your village?

At that time, I didn't see any ARVN forces in the area, as the Civil Guards had low morale. They only ran away when they saw the Front soldiers.

60. What did the Front people do to the people's GVN identification cards?

In each hamlet, a cadre was appointed to take charge of collecting all the people's GVN identification cards except for the Front's trustworthy men who were authorized to hold their cards in order that they would be able to move into towns or other places for their missions. Most of those cards were kept in a secret place by the Front cadres.

61. How did the Front cadres, soldiers and guerrillas behave?

The province and district cadres were the most polite and obliging people. They talked fluently and sweetly and everyone found it a pleasure to listen to them. The village cadres were quite different. They showed themselves to be rigid, and sometimes cruel toward the villagers. Anyone who showed just a little sign of discontent towards the Front would be arrested at once by them and taken away for reeducation. So the villagers had to repress their anger all the time. The Front soldiers were well-disciplined and behaved politely towards the villagers. All the guerrillas were local people who mostly had no choice but to be guerrillas to avoid becoming soldiers in the front line.

62. How did the villagers feel about them?

All the villagers were afraid of the village cadres and disliked them most.

63. What did you hear about the aims of the Front?

The Front introduced the district's Party Secretary to the villagers and he talked about the aims of the Front. He said "The Front is striving to drive the American imperialists out of South Vietnam, to unify the whole country and overthrow the feudalist and family-ruled regime. It is requesting that the people contribute as much as they can for troop support. There are now plenty of troops in the mountains and they are waiting for a good opportunity to come out and crush the enemy."

64. What did you think of these people?

I didn't trust these people, as I thought they were telling lies.

65. What are the names of the leaders of the Front?

I only know one name, that of Nguyen Huu Tho. He seems to have been a lawyer in South Vietnam who was not interested in politics. The Front enthroned him as its president in order to conceal the real authority of the Lao Dong Party from the rest of the population.

66. When the Front first controlled your village, which of the following words would you have used to describe the Front? peace-loving, dangerous, patriotic, treasonous, brave, cowardly, sympathetic, ruthless, well-disciplined, rigid? (Explain your choice. Would you now choose from among the different words?)

I must tell you that I hated the Front people and was hated by them, since I was a land owner. So, in my opinion the Front is always dangerous, treasonous, cowardly, ruthless and rigid. I also don't like to hear anything about the Front because I know that it only brings about misery everywhere it goes.

67. Did the Front hold meetings in your village/hamlet? How often?

Front meetings in my village weren't regularly held. They varied from one to three times a month.

68. What did they say about your own village?

They urged the villagers again and again to do their utmost to pay taxes and contributions and to save more food for the Front soldiers.

69. What did they say about the GVN?

They said, "The GVN is a puppet in the hands of the Americans. The people must not trust the GVN. It is now suffering setback after setback."

70. What about the Americans?

They said, "The Americans came here to direct the puppet government, to get hold of the country and to trample on the people and enslave themselves."

71. What about North Vietnam?

They said, "In North Vietnam, the people are living a happy life in their society. The Northerners are given the duty of helping the front liberate the unfortunate people of South Vietnam from GVN tyranny and the American yoke."

72. What about China?

They said, "China is giving North Vietnam and Ho Chi Minh unlimited aid in whatever they need."

73. What about Russia?

They said little about Russia and sometimes were critical of its revisionist ideology.

74. What did they say about the future of the war?

They said, "The Front is sure to win the war because it lies on the hearts of almost all the people of South Vietnam."

75. Did the Front ever take any villagers away for reeducation?

Every village has been sent for "study courses" to a mountainous place about three kilometers away from the village for three to seven days. They had to attend "study courses" which were intended to prepare them to accept willingly all the duties that would be entrusted to them, such as the service in the Army, the payment of taxes, the digging of trenches and other manual labor. If any villagers showed signs of resisting the orders after they had attended the "study courses", they would be taken away for "reeducation" for a long time, as were the villagers who didn't pay their taxes in time. These people were released on the promise that they would make the payment within a short time.

76. How did the villagers feel about it?

The villagers were afraid of being sent for "study courses" or for reeducation, because during the detention period, they would have neither time nor money to take care of their families, but, rather, would have to live at their expense.

77. What did the cadres say?

The cadres said, "That is the only way to change people's minds."

78. How many young men over 16 were in your hamlet?

My hamlet was very big. I don't know how many young men over 16 were there. I only know that seven or eight of them have fled to Duy Hoa since the beginning of this year and have enlisted in the ARVN, one of them is my 21-year-old son. My other son, 24, has been in the ARVN for four years now.

79. While in your village, did the Front know that one of your sons was in the ARVN?

No, I did my best to conceal that fact from the Front cadres for fear of reprisals. So when they asked me about him, I always said that my son had been working in town as a coolie.

80. What kinds of young men joined the Front? What kinds joined the ARVN?

When the Front controlled my village, the young men had no choice, they had to serve either in the main forces or with the village guerrillas.

81. Did those who joined the Front always do so of their own free will?

When the Front started controlling the village, there were a number of enthusiastic young people from poor families who joined of their own will. As for the other people, the Front used all the tricks to drive them into its forces either by propaganda or persuasion.

82. What recruiting propaganda did the Front use? What forms of persuasion?

About the end of last year, the Front began to recruit soldiers in my village. The recruiting began in the hamlets. The cadres gathered all the young people in the hamlet in a meeting during which they said, "Our country has just been liberated from the French not long ago. The Americans are now trying to get hold of part of our country with the cooperation of the present puppet government. Being patriots, we have to use all our

...bilities to help the nation get rid of its enemies. ...to for the young people, the best way to serve the country is to join the army." After giving explanations about the aims of the meeting, they called the young people by name, one by one, and asked them to volunteer for the Front forces. When the hamlet recruiting was completed, a meeting was held in the village conference hall to herald the results, comparing the number from each hamlet. The hamlets which provided a great number of recruits were commended and the ones which provided less were criticized. As the number of recruits was, by far, lower than that required the higher authorities requested the village cadres to make another recruiting drive to get the remainder. Therefore, the village cadres called a general meeting in a mountainous area for all the young male and female people. In that meeting, the Front cadres worked like past masters in using the girls to arouse the boys' pride and induce them into enlisting. Many young people joined the Front forces that way. The Front cadres stopped recruiting only when they had obtained the required number for the Front forces. In addition to that, they encouraged the remaining people to join the village guerrillas. Some of those who tried to resist were arrested and sent to a reeducation center for five months. They also couldn't avoid becoming guerrillas after their release. So there was no one left for the ARVN.

83. How did the villagers feel about the young men joining the Front?

Every young man had to go in the Front somehow or other. So the villagers found it natural.

84. Were families with sons in the Front treated differently in your village? How about families with sons in the ARVN?

The families with sons in the Front were well treated in my village. In the meetings, they were seated in the best rows. They were helped in their farming work by the Work Exchange Association. The families with sons in the ARVN were often requested by the Front to go to district-towns to hold protest demonstrations. That was an exhausting and dangerous task. Those people had to carry food for three days, they had no shelter during the night, and always ran the risk of being arrested, beaten up, or shot by the GVN troops.

85. How many Front guerrillas were in your village?

There were a great number of guerrillas in my village, but I don't know how many.

86. What did they do?

They stood guard, did the village police work, and checked the villagers' movements.

87. Did the Front ever promise to take land away from any villagers and give it to others?

It seems that the Front had promised to take land away from some of the rich villagers to give it to the share-croppers and the young people who had volunteered to join the Front forces.

88. Did they actually do it?

Yes, they did.

89. From whom did they take it away?

They took land away from those who had left the Front-controlled areas for the GVN and from those who were unable to farm all their land by themselves. At the beginning of 1965, between 70 and 80 hectares of land were distributed, of which 1.7 hectares had been taken from me.

90. How did the villagers feel about it?

The share-croppers who had benefited from the land distribution were satisfied. They worked with enthusiasm and used to report to the Front on their other villagers' attitudes.

91. Was it done fairly?

The Front tried to do it fairly to win the villagers' hearts.

92. Was the land given permanently, or as a loan to be paid for later, or did the people have to pay rent?

The beneficiaries had nothing to pay for, they kept on farming the land as long as they could pay taxes regularly to the Front.

93. How was your family classified by the Front?

I was classified as a rich peasant.

94. What do you think would happen to the land if the GVN returned to your hamlet?

I always expected that the GVN would return to my hamlet, and that I would be able to take back my land.

95. Were those who received land satisfied/better off than before?

The sharecroppers who had benefited from the land distribution seemed satisfied and better off than before.

96. Had there been land reform before the Front came?

There had been no land reform before the Front came.

97. What taxes did you (and others) have to pay the Front when it first controlled your hamlet? Who collected the taxes?

In 1964, I paid 280 kilos of paddy as contributions to troop support. The contributions were collected by [redacted] the hamlet leader.

98. Did the taxes go up later? How much?

In 1965, I paid 288 kilos for the Liberation Tax, 280 kilos for contributions to the general mobilization, and 180 kilos for various additional contributions. In January 1966, I was requested to make an advance payment of 120 kilos on my taxes for this year.

99. Did you actually pay in money or in rice?

I paid contributions and taxes in rice. The process of paying taxes was a hard job for the tax-payer. My wife and I had first to carry paddy to a mountainous place about three kilometers away from my village for weighing and inspection. Then we had to carry the paddy home and husk it into rice. The rice produced had to be carried back to the mountains and from there, it would be taken away by Front laborers to be stored in various secret caches.

100. What did the Front cadres say about the taxes?

The Front cadres said, "We need rice to feed North Vietnamese troops who have come to the area in great numbers to help the Front drive away the American troops."

101. What did you think?

I was skeptical about what they said.

102. Did the Front state what percentage of your income was to be taken in taxes?

The calculation of my income tax seemed complicated. I only know that I had to pay about 20% of my income.

103. How did the Front determine the size and output of taxable land holdings?

I don't know how the Front determined the size and output of taxable land holdings.

104. Were the taxes justly applied, or did some have to pay more or less than their share? Who were the people who had to pay more or less than their share? Why were they treated that way?

The taxes weren't justly applied. The poor farmers had to pay less than their share and the rich farmers often had to pay more than their share. This was due to the fact that, until the end of 1965, the hamlet cadres were still discriminatory in the determination of taxes to be collected from the villagers.

105. At the time you left your village, were the Front taxes higher or lower than the GVN taxes had been? How much higher or lower?

At the time I left my village, the Front taxes were ten times higher than the GVN taxes had been.

106. What happened to a villager who refused to pay taxes?

The cadres warned that those who refused to pay taxes would be taken away for reeducation. So no one in my village refused to pay for fear of being sent for re-education.

107. Where did the villagers usually sell their produce?

The villagers were forbidden to sell their produce in the open, with the exception of ripe fruits.

108. What happened to the cost of living?

The cost of living remained low, as the villagers were striving to live self-sufficiently. Those who wore good clothes or ate good food were criticized. They also were forbidden to eat rice mixed with other substitutes. To be sure of it, members of a commission were sent around the village to keep an eye on every family.

109. If the Front had restrictions on selling produce, did this have any effect on the villagers' production of food?

Restrictions on selling produce didn't have much effect on the villagers' production of food, because the Front bought all surplus production at a rate slightly lower than the local market price.

110. Were all kinds of food and goods available?

The food was just enough to keep the villagers from going hungry, while commodity goods were mostly unavailable.

111. Did the Front set up any organizations in your hamlet?

There were many organizations in my hamlet, but I know nothing about them because I didn't actively participate in them, pretending that I was too old and ill.

112. Tell me about the Front cadres in your village?

I only know that [redacted] was the leader of the Front organizations in my village. He had been a Viet Minh cadre. He appeared to have been ruthless towards the villagers.

113. What do you and the villagers think about the way the Front cadres acted in your hamlet and village?

Most of the villagers were dissatisfied with the way the Front cadres acted in my village, but they pretended to cooperate fully with them.

114. Did the villagers like them?

Very few people liked them.

115. Did they help the villagers?

They were like a breath to everyone.

116. Did you ever see or hear about any conflicts between the cadres?

I don't know of any.

117. Has there been any change in the attitudes of the villagers toward the Front cadres?

I didn't pay attention to this as I always lived apart from the Front cadres and also from other villagers.

118. Did the Front ever arrest, punish or kill any villagers?

Before the Front was set up in South Vietnam, the VC had already started their terrorist activities in my village. In 1959 they shot down [redacted] who was, at that time, the GVN assistant leader in charge of village security. Then, while taking over the village, they killed three other members of the GVN village council. All those people were summarily sentenced to death by the VC for having countered their subversive activities in the past years.

119. What did you think about it?

I thought the Front people were very vengeful, so I was afraid they might harm me also, as I had been a Hamlet leader for the GVN.

120. What did the other villagers say about it?

The other villagers were dismayed and dared not say a word about it.

121. Were you or the other villagers ever made to perform work without pay?

I didn't have to work as a civilian laborer because I was over 55 when the Front came. All the people under 55 had to perform work without pay for the Front.

The healthy people labored from two to three months, the weak ones labored from ten to twenty days. No one, except those who were in the Front forces, could escape from doing that work.

122. What did you think about it?

I thought that after laboring for the Front, the villagers lacked the energy and time to do their own work.

123. What did the other villagers say about it?

They got scared, particularly when they had to move through thick forests and high mountains, or to perform work in the front lines. They were always afraid they wouldn't come back alive.

124. Was your hamlet a combat hamlet?

My hamlet was set up as a combat hamlet. Communication trenches had been dug everywhere. They were 1.80 meters deep and covered in ten-meter lengths with a bamboo frame-work with earth piled on top; one meter was left open for breathing. The cadres also asked the villagers to dig pits in every blind corner in order to lay spike boards.

125. What did you like best about it?

I liked nothing about it.

126. What did you like least about it?

The villagers had to perform exhausting work for the combat hamlet, such as digging and sharpening spikes. They felt very angry but could do nothing but curse under their breath.

127. Were any villagers ever injured by the defenses?

Only a few buffalo-guards were injured by the spikes that had been laid too close to the roadsides.

128. How well did it protect your hamlet from military attacks?

The combat hamlet didn't protect the population from military attacks.

129. How would you compare it to the GVN's Strategic Hamlets?

The purpose of the Strategic Hamlet was to protect the population, while the Combat Hamlet was for the purpose of protecting only the Front forces or guerrillas and not the population.

130. In your village, what had you heard about conditions of life in the Front forces?

I heard nothing about conditions of life in the Front forces, because I never had an opportunity to speak with any Front soldiers.

131. Had any crippled Front soldiers returned home? What did the Front do to help them?

There were about five crippled Front soldiers living in my village. All were young Northerners who had been wounded in the Front and had been entrusted to the care of foster mothers in my village. I have been told that they belonged to high-cadre families in North Vietnam.

132. Did you know how many villagers from your hamlet serving in the Front forces had been killed or wounded?

I don't know how many villagers from my hamlet serving in the Front forces had been wounded. The villagers however had news that three or four young people had been killed in the Front.

133. Did you think a soldier's chance of surviving was better in the Front or the GVN forces?

I always thought that a soldier's chances of surviving were better in the GVN forces.

134. Which did you think suffered more casualties: the GVN or the Front?

An engagement took place last year in [redacted] Village, Thuan Xuong District between the VC and an ARVN unit. The Front cadres announced that they had annihilated a whole GVN company, but couldn't give any evidence. On the contrary, villagers living in the area nearby were aware that the Front people had carried back thirty-two corpses for burial. So I thought that the Front suffered more casualties.

135. Which side did you think was better armed and stronger?

I thought that the ARVN was much better armed, thanks to the American military aid.

136. Had you ever met any soldiers or cadres working with the Front who weren't Southerners?

Northern troops have moved through my village during the night twice. The villagers who had seen them said that most of them were fat but their pale complexions indicated that they could have had malaria.

137. What did they do? What did you think about them?

They were well-disciplined soldiers. The villagers, however, didn't like for the soldiers to stay long as they feared that GVN artillery would shell the village because of their presence. Moreover, when the Front soldiers came, their quartermasters bought all the food left in the village, such as chicken, ducks and fish sauce.

138. Had the Front's activities in your village changed in any way in the last year or so?

1965 was the Front's most active year in my village. So the people had to work harder and to suffer more hardships. But beginning in 1966, their activities slowed down and came to a standstill after the Korean troops came to the area and occupied high positions close to the village. Since then the village guerrillas have completely disintegrated.

139. Have you heard about defeats suffered by Front units?

While in my village, I never heard about defeats suffered by Front units. But I think that the presence of Korean troops in my area was a severe setback for the Front. Six guerrilla platoons out of sixteen from my hamlet have rallied in Tuy Hoa city. Along with them, I have seen some low village cadres and many Front organization leaders.

140. Did the Front ever set up a school in your village?

The Front set up a new elementary school in my village last year. We had had two schools before that.

141. How many children went?

I don't know how many.

142. Was the school free?

Children had to pay school fees amounting to a bucket of paddy (about 12 kilos) each month.

143. Did adults ever go to school?

No adults attended school.

144. What subjects were taught?

All subjects were mixed with politics.

145. Did you have a hospital or doctors in your village?

We had neither a hospital nor doctors in our village. There were some first-aid stations run by nurses, but medicines were very scarce.

146. While in your village, what had you heard about the present Saigon Government?

While in my village, I heard nothing about what had happened outside it. I didn't even know who the leader of the present Saigon Government was.

147. How do you know the names of any of its leaders?

They are now the Generals Nguyen Van Thieu and Nguyen Cao Ky.

148. What are their aims?

In my opinion, the main objective of the present Saigon Government is to annihilate all the Communist forces in South Vietnam, whatever may be the means it has to use.

149. Which of these words do you think best describes the GVN: strong, weak, compassionate, cruel, just, corrupt, wise, confused, dedicated, lazy?

I think the GVN is strong thanks to the American aid. It is compassionate as it is endeavoring to help all the peasants who have left the Front area for the GVN one.

150. In the past, would you have chosen different words?

Like in my village, I thought the GVN was weak and confused, because the Front had easily taken over my area, I had despairingly waiting for the ARVN to come and deliver my village from the Front's grip.

151. What do you know about the more recent behavior of local, district, and provincial GVN officials?

I had a bad impression of the local and district officials when I first had contact with them on my way to their settlement camp. On their way to Tuy Hoa, the villagers from my hamlet and neighboring ones drove all the cattle they had along with them. At [redacted] hamlet, they ran across a column of Korean soldiers and this threw the group of refugees into confusion and made the cattle go astray everywhere. Therefore the cattle merchants, with the connivance of the GVN security agents, took away all the healthy oxen and sold them in other villages, driving back to the district-town only the old ones. The refugees lost most of their best cattle and, yet, they encountered many difficulties in getting back the remaining oxen from the district authorities.

152. Are the GVN officials worse than before? better? the same?

I can't assert this. I have heard rumors that the district leader and the police chief would be replaced by new men. What I really know is that the former refugee-camp leader has recently been dismissed. The new leader seems to be much better.

153. How did you get information in your village on what was happening in Saigon?

I got no information in my village on what was happening in Saigon, because [redacted] never left my home. The village cadres [redacted] have been well-informed, as I found that each one had a radio set.

154. What have you heard about life in North Vietnam or in China?

In the first meetings after the Front took over my village, the VC cadres said North Vietnam and China sound like a paradise.

155. What did they say?

They said, "People in GVN and China are provided with a good education, good food and clothes. The state takes care of the aged men and children. So everyone can enjoy a happy life."

156. Did you believe them?

I thought they were telling lies.

157. Did you ever hear about the Chieu Hoi program?

I didn't hear about the Chieu Hoi program. On the fifth day after Tet, I heard broadcasts from GVN aircraft urging the population to leave my village which according to them, would soon become the center of a big sweep operation by the allied forces.

158. Was your village ever attacked by the ARVN or its allies?

Two days before Tet, the Korean troops, who had landed from helicopters and taken positions on the hills, carried out an operation in my area. They came first to [redacted] hamlet which was located near the foot of the mountain. All the villagers fled from the hamlet to take refuge in the neighboring woods. Mean hile, the Korean troops fired at the hamlet and set it on fire. The people who had been hiding near their houses ran back to the hamlet and tried to put out the fire. Seeing that, the Korean troops summoned the villagers out, asked them to stand in a line and, in cold blood, raked them with machinegun fire. About fifty people were killed. Then those troops moved down to my hamlet where they clashed with two platoons of Front Guerrillas who had been staying there. The guerrillas slipped away after a short while, leaving my hamlet at the mercy of Korean fire which caused fifteen casualties to the civilian population.

159. Why did you think your village was attacked?

I don't know what had first caused the Korean troops to attack [redacted] hamlet.

160. Do you know why the Korean troops massacred fifty villagers?

I don't know. I was told about it by a lot of people from [redacted] hamlet whom I met on my trip to the [redacted].

161. How did those people say?

They said, "The Koreans were very cruel and they killed with no sound reason."

162. Why did you think your hamlet was attacked?

My hamlet was attacked because the Front guerrillas had fired at the Korean troops.

163. What did the Front cadres say?

On the evening following the clash with the Korean troops, the Front cadres gathered the villagers and told them that the Koreans suffered at least ten casualties, that they were cowards and ran away as soon as one of their men fell under the Front fighters' fire. In reality they had no casualties.

164. What effects did the attacks have on the Front's activities in your village?

All the people in the village, including village cadres, were so afraid of the Korean troops that most of them left the area to take refuge in Fun Hoa city.

165. Before the attacks, was your village given any warning?

Before the first attacks my village wasn't given any warning. The cadres threatened that the Koreans were merciless and that if we came across them, they would take us away and drown us in the river or in the sea. So they used us to have over all them all the rice left and moved into the forest to take refuge. Fortunately, the VN broadcast called us in time to leave the Front area.

166. What did the warning say?

The warning urged the villagers to leave the village to avoid casualties that might result from an imminent allied forces operation in the area.

167. Did anyone leave the village?

Many people left the village. But I know best only about the people in my hamlet. 70% of the population followed me on our first trip to the GVN area, leaving their property behind. 20% moved later, making a total of 90% of my hamlet's population.

168. What did the cadres say about the warnings?

The cadres always tried to prevent the villagers from leaving, but they weren't listened to. Their reactions were weak this time, as their morale also seemed to have slipped.

169. What did you think about the warnings?

I thought the warnings were timely.

170. What did the villagers say about them?

Except the loyal cadres, all the villagers felt relieved, as they were given an opportunity to flee before the Korean troops came.

171. How did these attacks make you feel about the GVN and its allies?

These attacks made me feel that the GVN and its allies were much stronger than the Front.

172. What did other villagers say?

Most of them agreed with me.

173. How did these attacks make you feel about the Front?

I felt that the Front was losing ground and that many of those who were active in the Front were inclined to change sides.

174. Whom do you blame for the attacks?

I blame the Front. I think the attacks were to deliver us from Front control.

175. Did the attacks make anyone join the Front?

No one joined the Front because of the attacks.

176. Did you think there were better ways for the GVN to counter the Front?

I think what the allied troops did in my area is the best way for the GVN to counter the Front.

177. Have you seen or heard about the use of chemicals to destroy vegetation or crops?

No.

178. Before you came here, had you seen any Americans in Vietnam?

Before I came here, I hadn't seen any Americans.

179. What did the Front say about the Americans?

The Front said that the Americans never liked the people of Vietnam and that they came here just to get hold of this country for their own interests.

180. Was the Front correct in what they said?

The Front wasn't correct in what they said, as I notice that the Americans have been demanding nothing from us in exchange for their economic and military aid.

181. What do you think the Americans really want in Vietnam? What makes you think so?

I think the Americans really want to help South Vietnam fight the Liberation Front which has been trying to keep the people under the Communist yoke. Their position hasn't changed since the time of the Ngo Dinh Diem regime.

182. What is the relationship between the VC and the Americans?

I don't know about it. The first American with whom I have had contact is the gentleman who came along with a virtuous man and he showed no aloofness toward the Vietnamese. Such a man should be a good friend to us.

183. Do you think the Americans are like the French, or are they different?

I think the French came here to be masters while the Americans have been our friends and advisers.

184. Have you seen or heard about American gifts to villagers?

While in the refugee camp, the other villagers and I have received American gifts such as medicines, sweets, soap, towels and a basin.

185. What did you and the others think about these gifts?

All the refugees were very happy to receive the American gifts. Women and children in my camp leaped for joy when they saw an American coming. On the contrary, they got scared before any Korean.

186. Have you seen or heard about other foreign countries assisting the GVN and sending troops to South Vietnam?

I have seen the Koreans because they came to my area.

187. What did you think about their being in your country?

Myself, I don't like them, but I think their presence is necessary to speed up the Front defeat.

188. Which do you think is stronger: the GVN with its allies or the Front with its allies?

I think the GVN with its allies is stronger, just in counting the number of their planes and helicopters in the air.

189. Have you heard about their bombardment of North Vietnam?

No.

190. What were the reasons why you left your village and came here?

In my opinion, the Front never took care of the villagers' interest and completely ignored their rights. They were compelled to perform exhausting work all day and all year long and to eat only bad food. Myself, I was living in perpetual fear -- fear of the VC atrocities, fear of being killed by the attacks of allied troops on my village.

191. Which do you think was the most important reason?

The most important reason was the presence of Koreans in my area.

192. What reasons made you not want to leave your village?

I was afraid of losing my land and my houses, of being arrested and beaten up by the GVN officials, of going hungry once in a GVN area.

193. Which was the strongest reason?

The fear of losing my property. In addition to my ricefields, I had two brick houses.

194. Why didn't you leave earlier?

I was waiting for the ARVN to come and take over my village so I would be able to live under GVN control without losing my property.

195. Have you ever taken refuge before?

I haven't.

196. Before you left your hamlet, what had you heard about present conditions in GVN areas?

Nothing.

197. What preparations for leaving did you and your family make?

I made no preparations for leaving. When the Koreans first made an attack on my hamlet, my family and I moved to a neighboring one. From there, we dared not return to my hamlet and went right to the refugee camp, carrying with us only a few clothes. In the camp, we had to beg for food while we still had 150 buckets of paddy left behind in my hamlet.

198. What will happen to what you left behind?

I don't know.

199. Who came with you?

My wife and five children came along with me.

200. Describe your trip here?

When I left the hamlet in which I had been taking refuge, I carried with me a small white flag on which I had written some Chinese words which were supposed to mean, "Welcome to Korean troops." Far from there, I came across a patrol of Korean soldiers. Getting scared in their presence, I took out my white flag and showed it to them. Immediately their leader invited me to see him and offered me a glass of wine. Then, upon learning that we were going to the GVN area, he called a helicopter in to bring us here.

201. How many families have left your hamlet?

About 90% of the population have left my hamlet.

202. Why do you think the others stayed?

I don't know why they stayed, but I think they were all VC cadres and their families.

203. What kinds of people left?

They were all Vietnamese people, including also some Front cadres who, like other villagers, were afraid of getting killed by the Korean troops.

204. Did any families leave your hamlet for other Front-controlled areas?

No one left my hamlet for other Front-controlled areas, because they were afraid of starving.

205. When did people first start leaving your village?

They first started leaving my village on January [redacted] 1966.

206. Have any people who left your village to come here now gone back?

No one dared go back. They could be killed by the remaining VC guerrillas.

207. What would happen to you if you went back now?

If I went back now, I would be killed by the VC cadres, because I had just been given the function of hamlet leader by my village representative in the GVN.

208. What have the GVN authorities here done for you?

The Social Service gave my family of seven persons 49 piasters a day for our food, a blanket, and a mosquito net. The sum received was insufficient for our daily rice and it is cost 20 piasters a kilo. So we often had to make a rice soup with the small amount of rice we could get, just to fill our empty stomachs. We had no medicine facilities except for some tablets we had received from the Americans. As for shelter, it was most uncomfortable.

209. Have you been given identification cards?

Most of the people in my hamlet and I could take back our old identification cards from the village authorities office, as they hadn't yet been destroyed by the Front cadres.

210. When you leave here, where would you like to go?

When I leave the refugee camp, I would like to go to any place under GVN control. I would prefer to go back to my village if the GVN succeed in controlling it again by ridding it of all Front activities.

211. If you were given land, would you be happy living somewhere else?

I would be happy living somewhere else if I was given land so that I might earn my living by farming.

212. If you could learn some other way to make a living, what would it be?

I am very old, and have been a farmer for many years, so it is very difficult for me to learn some other way to make a living.

213. Here is a picture of a ladder. The bottom rung is numbered ten, and the top rung is numbered one. Now, let's say that the top rung represents the best life you can imagine and the bottom rung represents the worst life you can imagine. Where on this ladder would you say that your life was before the Front came to your village? After it came to your village? At the time you left your village? How about right now -- where on the ladder would you put your life now? Where do you think your life will be five years from now?

On this ladder, I would say that my life was, before the Front came to my village, at rung No. 4; after the Front came, at No. 7; at the time I left my village, at No. 9.

214. How about right now -- where on the ladder would you put your life now?

I would put my life now also at No. 9, because while other living conditions are worse than in my village at the time I left it, my life is more secure.

215. Where do you think your life will be five years from now?

I think my life will be at rung N. 4 five years from now, as the war will be over and I'll be able to farm my land normally as in 1962.

216. How would you describe the worst life you can imagine yourself living back in your village? What would it be like?

If I lived back in my village, my supply of rice would be taken by the Front cadres and I would starve like other poor villagers. I would be unable to live in my home and would follow the VC to take refuge in the forest. So I would soon die of hunger or from GVN bombing.

217. Now try to describe the best life you can imagine for yourself. What would it be like?

I am too old now. The best life I can imagine for myself is to stop working and live leisurely on my land income. So I wish the war would end soon and that my eldest sons would return to my village and farm the land I owned again, thus relieving me.

218. If you could ask three things of any Vietnamese Government, what would they be?

I would ask of any Vietnamese Government the following three things:

1) To rid this country of all Viet Cong.

2) To help the rural population live better.

3) To open more schools for children to give them a secure future.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

The subject is an aged man of average intelligence. He was a rich farmer and lived a good life during the Ngo Dinh Diem regime. He had participated in the Resistance under the direction of the Viet Minh cadres and had an idea of what would happen to him and his fellow villagers once they were placed under the Front's control. But a permanent fear of the Front people reigned over the villagers and they were resigned to accept the conditions of life dictated by the Front until a greater fear came to stir them: that of the Korean soldiers. The subject unconditionally left the village, drawing along with him most of the hamlet population.

He was sincere and cooperative.

No. AGR-56

[illegible]
for Refugees

1. Name of interviewer [redacted]

2. Name of subject [redacted]

3. Time and date of interview :

From 9:35 AM to 11:45 AM on May [redacted] 1966

From 2:15 PM to 5:00 PM on May [redacted] 1966

From 8:25 AM to 11:00 AM on May [redacted] 1966

Total time _____

Interview based on : tape ( ) hand written notes (X)

4. Place of interview :

Tuy Hoa Youth Center

5. Sex of subject : Male (X) Female ( )

6. Age of subject : 61

7. Ethnic background : Vietnamese

8. Place of birth :

hamlet [redacted]

village [redacted]

district Hieu Xuong

province Phu Yen

9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :

hamlet [redacted]

village [redacted]

district Hieu Xuong

province Phu Yen

10. (a) Length of residence in this location : From childhood

(b) Area controlled by place of residence :

GVN ( ) VC (X) Contested ( )

(c) Since when controlled ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ June 1964

11. Number of brothers ( ) and sisters (2)

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : 1

13. Marital status : Married

14. Number of children : 6

15. Number of age over 15 years of age : 4

16. Parents with subject (X) or not with subject ( )
Husband with subject (X) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject( ) or not with subject (X)
Wife with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject( ) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion : Buddhist

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : Farmer

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation Rich farmer
(b) Landowner ? Yes How much land 8 hectares

20. Education :
illiterate ( )
literate (X)
schooling completed : 2 years

21. Any relatives in VC :

22. Any relatives in GVN : 4

23. Any relatives (How Many? When?) killed by :
(a) French
(b) GVN
(c) VC -- a son killed by VC

24. When became a refugee : January [redacted] 1966

25. Where took refuge first Dong Tac

26. Present residence [redacted] Refugee Camp, [redacted] Village, Hieu Xuong District

AGR

INTERVIEW

57

[redacted]

SMP

THE RAND CORPORATION

[redacted]

STUDIES OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT
OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR-57

Date of Interview : May [redacted] 1966

Subject's Category : Refugee: March 1966

Area of Residence : [redacted] Hamlet
[redacted] Village
Tuy An District
Phu Yen Province

Subjects Discussed: - The Diem regime - Q. 26-49
- Strategic Hamlets - 41-52
- VC Takeover - 56-65
Terrorism - 66-67
Recruitment - 77-88
Land Reform & Taxes - 89-102
Restrictions on Marketing - 103-106, 134-135

Forced Labor - 128-129
Fighters' Hardships - 136-143
Propaganda - 160-164
- GVN Information - 144-147, 155-159, 165-167
Chieu Hoi - 168-173
Military Action - 174-180
Herbicide - 181-186
- American Presence - 187-196
- Koreans - 197-201
- Bombing of NVN - 202-206
- Motivation for and circumstances of Taking Refuge - 43, 207-209, 211-222
- Refugee Aid - 210, 223-240
- Attitude Toward Taking Refuge - 241-243
- Hopes & Expections - 244-261

1. Before taking refuge here, did you and your family live in your native village?

I had always stayed in my native village, except for a few years serving in the army during the French regime and then the civil guards. In February 1962, I moved to [redacted] hamlet, [redacted] Village, and lived there until my evacuation two months ago.

2. How big was your village? How many people were there?

My village was big. There were [redacted] hamlets. I don't know the number of villagers. I only know that the whole village had about 3,000 families.

3. What did you do to earn your living before taking refuge here? Did you make enough to live on?

When I was in my native village, my family farmed, grew sugar canes and processed sugar. When we moved to [redacted] Hamlet, my wife did some tradings and I became a bicycle repairman. We made enough to feed ourselves.

4. How many mau of land did you own in your native village? How much did you earn a year?

I had two sao of sugar cane fields. My wife had a piece of land large enough to hold four bushels of seeds at a time. We had two crops a year, and earned 80 bushels of paddy each crop.

5. Who took care of your land when you moved to [redacted] Hamlet?

The VC confiscated all my land.

6. What was the main occupation of the people of your village? Did they have enough to eat?

Most of the people in my village farmed and grew sugarcane. Almost all the people had enough to eat when I was still there.

7. What did the people of [redacted] do to make a living? Did they have enough to eat?

Half of the people of [redacted] lived by farming, the other half by trading. About two-thirds were well-off; the rest were poor.

8. How large is your family? How many are working?

My family consists of me, my wife, and our three small children who are seven, six, and two. My parents died a long time ago.

9. Do you have any brothers or sisters?

I have a younger brother in the ARVN. A few days ago, when he got paid, he came to see us in the resettlement center and gave me 1,000 piasters.

10. What's your religion?

I have no religion. I worship my ancestors.

11. What's the religion of the people in your village?

About 20 percent of the people of my village were Buddhists. Except for some 70 Catholic families, the rest were ancestor worshippers.

12. Were there any conflicts between people of different religions in your village?

During the Diem regime, the Buddhists and the Catholics sometimes had differences, but there was nothing worth noticing. Since the Khanh regime, there was no incident.

13. What's the religion of the people of [redacted] Village? Were there any conflicts between people of different religions?

About 50 percent of the people of [redacted] Village were Catholics, 40 percent were Buddhists, and 10 percent had no religious ties. During my stay in that village, I didn't see any conflicts between these people.

14. Were there any people of different ethnic background in your native village and in [redacted]

No. All the people were Vietnamese.

15. Did you go to school when you were young? What's your level of education?

Yes, I went to school and got my Primary School Certificate (5th grade).

16. Was there a school in your village? Did the people send their children to school?

There were four small schools in four hamlets, and one big school leading to the 5th grade. Almost all the children were sent to school. A few had to stay home to herd the cattle because their families were too poor to send them to school.

17. How many people in your village had advanced education?

A lot of people in my village passed the Primary School Certificate. About five went through junior high school, and two got the high school certificate. All of them are working elsewhere.

18. When you were still in your village, who was your best friend?

I had some good friends when I was young, but they had moved away to make a living elsewhere. So, I was left with no best friend. I didn't have any friends in [redacted] Village either.

19. Could the people still talk freely after your native village went under the control of the VC?

I had left my village when the VC moved in, so I don't know. After the VC occupied [redacted] Village, some people left to take refuge elsewhere. They told me that the villagers could no longer talk as freely as before. Families who had children serving the ARVN had to spend the nights together.

20. Who was the most important, and the most respected man in your village?

The head of the village council.

21. What had become of him when the VC got control of the village?

A villager who has just come here to take refuge told me that when the VC moved in, they arrested him right away, but the people protested with the cadres, telling them that the man had been kind to the people. So the cadres released him. I don't know where he is now.

22. When you were in your village, who was the man who was most knowledgeable about what was going on in the district, the province and in other places?

I don't know.

23. How was the life of the people in your village during the Resistance period?

During the Resistance period, the villagers had a hard time making a living. They had to pay heavy agricultural taxes. In addition, almost everybody had to go on labor duty trips to the Western Highlands. Labor duty trips were terribly hard. Somebody always died in the forests while doing labor duty.

24. How many men worked for the Viet Minh? What class did they belong to?

A lot of people worked for the Viet Minh. They belonged to the middle class and poor farmers. Eight of them regrouped in the North.

25. Did any of the regroupees return to the village?

Some villagers who moved to [redacted] Village after I did, told me that they had been taken to the mountain for re-education where they met some returned regroupees. They didn't tell me how many of them there were, or who they were.

26. What did those who had served the Viet Minh but who didn't regroup do after 1954?

After 1954, when the GVN came to establish the village administration, twenty men were arrested. The villagers had informed the GVN about these ex-Viet Minh. Later on, seven men were released and sent back to the village. I don't know what happened to the others.

27. Was the life of the villagers improved after 1954?

After 1954, the people were able to make a better living. Landowners no longer had to pay heavy taxes. Those who worked on rented land didn't pay any taxes at all. Especially since the [redacted] was completed during the Diem regime, all the land in the village has been yielding two crops a year. Previously, we only had one crop a year. Almost all the families in the village, even if they were poor, owned bicycles.

28. How did the village officials behave toward the people?

Except for a few who took bribes sometimes, almost all the officials were decent people. The villagers had nothing to complain about these men.

29. Were they natives of the village? Were they elected by the people?

They were natives of the village appointed by the GVN. They weren't elected by the people.

30. Did the people of your village ever go to the polls?

The people went to vote once for the National Assembly during the Diem regime.

31. How was that election organized?

Before the election actually took place, the GVN sent cadres to the village to educate the villagers about the voting procedures. The people were also told when they should vote for. When the people went to the polls, a man standing near the voting booth kept reminding people to vote for a certain [redacted]. A number of cadres loitered around in the voting booth to advice the illiterate voters to use the ballots with a mark or the cross which meant they had voted for Mr. [redacted]

32. Did many villagers go to the polls? Did all of them do as they were told by the GVN cadres?

All the villagers of voting age had to go to the polls. Very few voted for other candidates. Almost all the people voted for [redacted] according to the advice of the cadres.

33. Did the people know anything about the candidates before casting their votes?

All the candidates were strangers to the villagers. None of them came from our home district or province. So none of us knew anything about them. The people just did exactly as they were told by the GVN cadres.

34. After the election, did the elected representative do anything good for the people?

The elected representative was [redacted] He didn't do anything for the people.

35. What do you know about the Diem Government?

I don't know how to answer your question.

36. Did the people in your village know anything about the overthrow of Mr. Diem? What did they say about that?

I had left my village at that time, but I think the people knew about it right away. Like in [redacted] Village, a lot of people owned radio sets. The people in [redacted] commented that if people kept overthrowing each other in the central government, the VC would take advantage in the rural areas. When the radio talked about the abuses of Mr. Diem, the people then decided that his downfall was justified because he had abused the people.

37. What did you think of this event?

It didn't make any difference to me who runs the government, provided that the people could live and work in peace.

38. Were any GVN units stationed near your hamlet?

A unit of Civil Guards was stationed on [redacted] Mountain, about 2 km from my hamlet.

39. How did the GVN soldiers treat the people during the Diem regime?

At that time the soldiers used to seize the fish that the people bought from the market places and throw them away. They accused the people of supplying the VC. They also to shout and abuse the people. Lately, the GVN soldiers no longer behaved that way. They only advised the people not to buy too much fish or the VC might take advantage of them. They didn't seize the fish or shout at the people. They behaved properly, and nobody complained about them.

40. Was there any other force stationed near the village besides the Civil Guards? How did these people behave?

During the Diem regime, the GVN soldiers often passed [illegible] my village. Each time they did, they would steal the [illegible] chicken and ducks. If the people protested, they would be beaten, or threatened. The people complained about the GVN soldiers all the time. Recently, the GVN and also American soldiers often passed through the village, but they behaved [illegible] the people. They didn't steal anything from the villagers. They didn't threaten or beat up anybody. So the people were happy.

41. Were there any Strategic Hamlets in your village?

My village had [redacted] Strategic Hamlets.

42. When were those hamlets established? How long did you stay in a Strategic Hamlet?

All the Strategic Hamlets in my village were begun in 1961, and completed in 1962. I was arrested by the VC a few days before the Strategic Hamlet was completed. You could say that I had spent some time in the hamlet.

43. How were you arrested by the VC?

One day three VC came to my house, one of them with a gun. They took me out of the hamlet. My wife tailed along, crying and pleading with the VC. When we were about 50m outside the hamlet, one of the VC walked back in to fetch a rope to tie me up. Right then I jumped on the two remaining men and threw them on the ground. Then I fled, running across the field. The man with the gun immediately fired three shots at me, but I wasn't hit. Luckily, an army truck drove toward the road where the two VC were standing. The GVN soldiers shouted to my wife to hit the ground, and they started firing at the VC. The VC ran into a nearby bush. Thus I escaped from their grips. The GVN sergeant advised me to move away from the village for fear the VC might come after me again. My wife and I got into the truck and went straight to [redacted] Hamlet, [redacted] Village, and settled there.

44. How much labor, time, money, and materials did you have to contribute to the building of the Strategic Hamlet?

All the people in the village had to contribute three days' work and 30 pieces of wood, 2m long, to set up the fences. As I was a disabled veteran (when I was a militiaman, I lost my left hand when I tried to remove a VC booby trap) I was excused from everything, but my wife had to buy the lumber at 3 piasters per piece, and my brother did the labor duty for [redacted].

45. Did anybody complain about that compulsory contribution?

Nobody complained about it because everybody wanted to live in a Strategic Hamlet, away from the VC trouble-makers.

46. What did you and the people like best about the Strategic Hamlet?

What I liked best was the solid fences we put up around the hamlet which kept the VC out. I think other people also shared my opinion.

47. What didn't you and the people like about the Strategic Hamlet?

There was nothing I didn't like about the Strategic Hamlet. I don't know what the people think.

48. What has become of that Strategic Hamlet?

Those who ran to [redacted] to take refuge later told me that the Strategic Hamlet was destroyed in mid-1965. The VC came at night and ordered the people to help them destroy the hamlet. The fences were taken down. The lumber was piled up and burned. It took the people three nights to finish the wrecking job.

49. Were the Civil Guards still stationed on [redacted] Mountain at that time?

Yes, but they didn't interfere.

50. What do you think of the Strategic Hamlet now?

I think the Strategic Hamlet served the peace of the people by keeping the VC out. When I moved to [redacted] I also lived in the [redacted] strategic hamlet. But I think the hamlet should be defended by soldiers. The fences alone couldn't protect the people from the VC.

51. What has become of the [redacted] Strategic Hamlet?

It was also destroyed by the VC in December 1965. I don't remember the exact date. I only remember that the day before, the VC had destroyed the [redacted] Strategic Hamlet located on the side of the bridge. The [redacted] Strategic Hamlet was guarded by some Civil Guards, but they all ran away, and the VC destroyed the whole hamlet in one night. The platoon of Popular Force which was stationed in [redacted] Strategic Hamlet withdrew at dawn the next day. A number of villagers including myself immediately followed suit. We headed toward [redacted] That place was kept by the Civil Guards. At around 11:00 AM on that same day, the VC from [redacted] crossed the bridge to [redacted] to destroy the Strategic Hamlet.

52. Did the Civil Guards in [redacted] do anything about the situation?

They shelled into the hamlet. Later I was told that four VC were killed in the shelling, and two villagers wounded, but the VC still had the hamlet destroyed.

53. Before the VC came to your village, what did you think about your life and your future?

Before the VC came, I and the rest of the people in the village worked in peace. At that time, I thought to myself that if life kept going on like this, I might be better off some day.

54. Did you ever feel dissatisfied with anything?

No. I was only afraid that the VC might come.

55. What did you think the GVN should have done to free you from that fear?

I only prayed that the GVN would do something to stop the VC from coming to my village. But I don't blame the GVN. I knew the GVN had a lot of other jobs to do, and had a lot of other places to protect. Besides, I don't think the GVN ever want to see the VC occupy any villages.

56. When did you first hear of the VC and the NLF?

In 1957, when I was still a Civil Guard, I heard that GVN arrested a number of VC workers. It was the first time I ever heard of the VC. I didn't hear anything about the NLF until 1962. I was working as a liaison man for my village. Some old women from [redacted] Village came to sell in my village's [redacted] market. The village militiamen asked for their ID cards, they produced some sorts of authorization with the letter head of the NLF, because their village was under Front control. That's how I learned about the NLF.

57. Did anyone in your village join the VC then?

I don't know.

58. Did any VC try to infiltrate your hamlet?

I don't know. I didn't hear of any VC infiltrating into my hamlet until February 1962, when I was arrested by three VC. (See p. 43.)

59. Did you ever listen to the VC cadres making propaganda?

No.

60. When did the VC get control of your hamlet?

As I told you, the VC came to destroy the Strategic Hamlet in mid-1963, but they didn't come to stay until February 1964. I was already in [redacted] Village at that time.

61. Do you know how the VC got control of your hamlet?

One day when I was in [redacted] Village, I heard the sound of gunfire for half an hour at noon. Later on, a number of villagers from my old hamlet rushed to [redacted] Village and said that the VC had come to occupy the hamlet. They said that when the VC came, there were two platoons of Popular Force, and these soldiers were able to withdraw safely. That's all I've heard. I don't know anything else.

62. Did the VC confiscate or destroy the people's GVN ID cards?

As soon as the VC got control of the village, they confiscated the ID cards of those who had children or brothers serving the ARVN, or those who had served the GVN, or the suspected. A month later, they confiscated all the ID cards in the village.

63. How did the VC cadres treat the people?

The VC told the people not to work for the GVN, not to move to the GVN-controlled areas. They said that if the people moved away, they would starve to death because they wouldn't have any land to work on, and there wouldn't be any jobs. Thus the people should stay where they were and go on with their work. Those who left the village would lose all their property.

64. Did anyone move away from the hamlet?

Very few people dared move away. Only those who had worked for the GVN before, or those who had relatives in the ARVN tried to sneak away. Some of these people failed to get away and were sent to the mountain for re-education.

65. Where were people sent for re-education? And for how long?

Nobody knows where the mountain was located, but it was very far away. It took the men 7 days to get there for re-education. The re-education session lasted one month at least, and 6 months at most.

66. Did the VC mistreat or kill anyone?

Two villagers were killed by the VC. One of them was my friend. He used to serve in the Civil Guards with me. He lost one eye in action and was discharged. His family was fairly well-off. The VC suspected that he still had something to do with the GVN cadres, so they took him away from the hamlet, and knifed him. I met his mother at the market place in [redacted] Village, and she told me all about him. A year later, this old woman also got sick and died. The second victim was an old man whose son was a teacher in [redacted] Village -- where I was taking refuge. The old man simply hated the VC cadres, and often criticized them. That's why he was shot to death. After his death, his daughter-in-law and nephews -- wife and children of the teacher -- ran to [redacted] Village. I met his son, the teacher, in [redacted] Hamlet, and he told me about his father.

67. Did the villagers say anything about these two incidents?

I don't know. I guess no one dared say a thing.

68. What do you know about the aims of the Front?

I only heard of the Front but didn't hear anything about its aim.

69. Now, do you know what the aim of the Front is?

I still don't know.

70. Do you know why the VC fight against the GVN?

I think the VC have been fighting against the GVN in order to serve their own interest. None of the people like the VC, even those who live in the VC-controlled areas. They were only too afraid to say so openly.

71. Who is the leader of the Front?

T. To Chi Minh.

72. Why did you do?

The people in [redacted] that Mr. Ho Chi Minh sent troops from the North to South Vietnam to fight against the GVN. So I think Mr. Ho Chi Minh must be the leader of the Front.

73. When the VC first got control of your village, did you think that the effort was for peace?

I didn't have any idea then. I could only tell you my present opinion. I don't think the "ringleaders" of the Front want peace, because they kept ordering their fighters to struggle against the GVN. But the fighters, especially the guerrillas, want nothing but peace so that they could make a living. I think about 80 percent of them just think so.

74. In your opinion, is the Front patriotic or treacherous against the people?

The people were making a living in peace, suddenly the Front came to cause trouble, to levy taxes, to force the people to go labor duty, to send people to re-education, to kill people. Thus they must be traitors.

75. In your opinion, does the Front love the people or is it cruel with the people?

The Front doesn't love anybody. They forced everybody to do labor duty for them, such as digging spider holes. Those who refused to work would be intimidated at gunpoint or be sent to re-education on their own expense. Even the sick had to go on labor duty trip. Those who got sick to death were left behind on the road without care. If they happened to die there, they would rot there by themselves. Thus, the VC were cruel and had no love for the people.

76. Did you ever take part in a VC mass meeting?

Yes.

77. How many youths over 15 were there in your hamlet?

I don't know.

78. How many people in your village served in the VC army?

I only know that 6 men in my hamlet served as guerrillas.

79. Were they volunteers, or were they drafted?

From what I heard from the people, after the VC got control of the village, the cadres began to make propaganda to urge the youths to join their army. They didn't force anyone to join the guerrilla force or to do military duty. They only urged the women to talk the men into joining the army. Those who were careless wouldn't go, but those who were sensitive would volunteer. This was the case of the six young men who joined the guerrillas.

80. Did any youths join the ARVN?

Before the VC came to the hamlet, four men were drafted and ten volunteered to join the ARVN. After the VC got control of the hamlet, two youths ran away from the hamlet and enlisted into the ARVN. I know one of them very well. I met him in [redacted] Village after he got away from the hamlet. It was he who told me about what was going on in the hamlet after the VC got control of it.

81. Which class did those who served the VC army belong to? Which did those who joined the ARVN belong to?

Those who joined the VC as well as those who joined the ARVN belonged to the middle class and poor farmers.

82. Did any women in your hamlet do military duty?

Only one woman worked as a VC cadre. None of the women did military duty.

83. What did the people in the hamlet think of those who joined the VC army?

I don't know.

84. What did the people think of those who joined the ARVN?

I don't know.

85. Were families which had children serving the VC army better treated?

The cadres only told members of those families to be patient. When peace was achieved, they would be living in happiness. The cadres didn't say what kind of happiness it would be. For the time being, those families enjoyed no special privilege whatsoever.

86. How were families which had children serving the ARVN treated?

As I told you, those who had close relatives serving the ARVN were sent to the mountain for re-education if they failed to get away from the hamlet.

87. Did the fact that some young men left to join the army have any effect on the hamlet's economic life?

When a lot of people joined the army, there would be less men working on the land. But what could we do?

88. How many guerrillas were there in your village?

I don't know exactly. I only know that there were 6 men in my hamlet serving the guerrilla force.

89. Did the cadres organize a land reform program in your village?

The VC cadres confiscated the land of all those who had left the village to take refuge in the GVN-controlled areas. The VC called these people the exiled. The VC promised to redistribute the seized land to the people, but the redistribution has not taken place.

90. What did the VC cadres do with the land seized from the exiled?

If the land had been rented to somebody else by the owner, the VC would collect the absentee owner's share of paddy. In addition, they also taxed the tenant on his earnings. For example when the owner was still in the village, he rented out a piece of land. Now that the owner had left the village, the VC collected the owner's 50 bushel share. The tenant also had to pay the VC 20 bushels in taxes. So the tenant was left with only 30 bushels. If the land hadn't been rented out before, the VC would rent it out now, and would collect the same amount from the tenant, that is 70 bushels out of every 100 bushels earned.

91. Were the people glad to hear that the VC cadres were about to distribute land to them?

From what I heard from the recent refugees, nobody was excited about the promise. The people have seen how the tenants were treated by the cadres. If they were given land, they would have to work for the cadres, and wouldn't gain anything for themselves.

92. How were the landowners who still stayed behind in the village treated?

Landowners as well as tenants had to pay taxes. In the old days, a number of landowners just rented out their land and collected their shares of paddy. They themselves didn't do a speck of work. When the VC came, they ordered all the landowners to plow part of their fields. Nobody was allowed to stay idle. Thus the landowners had to work harder than ever before in their lives, and earned less.

93. Before the VC came, had any kinds of land reform programs been carried out in your hamlet?

No.

94. How did the people in your hamlet pay taxes?

The people had to pay three kinds of taxes. The first kind was called "tax on the main crop." Only the landowners and the tenants had to pay this kind of tax. It was paid in paddy and was equal to 25 percent of the total earning. The second kind was called "tax on the supplementary crops." The amount of tax was fixed according to the amount of land owned or rented, the size of orchards owned, earnings from tradings or from other occupations and also according to the number of people in each family. This tax was paid in money. The highest amount of tax collected from a single person in the hamlet was 5,000 piasters, the lowest 100 piasters. The third category of taxes was the tax on rice. The tax was paid in rice, and was levied equally on every family. Each month a family had to pay 1 kg of rice. In addition, the people had to raise "chickens for the Resistance." Each month the cadres collected one chicken from each family. Those who had no chicken had to pay 40 piasters.

95. Did the cadres explain why the people had to pay taxes?

The cadres said that the Front forces were fighting against the GVN to liberate the people. It was for the people's interest that the Front fighters had to sacrifice themselves. Thus the people had the duty to contribute to the upkeep of the army.

96. Did the people say anything about those taxes?

The people complained a lot about those taxes. Some even told the cadres that they thought the taxes were too heavy. The cadres said that the people should try hard to feed the army

97. Did anyone refuse to pay taxes?

At first, a few people refused to pay taxes. They were sent to the mountains to be re-educated. I had a friend among these people who was re-educated for 6 months. As he couldn't stand the hard life in the mountain, he fell sick. The cadres allowed his wife and children to go to the mountain to fetch him back. He died two days after he got home. The people were too afraid of being sent to re-education to refuse to pay taxes.

98. How did the cadres go about fixing the amount of taxes each family had to pay?

At harvest time, the cadres came to each house to check on the amount of paddy earned. Nobody could evade taxes.

99. If two families owned an equal amount of land, but the number of children were different in each family, would the taxes be the same for both?

If two families had an equal amount of land, and collected an equal amount of paddy at each harvest, then both had to pay an equal amount of "tax on the main crop," but the amounts of "taxes on the supplementary crops" were different. The family with fewer mouths to feed had to pay more.

100. You say the tax on the supplementary crops had to be paid in money. What happened if a man didn't have cash?

If a man had no cash, he had to pay in paddy instead. The price of paddy was fixed by the cadres. It was always lower than the market price.

101. Was anyone in your hamlet exempted from taxes?

A few poor people who lived from meal to meal and whose state of poverty was well-known to everybody were exempted from taxes. The rest of the people in the hamlet had to pay main crop and supplementary crop taxes. Taxes on rice of 1 kg a month each family had to pay was waived for families whose sons served in the guerrilla force.

102. Before the VC came, did the people in your hamlet have to pay taxes to the GVN? How were these taxes compared to those levied by the VC?

In the old days, the people also had to pay taxes to the GVN: land tax, irrigation tax, and contributions to the village budget. The men had to pay 80 piasters each, and the women 60 piasters each a year. The VC taxes were 100 times heavier.

103. Could the people sell their produces outside the hamlet?

The people weren't supposed to sell rice, pigs, chicken, corn, manioca to the GVN-controlled market places. Only sugar and banana were allowed to be sold in the GVN areas. But very few people were allowed to go to the market place, and they were all old women. Some of the villagers sneaked away to the GVN-controlled market places to sell their produces, at night, but there weren't many of them.

104. Did this restriction on the selling of produce to the GVN market places have any effect on the production?

There was no effect on the production. Everybody tried to keep up his normal rate of production. He would try to sell his produce at any price to get some money for his necessary expenditures.

105. Were the people allowed to buy necessary things from the GVN market places?

The cadres allowed the people to buy necessary articles such as cotton materials, raincoats, salt, and fish in the GVN market places. The people were urged to buy as many raincoats and salt as possible, but the GVN authorities forbade the residents of the VC-controlled areas to buy too many of these articles. The number of people allowed to go to the market was limited, and amount of articles bought was small, thus the people had to put up with a lot of in-

106. Did this poor situation in buying and selling affect the life of the people?

The people were allowed to sell produce only in the VC-controlled areas. Most of the customers were VC cadres. They bought things at their own fixed prices which were much lower than those in the GVN market. Thus, the people's earnings were lowered. Necessary articles that had to be bought in the GVN markets, such as Western and Eastern medicine, were very scarce. The sick suffered most from this situation. A lot of people died unnecessarily, due to lack of drugs. The village had no hospital. All the hamlet nurses had left for the GVN-controlled areas. The people's life has become harder and more miserable than ever before.

107. Did the VC establish any kinds of organizations in your hamlet?

I know nothing about the VC organizations in my hamlet.

108. Who were the VC cadres in your hamlet and villages. Where did they come from?

From what I heard from the people, the regroupees had returned to govern the village. The former Party members were also back to power. There were also a number of new cadres who were natives of the village.

109. Who was the highest-ranking cadre in your village?

The two highest-ranking cadres in the village were [redacted] and [redacted]. Both were regroupees. [redacted] served as the village chief, and [redacted] as a district committee member. A friend of mine told me that it was [redacted] who had ordered my arrest.

110. How were the village affairs managed? Who was the most influential man in this task?

I know nothing about the way the village affairs were managed.

111. You told me that there was a female cadre in the village. What position did she hold?

I only know that there was a female cadre. I don't know anything about her job.

112. Did the villagers say anything about this female cadre?

I don't know.

113. Was there a Party Chapter in your village?

I don't know. I only know that when I was still there the village had 40 former Party members, not counting those who had been arrested or the dead ones. There was a Communist denunciation session organized in my village during the Diem regime. That's how I learned about these men.

114. How did the cadres treat the people?

Almost all the cadres spoke cleverly and sympathetically. They seemed to be kind, but actually they were cruel as I've told you. None of the people liked the cadres.

115. Were the cadres fair to everybody?

I don't know.

116. Were the cadres honest?

It's hard to tell whether the cadres were honest. They collected money and paddy from the people in the name of the Front. In reality, nobody knows for sure whether they hadn't pocketed some for themselves.

117. Did the cadres help the people in any way?

The cadres never helped the people in anything.

118. Since the Front got control of your village, has there been any change in the village cadres?

According to the people, there has been no change so far.

119. Have you ever heard of any conflicts or quarrels between the cadres?

The newly arrived refugees have told me that once in a while there was a quarrel between the hamlet cadres, but they don't know why.

120. Did those quarrels have any effect on the people or on the cadres?

I have no idea.

121. Did the villages have any military cadres? Did they confer often with the civilian cadres?

I know nothing about the military cadres.

122. Were there any cliques among the cadres?

I don't know.

123. Has the attitude of the people toward the cadres ever changed?

The people's attitude toward the cadres has changed a lot. When the cadres first came to the village, they talked so well that a number of villagers were taken in. Although a large number of people didn't trust the cadres very much, they didn't hate them. After a while, the people found out that the cadres were cruel in spite of their kind appearance. Besides, the people had to put up with heavy taxes, shortage of practically everything, and restriction on travel. All these made the people feel dissatisfied, and they came to hate the cadres more and more every day.

124. In your opinion, how many people out of 100 hated the cadres?

From what I heard from the newly arrived refugees, almost all the people hated the cadres. Only those who had close relatives serving the front as guerrillas or cadres didn't hate the VC. Thus I think 80 percent of the people were hostile against the cadres. The rest didn't hate the cadre, but I don't think they liked them either.

125. You said two men in your hamlet were killed by the VC. What class did they belong to?

The old man who was shot by the VC belonged to the rich farmer class. He had criticized the cadres often, and was killed when he tried to get away from the VC. The man whom I know and who was slain also belonged to the rich farmers class.

126. Were any people killed in other hamlets?

I don't know.

127. In your opinion, why did the VC kill the people like that?

One of the victims had a son working for the GVN as a village school teacher in [redacted] The other had served in the GVN Civil Guards. I think the VC killed them to set an example for the people. Nobody else would dare work for the GVN.

128. You told me that the VC forced the people to go on labor duty trips. Would you tell me how the VC organized these trips?

Those who went on labor duty trips often had to carry rice to the Western areas. The cadres made the people process the paddy collected from taxes into rice. Then they made the laborers transport the rice to another area. Fifteen men from my hamlet were picked for each trip. They walked with men from other hamlets. Each trip lasted from 10 to 20 days. The rice was taken to a remote mountain in the Western area. Nobody knows its exact location. The laborers had to bring along enough rice to feed themselves through the trip.

129. Did the people say anything about these labor duty trips?

A labor trips cost a man a lot of working days, rice, and sweat. Those who fell sick on the road weren't given any medicine or care. Everybody complained about these trips. Some of them said that if you lived in the VC-controlled areas, you would either starve to death or die from labor duty trips.

130. Did the VC turn your hamlet into a combat hamlet?

I only know that the VC made the people dig spike pits and communication trenches. They said they would fire at the enemy from those trenches. I don't know whether you call this a combat hamlet. I had left the hamlet before the VC came. I only heard about these things from the newly arrived refugees from my own hamlets.

131. You mentioned restriction on travel. Did you mean that the people were forbidden to travel outside the hamlet? Did anyone sneak out?

My hamlet had only two gates which were guarded day and night by the guerrillas. The cadres only allowed a number of old women to go to the market places outside the hamlet. In spite of the tight control, somebody could still sneak away. Two of my friends had gotten away from the hamlet.

The first one sent his wife out of the hamlet the day before pretending to go to the market for groceries. He had no children and had been forced to be a guerrilla. It was his turn to guard the hamlet gate the next day. Although he wasn't supposed to carry a gun, he stole a gun from another guerrilla and then fled away. His wife was already in [redacted] Village, waiting for him. I met him as soon as he came out. He rallied at the Chieu Hoi Center and has enlisted in the ARVN. The second man also sent his wife away in advance. They had a baby. His wife got the permission from the cadres to take her baby to visit her parents in the neighboring village. She walked straight in [redacted] Hamlet, where I had taken refuge. The husband got away from the hamlet the next day. I don't know how. When we met, he told me a lot of things about the hamlet. I forgot to ask him how he had made his escape. Right now he is in the ARVN.

133. Did those who fled from the hamlet have any relatives staying behind? What happened to those relatives?

The second man still had his father in the hamlet. After his escape, the cadres sent his father to re-education for a month. Some time later, around April of last year, the GVN troops carried a sweep-up operation in my hamlet. The old man followed the troops outhere. Right now he is taking refuge in the same resettlement center with me.

134. What did the cadres do to assure that those who were allowed to go to the market places didn't run away for good?

Those who were allowed to go to the market places were aged women who had husband and children living in the hamlet. If they ran away, their husbands and children would be sent to re-education and be mistreated. Besides, the old women seldom wanted to leave the hamlet.

135. In your opinion, why did the cadres restrict travelling?

In my opinion, the cadres restricted the movement of the people because they were afraid somebody might supply the GVN with information, somebody might move to the GVN-controlled areas for good, and especially they were afraid that the village youths might run away to join the ARVN.

136. What have you heard about life in the Front army?

I don't know the details about life in the Front's army, but all other people know that the front fighters led a very hard life. They had to put up with poor food. They lived on the rice collected from the people which wasn't sufficient. They ate rice with salt. They had to move all the time and always had to walk at night. They could never stay too long on a spot for fear of being attacked by the GVN troops.

137. Have you ever met or talked to a front fighter?

No. I've never met a Front fighter.

138. Have you ever heard of any disabled fighters being sent back to your village?

I've never seen a disabled fighter, and never heard about them.

139. In your opinion, which is more dangerous, joining the VC or joining the ARVN?

I think you're more exposed to death in the VC army. From what I heard from my friend the guerrilla, the VC were outnumbered by the GVN troops and their weapons were also inferior. Besides, a wounded VC fighter never had enough medical care, while a wounded GVN soldier would be taken to the hospital by truck or airplane, and all the GVN hospitals were well-equipped.

140. Have you ever seen a dead VC?

Once, by the end of last year, the GVN troops killed a VC while going on an operation. They took the body back to [redacted] for the people to see if the fellow was a native of the area. I also took a look at him. He wore rubber sandals, black shirt, black shorts, and a worn-out khaki cap. The dead man was a stranger in the area.

141. Did the people who saw the body say anything?

Nobody said a thing.

142. Have you ever met a non-Southerner cadre?

Never.

143. Have you ever heard of the failures of the front units?

Never. I only heard from the GVN soldiers that wherever the GVN troops went on operation, the VC just fled away and never dared put up a fight.

144. When you were still in your village, did you ever hear anything about the GVN?

Only those who owned radio sets heard about the GVN. I myself knew nothing about it. The people told me that the GVN asked the Americans to help it fight against the VC.

145. Do you know who heads the GVN now?

No.

146. Do you know anything about the aims of the GVN?

I was told by the people that the GVN's purpose was to help the poor, especially the refugees from VC-controlled areas, give them shelters, and provide them with jobs. Besides, I don't know anything else.

147. In your opinion, is the GVN strong or weak?

I think the GVN is strong. Previously, all the communication axis around or near my area were controlled by the VC. Now they have been re-occupied by the GVN, that's why we could come here to take refuge. Besides, a lot of people have left the VC-controlled areas to move to the GVN side. The people wouldn't have done so if the GVN wasn't strong.

148. Do you think the GVN loves the people, or is it cruel to the people?

The VC cadres often told the people that the GVN was cruel. It strafed to kill the villagers, burned the people's houses, and dropped bombs on the villages. The reasons for the GVN to strafe the people or bomb their houses, I think, was because the VC tried to mingle with the people. The VC knew very well that if they mingled with the people, the latter would have to suffer. Yet they still mixed with the people. Thus it was the VC who were cruel, and not the GVN. On the contrary I found that the GVN was concerned about the people. Take a look at the refugees who had come here before me. They had all built their houses, and were given rice by the GVN. Even the convicts who were imprisoned were well fed.

When they were released and sent back to the village to make a living, I found them big and fat. If a man was imprisoned by the VC, he would have no hope of returning to his family. If he was lucky enough to be released, he would die of sickness.

149. Do you think the GVN is corrupt?

I didn't find the GVN corrupt. If the GVN is so corrupt, why should anyone leave the VC to come to the GVN.

150. Do you think the GVN is fair?

I saw that those who committed crimes against the GVN were thrown in jail. The GVN never mistreated the relatives of the prisoners. The VC on the contrary, would tried to make life difficult for their prisoners' kinfolks. These innocent people were mistreated, and sent to re-education. Under the GVN, "a man would suffer from the lice on his own head only". It is not so under the VC. Therefore I think the GVN is just.

151. Do you think the GVN is wise or confused?

The GVN never arrests people at random as the VC did. I think the GVN always investigated before taking action. In the old days, there were GVN soldiers who often threw away the people's fish without checking to see whether the people were really supplying the VC. In this case, I think it was the individuals who were "confused" and not the government. Besides, regrettable incidents like that only took place during the Diem regime. None of those things has happened recently. Therefore I think the present GVN is wise.

152. Do you think the GVN cadres were helpful to the people, or were they lazy?

I found that the GVN cadres in the refugee camp were very concerned about the people. They were not at all lazy. Although there was delay in the distribution of rice and money, everybody knew it was because of the red tape, and not the fault of the cadres. That's why nobody complained. Everybody admitted that the cadres were eager and helpful.

153. Has the attitude of the village, district, and province cadres improved at all lately?

In the old days, during the Diem regime, the GVN cadres of various levels didn't mistreat the people, but they weren't very helpful either. Sometimes, they were sarcastic to the people. GVN soldiers sometimes stole chicken and ducks from the villagers. Now, GVN cadres of all levels are helpful and never say anything that would hurt the people. The soldiers have become nicer. They no longer steal poultry or beat up anybody.

154. How do you know all that?

From my own observation since I came here to take refuge.

155. Were the people in the villages informed about what was going on in Saigon?

A lot of people listened to the radio and the news spread around. I think about 30 percent of the people in the villages of my area owned radio sets.

156. What programs did the people often listen to? Did they ever tune to Radio Hanoi, VOA, or BBC?

The elderly people loved to listen to classical opera (Hat Bo). The younger ones liked to hear reformed opera (Cai Luong) and the news. They usually tuned to Dalat, Nha Trang, and Saigon stations -- never the Hanoi, American, or British broadcasts.

157. What stations did the people in the VC-controlled areas such as your village listen to?

When the VC came to the village, some of the radio set owners moved away to the GVN-controlled areas. Those who stayed behind put away their radio sets for fear the VC might seize them. Besides, I don't think they could listen to the radio even if they wanted to, because there were no batteries.

158. Did the people in the village read newspapers?

In the old days, there were newspapers distributed by the Information Service. Some people even bought newspapers to read. Since the VC came, there have been no newspapers.

159. Have you ever listened to market place rumor or gossip?

I never went to the market, so I don't know. My wife went to the market place, but she didn't bring home any gossip.

160. Did the village cadres often read news bulletins to the people?

The people told me that the VC often told combat news.

161. What did the VC tell the people? Did the people believe them?

I don't know how the cadres went about informing the people, but I'm sure that nobody believed them. The cadres always told lies. Take, for example, the battle at the end of last year on Route 1, 8 km from Tuy Hoa. My brother, a GVN soldier, took part in this battle. He told me that the GVN lost two armored vehicles. The damaged vehicles are still there. The number of GVN soldiers killed was insignificant -- about five or seven. Yet the cadres in my village told the people that the GVN had lost 42 armored vehicles, and the 47th Regiment -- my brother's unit -- was almost annihilated. Everybody knew the truth about the battle, yet the cadres tried to twist it around. So who on earth could believe them?

162. How did the people in your village know that the VC were lying?

Some people went to the market places and picked up the news. (See A. 159.) Besides, all the residents of the [illegible]controlled villages could see for themselves the two damaged vehicles sitting by the road.

163. Why do you think the cadres wanted to give out inaccurate news?

I think the VC meant to brag with the people about the strength of the VC forces so as to win the confidence of the people. Thus they might hope to keep the people in the village.

164. Do you think those inaccurate news have served the VC purpose?

I don't think their lies did them any good, because nobody believed them.

165. Have you heard anything about life in the North?

Radio Saigon said that the people's life in the North was very miserable. The people were bombed by the GVN and American aircraft, and couldn't do any work. All they wanted was to be liberated from the Communists and to be able to live like their counterparts in the South.

165. Do you believe all that?

I do. I saw that in the South the areas where the VC occupied have been bombed. People of those places suffered death and couldn't work, and they have tried to move to the GVN-controlled areas. There must be a lot of VC in the North, just as there are many of them in the Front-controlled areas in the South. Therefore the people must have suffered from bombings. Their condition must be like that of the people in South Vietnam's VC-controlled areas.

167. What have you heard about life in Red China?

I've never heard about life in Red China.

168. Have you ever heard of the Chieu Hoi program?

I heard about the Chieu Hoi program from the aircraft broadcasts over the edge of the forest near [redacted] Hamlet. The program called on the VC cadres and fighters to rally to the GVN. The GVN promised good treatment and assistance to the ralliers.

169. How many time did you hear aircraft broadcast?

Twice, near [redacted] hamlet three months ago.

170. Have you seen any VC cadres and fighters rally to the GVN?

I only saw one man. I told you about him a while ago. He was a guerrilla in my hamlet.

171. Did he know anything about the Chieu Hoi program?

He didn't tell me. But as a hamlet cadre, he didn't have a gun, yet he tried to steal a gun from another fellow before rallying to the GVN. So I think he must've heard about the Chieu Hoi program from the aircraft broadcasts.

172. What do you think of the Chieu Hoi program?

I think Chieu Hoi is a good program. I'm not thinking of those who are restricted by the VC, and aren't allowed to move to the GVN areas. For these people always try to get away from the VC whether there's a Chieu Hoi program or not. I'm thinking of those who had been taken in by the VC and have joined them. Now they were too afraid of being killed by the GVN to rally. If they learn about the GVN program from aircraft broadcasts, they will find a way to come out.

173. Have you heard the VC cadres or the people say anything about the Chieu Hoi program?

No.

174. Was your village ever attacked by the GVN or allied troops?

The GVN troops from the 23d Division carried out a sweep-up operation in my village last April. Eight days ago, some refugees rushed to this place telling me that my hamlet was being swept-up by the GVN and American troops.

175. Were there any VC troops in or near the village at the time of the GVN operations? Did any battles take place?

The GVN troops didn't meet any VC forces on both operations. The village only had some VC cadres who fled away when they heard the GVN troops were coming. Therefore there were no clashes.

176. Did anything happen in your hamlet during those two operations?

As there was no battle, nobody got hurt. On the second operation, almost all the people in my hamlet followed the American troops to this place to take refuge. They told me that only five or six out of 96 families in the hamlet still remain there.

177. Was your hamlet ever bombed?

I don't know.

178. Were the people warned in advance of the operations?

The people told me that there were no warnings in advance.

179. Do you think the people ought to be warned in advance of an operation?

I don't think so. Warnings in advance may be harmful. The cadres would flee away easily. The people would worry. Also, those who were suspected by the VC might be forced to follow the cadres out of the hamlet.

180. When did the people in the hamlet think of those sweep-up operations?

The newly arrived refugees told me that the people hoped and prayed for those operations to take place in their hamlet, but would take advantage of the chance to follow GVN troops to the GVN-controlled areas. Besides, when the people saw the cadres flee away, they understood that the VC weren't as strong as they've bragged.

181. Have you ever seen trees and plants destroyed by chemical products?

I saw a place on a mountain, near Song Cau, about 1 km from Route 1 where all the leaves had turned brown and withered away. The place was about 1 km long. The GVN soldiers told me that the aircraft had sprayed chemicals on that area to kill the trees.

182. When did you see that place? When did the spraying take place?

I saw that place last December. I don't know when the spraying had taken place.

183. Have you ever heard or seen any places where the crops had been destroyed by chemicals?

I've never heard or seen any such places.

184. Why do you think the GVN sprayed chemicals to kill the trees?

The VC used to hide themselves in the mountain near Song Cau in order to get to Route 1 to stop buses. Ever since the spraying of chemicals, the VC have no longer stopped buses on the highway. So, I think the GVN meant to destroy the trees to deprive the VC of a hiding place from where they could disturb the peace of the people.

185. Did you hear the people say anything about that spraying of chemicals?

I didn't hear anything, but I think the people must've been glad, because the VC don't stop buses anymore.

186. Did the GVN use any other kinds of chemicals?

I heard the soldiers say that the GVN has sprayed a lot of poisonous chemicals in the western mountains to kill the VC. That's all I've heard.

187. Did you ever meet an American before taking refuge here?

I met the Americans many times before coming here.

188. How did the Americans treat the people?

The people told me that the Americans were very nice to them. In [redacted] I saw the Americans dress a man's boil and then take him to the hospital. The children loved to play around with the Americans, and the latter seemed to enjoy it.

189. How did the people treat the Americans?

The people were also nice to the Americans. They told me that when American troops carried out an operation in the village, they behaved properly, they never threatened or beat up anyone. They paid for everything they bought. A friend of mine told me that one day an American passed by his house and saw a big watermelon in his garden. He just picked up the melon and carried it away. My friend ran after him to ask for payment. The American shook his head and didn't say a thing. He took the melon back to the garden and placed it where he had found it. My friend understood that the American didn't have cash in his pocket, so he decided to give the melon as a gift. The American received the melon and thanked my friend over and over again. Another man told me about what had happened to him. One day an American came into his house and saw a bunch of bananas on the table. He took the bananas and paid for them with money. But my friend told him that those bananas were to be offered to his ancestors first. The American immediately put the fruits down without a word. Impressed by the American's decency, the host went inside and took out another bunch of bananas which had been offered to his ancestors' altar, and gave the fruits to the stranger as a gift.

190. Have you ever seen the Americans distribute gifts to the people?

In Tuy An District, as well as in this refugee camp, the Americans have brought a lot of gifts to the people such as clothing, soap, and candy. They brought gifts to the children even more often.

191. Do you think the Americans are like the French in the old days?

The Americans are not at all like the French in the old days. The French were never close to the people. They never treated anyone kindly and were never helpful. The elderly folks said that all the French did was to bully the Vietnamese people. The Americans, on the contrary, are more popular. They are kind and always try to help the people.

192. What do you think the Americans are in Vietnam for?

They are here to help the ARVN fight against the VC.

193. Why do you say so?

I think so because I always saw the Americans go along with the GVN soldiers on operations against the VC. They treated the GVN soldiers as their brothers.

194. Did you think so when you were still in your village?

I've always thought so.

195. Did the VC cadres say anything about the Americans?

I've never heard the cadres say anything about the Americans.

196. What do you think is the relation between the Americans and the GVN?

I think the Americans are friends of the GVN.

197. Did you see any foreigners other than the Americans?

I saw the Korean soldiers who often moved on Route 1 by trucks.

198. What do you think of those Korean soldiers?

I know nothing about the Korean soldiers. The people told me that they were very afraid of those soldiers.

199. Did the people say why they were afraid of the Korean soldiers?

They said it was very dangerous for the people each time the Koreans carried out a sweep-up operation in the villages. It was all right if everything was quiet. But if there was a sound of gunfire, they would shoot everybody to death regardless whether the victims were VC or not, and regardless of men, women, the aged, the young, or the babies. When the Americans carried out an operation, they only fired at the VC, and never hurt the people. There were cases in which the Americans gathered all the men in the village and took them away. But they didn't beat up or kill anyone. The women and children were never touched. Therefore, the people were terribly afraid of the Korean soldiers.

200. What do you think of the Koreans' behavior?

I only heard about them from the people. Actually I've never seen the Koreans kill anybody. I have no opinion.

201. Do you believe what the people told you?

The refugees who have come here never lied. They said what they knew. I believe that everything they told me was true.

202. You told me that you know about the bombing of the North. Who told you about it, and when did you first hear about it?

I knew about it when the North was first bombed. I was in [redacted] Hamlet at the time. Those who read newspapers and listened to the radio told me so.

203. What have you heard about the damage suffered by the North?

Those who got the news from newspapers or the radio said that the North suffered a lot of damage. Buildings, machines, and bridges have been destroyed. I don't know much about it, but judging from what happened to the VC-controlled areas in the South, I could image how things would be in the North. The people in the VC-controlled areas in South Vietnam had to take refuge in the GVN areas because they couldn't live and work safely in their villages. I think it would be the same thing with the people in the North.

204. Why do you think the North was bombed?

I think the GVN and the Americans bombed the North so that it could no longer send arms and troops to disturb the South.

205. Did the bombing of the North have any effect on the Front in the South?

The Front has always been supplied by the North to maintain the war in the South. If the North kept being bombed, some day the Front will have to surrender to the GVN.

206. What did the people in the hamlet where you lived think of this bombing of the North?

I don't know, but I think they must've thought like me.

207. You said you were almost captured by the VC, and it was because you were afraid that the VC might come after you again, that you left your hamlet. (See Q. 43). Did you have any other reasons for leaving your hamlet?

Nobody could do any work in the VC-controlled areas. The labor duty trips and the heavy taxes were enough to make people miserable. That's why I gave up my home and ricefield to take refuge elsewhere.

208. Have you ever seen leaflets or heard aircraft broadcasts calling on the people to move away from the villages?

I've never seen leaflets or heard broadcasts calling on the people to evacuate. I only heard the aircraft calling the VC cadres and fighters to rally to the GVN.

209. Did anything make you hesitate to leave your hamlet?

When I left my hamlet, I had no hesitation whatsoever. I had no regret, and wasn't afraid to lose any property. My house might be destroyed, but my land is still there. It couldn't get lost anywhere! When the GVN reoccupies my village, and security is reestablished, I'll go back to make a living.

210. Did you receive any help from the GVN when you first moved to An Thach Village?

When I first took refuge in [redacted] I was given 30 kg of rice by the local authorities. I got nothing else besides that. It wasn't too hard to make a living. As the village had no VC, we could live and work in peace.

211. Did anyone try to hold you back when you left the hamlet?

No.

212. Were you well prepared for leaving the hamlet? Could you bring along anything of value?

I left my hamlet in a hurry without preparation. My wife could only take along a suitcase of clothing. It was the same thing when we left [redacted] to this place. The night before, we heard about the battle taking place in the neighboring hamlet. So the next morning, we gathered our clothes and ran.

213. How did you leave [redacted] Village?

Early in the morning, I saw all the Popular Force men withdraw from the hamlet [redacted] Hamlet, [redacted] Village). I gathered my children and my wife and ran after them, as I was afraid that the VC might move in from the neighboring hamlet. There were 20 families or some 50 people left the hamlet at the same time. We walked to the district town three miles away. We had some difficulties crossing a bridge. The VC had reduced the bridge to a single piece of wood. As it was raining, the plank became slippery. I had to make several trips to take my three children and the suitcase cross it one at a time. One woman held a baby and led another cross the bridge. As the plank was narrow and slippery, the child lost balance, fell into the creek and drowned. Everybody else was too busy getting away from the VC to try to save the child. We stayed in the district town for a month. Then the road between the district town and Tuy Hoa was cleared, we took the taxi-lambretta to this place.

214. How long did you think you would be away when you left your hamlet?

I thought I would have to be away for a long time, but I always believe that some day I'll return to the hamlet.

215. Do you know if there are many families still remaining in your hamlet?

About 6 families remain there.

216. What class did they belong to? Why did they stay behind?

Three of the families own land, the other three are hired laborers. They stay behind because, I think, they have children working for the VC as cadres or guerrillas.

217. Did any families move to another VC-controlled village?

From what I heard from the people, nobody moved to another VC-controlled village to take refuge. The villagers either took refuge here, or in the Tuy An District Town.

218. When did people begin to leave the hamlet?

Perhaps I was the first one to leave, in 1962. Later on a number of people who had worked for the GVN and the Catholics also left. The rest didn't move until recently. Thanks to the GVN operations they have been able to follow the GVN troops out.

219. Did any of the refugees return to the village?

Nobody.

220. Could you return to the village now?

I'd be killed by the VC if I came back to the village now. They'd tried their hands on me once in vain, they wouldn't let me get away this time.

221. If another man returned to the village now, what would happen to him?

I think he'd be arrested by the VC. He might be accused of trying to get information for the GVN.

222. Did anybody urge you to go back to the village?

No.

223. Have you received any assistance from the GVN since you left An Khoa?

When my family first moved to Tuy An District Town, for a month, we received 16 kg of rice and two cans of butter. We are five: my wife, three children, and myself. It's a month since we've been here, but we haven't received any rice or money from the government.

224. Did the government promise any help?

The refugees here told me that the GVN promised to give each one of us 7 piasters a day during the first 6 months. After six months, we'll be settled elsewhere, and each family will receive 3,000 piasters for house building.

225. Why haven't you received anything although you've been here one month? Do you think the GVN will keep its promises to help the refugees?

I'm aware that there are a lot of refugees and refugee camps. The reason for the delay is that the authorities are too busy. I think the GVN will keep its promise. I myself saw some people leaving the camp after receiving the money.

226. Do you find your camp comfortable and sanitary?

We live in tin-roofed houses. Each has only two doors and no window. It is too crowded, hot and stuffy. All the children have become sick. They have measles, cough, fever, or diarrhea. We were given some sorts of pills, but they aren't very helpful.

227. Did you get your ID card?

None of the refugees who came here at the same time as me got ID cards. I had an ID card when I was in [redacted] Village, but I've lost it in the confusion. I've requested another, but the camp cadres told me that I have to file my application in Tuy An District before they could give me one. I couldn't go to the district now because the road isn't safe.

228. Are any of the refugees in this camp learning any new trades?

Nobody's learning a new trade. A lot of people want to learn new trades, or to have a job to make a living temporarily while waiting for the GVN assistance to come. As nobody has proper ID papers, we all are out of work. A 17 year old youth holding a Junior High School Diploma, is also unemployed. A very few people who still have their ID cards could find some jobs with the quarry. Some went into the villages nearby to carry dirt for the people there and earn as little as 30 piasters a day.

229. How many refugees are there in the camp? How many have left the camp?

A number of refugees had left the camp before I came. I don't know how many of them there were. Right now there are over 700 people in the camp. Among those who came at the same time as me or after me, three families have left. These people have found jobs and have been able to rent houses outside the camp.

230. Do you feel safe in the camp?

Yes, because the camp is not too far from the town (Tuy Hoa), and soldiers always stand guard at night.

231. Did anybody feel unsafe? What did they do and say?

About 20 people think it's not safe in the camp at night. So they spent the nights with friends in Tuy Hoa and came back to camp in the daytime. I've seen them do so, but haven't heard them say a thing.

232. Do you know why they feel unsafe?

I don't know.

233. How is the camp administration organized?

The camp's administrative body consists of four cadres: a camp chief, a policeman, a psywar cadre, and a social worker. The camp is divided into four sections. Each section elects a refugee to be in charge of the camp's sanitary problem.

234. Did you meet the camp chief often? How did he treat the people?

I met him every day. He's very nice to the refugees. He's clever and soft-spoken. Each time the refugees mentioned the assistance, he would try to calm them down, and advise them to wait patiently. Nobody complained about it anymore. I like him very much.

235. Are there any of your former village's GVN cadres in the camp?

No.

236. Have you heard any news from your village since you've been here?

The people told me that the GVN and American troops have carried out two operations in my village, and a lot of villagers followed them out here. I heard nothing else besides.

237. What did the VC cadres and guerrillas do during those operations?

They fled away. So I've heard the people say.

238. Did any foreigners visit this camp?

Eight days ago, two Americans came here to distribute clothing and soap to the children. Yesterday, another one came bringing headache and vitamin pills. The Americans are very kind.

239. Do the children in this camp go to school?

Thirty children in this camp go to school.

240. Do you have any special requests for the children of this camp?

As I've told you, almost all of the children of this camp have fallen sick. We hope the government will give us enough drugs for them.

241. Do you have any difficulties?

Our present difficulty is the delay in the distribution of rice and money.

242. In your opinion, who is responsible for this?

The distribution of rice and money to the refugees is in the hands of the higher authorities. I don't think the camp's cadres have anything to do with these affairs, as none of the people blamed them for this delay.

243. Did you ever think that your family didn't deserve this misery?

If I was left alone to make a living in my hamlet, I wouldn't have to wander around homeless and jobless like this. It's the VC who have brought misery upon us. If it hadn't been for the VC, I wouldn't have to abandon my hamlet, my home, and my land.

244. Where will you settle down after leaving this camp? Do you want to go back to your village?

As I told you a while ago, I can't go back to my village now. I want to settle down in Tuy Hoa.

245. What do you plan to do for a living?

I'll try to find a job. As a disabled veteran without a left hand I can't do anything heavy. If I can't find a job, I'll have to depend on my wife's trading.

246. Do you want to learn a trade?

When I moved to [redacted] I worked as a bicycle repairman. I wish I had three or five thousand piasters to buy tools. I don't know what else I could do with one hand.

247. This is the picture of a ladder. The top step is step No. 1 signifying the best life you could imagine. The bottom step is step No. 10 signifying the worst life you could imagine. Where would classify your life in the village, after you left the village, and right now?

When I was in the village, I had land, and my life was easy. I could say that I belonged to step No. 5. When we moved to [redacted] although we left behind our land, my wife had some gold leaves. We had some money to engage in trading and I was able to open a bicycle repair shop. My life could be said to be at step No. 6. Right now, I must be at No. 9.

248. Where will you be in five years?

I can't tell.

249. In your opinion, what is the worst life in the village?

Being in need of food and clothing and always mistreated by the VC is the worst life possible in my village.

250. What in your opinion is the best life possible?

It is when we could make a good living, have savings, spacious house, a Lambretta, a radio and live in the non-VC areas.

251. What do you hope your son's life will be?

I wish my son could have a good education, at least having a high school diploma, and if possible, I'd like to see him become a doctor.

252. If you could ask the GVN for three things, what would you ask?

First, I'd like to have a job. Secondly, I want to have an ID card. Last of all, I hope to receive our share of rice and money as the GVN has promised.

253. In your opinion, what kind of government would be most likely to give you those things?

Any nationalist government could grant me my wishes.

254. How long do you think the war will last?

I don't know.

255. Which side do you think is winning?

I think the GVN is winning, because I saw the people joined the GVN side more and more every day, and wherever the GVN troops go, the VC ran like mad.

256. Do you think the GVN will win totally?

I think so, because I know that the VC depend on the country people to live. Without the people to produce rice, the VC won't have anything to eat. At this present rate, the people keep moving into the GVN-controlled areas more and more every day. Some day nobody will be left in the countryside, and the VC will starve. Then the GVN will win totally.

257. Do you think the people have the same opinion as you?

I'm sure all the people believe the GVN will win. That's why they've moved to the GVN areas, and the number of refugees keeps growing.

258. Do you mean the Front keeps losing the people's support?

Right. Some time ago, a number of people were willing to stay behind to contribute to the VC. Now everybody wants to move away from the VC. Take the case of my hamlet, for example. Nobody wants to support the Front anymore.

259. In your opinion, what should the GVN do to win more support from the people?

If the GVN could help the refugees more quickly and effectively as it has promised, more people will leave the VC to come out, and thus the people will support the GVN more.

260. In your opinion, what will life be like if the VC wins?

I don't believe the front will ever win. If the front did, the people would have to contribute more and work harder. All the people in the country would be miserable except the cadres.

261. In your opinion, what will life be like if the GVN wins?

If the GVN wins, I'm sure the GVN will see to it that all the people are well fed and well clothed. We're at war right now, yet the GVN has been trying to help the people. It certainly will be better if the GVN wins the war. At that time, not only our generation will be happy, but our children and grandchildren will also be happy.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

The subject was fairly intelligent. His speech was halting but clear. Having been on the point of being arrested by the VC, he seemed sincere in his hatred of the VC. He was cooperative.

No. AGR 57

[illegible]
For refugees

1. Name of interviewer [redacted]

2. Name of subject [redacted]

3. Time and date of interview :

From 9:45 AM to 11:40 AM on May [redacted] 1966
From 1:30 PM to 5:00 PM on May [redacted] 1966
From 8:15 AM to 11:30 AM on May [redacted] 1966
Total time 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM May 1966
~~11 h 40~~

Interview based on : tape ( ) hand written notes (x)

4. Place of interview :

International center Tuy Hoa

5. Sex of subject : Male (x) Female ( )

6. Age of subject : 38

7. Ethnic background : Vietnamese

8. Place of birth :

hamlet [redacted]
village [redacted]
district Tuy An
province Phu Yen

9. Residence prior to [illegible] :

hamlet [redacted]
village [redacted]
district Tuy An
province Phu Yen

10. (a) Length of residence in last location : 4 years

(b) Who controlled the place of residence:

GVN ( ) VC (x) Contested ( )

(c) Since when controlled or contested ? 5 months

11. Number of brothers (1) and sisters (0)

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : 1

13. Marital status : married

14. Number of children : 3

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age :

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject( ) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject (x) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject(x) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion : none

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : Bicycle-repairer

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation middle
(b) Landowner ? _____ How much land Two "Sao" of Sugar-cane and two "mau" of ricefield.

20. Education :
illiterate ( )
literate (x)
schooling completed : Graduated (elementary school)

21. Any relatives in VC : none

22. Any relatives in GVN : 1 brother and 1 nephew serving in RVN.

23. Any relatives (how many? when?) killed by :
(a) French
(b) GVN
(c) VC Two nephews killed in battlefield in 1965

24. When became a refugee : 2 months ago

25. Where took refuge first Tuy An district

26. Present residence Tuy Hoa

AGR

INTERVIEW

58

THE RAND CORPORATION

[redacted]

STUDIES OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT
OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR-58

Date of Interview : May [redacted] 1966

Subject's Category : Refugee, January [redacted] 1966

Area of Residence : [redacted] Hamlet
[redacted] Village
Hien Xuong District
Phu Yen Province

Subjects Covered:

Life in village before 1954 - Q. 1-19
The Diem period - Q. 20-44
Strategic Hamlets - Q. 34-39
The VC takeover - Q. 45-59
Front propaganda - Q. 60-62, 122-124, 140-143
Front Re-education - Q. 63-70
Front Recruitment - Q. 71-82
Front Land reform and Taxes - Q. 83-92
Front Restrictions on Trade - Q. 93-95
Front Organizations - Q. 96-111
Front Terrorism - Q. 112-113
Front Forced Labor & Combat Hamlets - Q. 114-117, 120-121

GVN Information - Q. 127-139, 144-147
GVN Military actions - Q. 148-151
Korean military actions - Q. 152-155
Herbicide - Q. 156-161, 167
American presence - Q. 162-167
Bombing of NVN - Q. 169-173
Motivations for taking refuge - Q. 174-181
Details of trip - Q. 182-183, 186-190
GVN aid - Q. 192-199, 201-211
Expectations and hopes - Q. 168, 184-185, 191, 200, 212-230

1. How long did you and your family live in your native village before taking refuge here?

My family always lived in the village.

2. How big was your village?

Very big. It had [redacted] hamlets.

3. What did you do for a living? Did you make enough to eat?

I'm a farmer. I had two mau of ricefield inherited from my grandfather. We had two crops a year. Each crop yielded one ton of paddy.

4. What was the main occupation of the people in your village? Did many of them make enough to eat?

Most of the people farmed. About three-fourths had enough to eat because they owned land. The rest were poor and had to work as hired-laborers.

5. How large is your family? Do you have any grown-up children?

I have a wife and three children. I have a seventeen-year-old son, but he doesn't live with us. He's working as an ironsmith in [redacted]

6. What's your religion?

I have no religion. I worship my ancestors.

7. What religions did the other villagers practice? Were there any conflicts between members of different religions?

One-third of the villagers were Buddhists. Some families were converted to the Catholic faith during the Diem regime. There were no conflicts between members of different religions.

8. Was there anybody of different ethnic background in your village?

No. All the people were Vietnamese.

9. Did you go to school when you were young?

When I was a child, I went to school up to the second grade. It was under the French regime.

10. What education did the other villagers have?

Almost all the people in the village know how to read and write. A number of very old women were illiterates. A few people had better education. Two or three had high school diplomas.

11. Were there any schools in your village? Did all the children go to school?

Each hamlet had a school to teach the children how to read and write. The village had a primary school with five grades. Almost all the children were sent to school.

12. Who organized the schools? The GVN or the Front?

All the schools had been organized by the GVN. Two of them were destroyed by the bombs when the VC came to the village. All the teachers had run away. The VC cadres picked out some villagers to replace them.

13. Who is your best friend in the village?

I have a very good friend. Right now he is also taking refuge here in Hieu Nhon District.

14. Could you talk freely to him about everything before the VC came? How about after the arrival of the VC?

We always talked freely to each other before and after the arrival of the VC. Sometimes we criticized the VC, because both of us hated them. Before the arrival of the VC, I talked freely to everybody. After the VC came, I only talked to my friend. I was too afraid to say anything to anybody else.

15. What people in the village were the most important? Who was the most respected?

In the old days, Mr. [redacted] a member of the village council was the most esteemed and respected in the village. He was assigned the task of appointing the hamlet chiefs. Since the VC came, no one has been respected by the people.

16. Which class did Mr. [redacted] belong to? What has become of him?

He belongs to the middle farmer class. He had moved to the GVN-controlled areas when the VC came.

17. Who was the best informed about what was happening in the district, in the province, in Saigon, outside of Vietnam?

Nobody.

18. How was life in your village during the Resistance?

Nobody was well-off during those years because the people had to pay heavy agricultural taxes, and had to do labor duty -- carrying rice to the western Highlands.

19. Did anybody in the village join the Resistance to fight against the French?

Ten men from the village joined the Viet Minh army. Later on, they regrouped in the North. I don't know if they have returned to the South. A lot of other people worked as cadres for the Viet Minh. None of these cadres regrouped.

20. What happened to those people after 1954?

After 1954, when the GVN established the village administration, these people were divided into three categories. A, B, and C. The A's and the B's were thrown in jail. The A's were sentenced to a longer term. Six from my village belonged to this category. All of them have been released. One was dead, the rest are now VC cadres.

21. After 1954, since the GVN established control in the village, how was the life of the people?

When the GVN came, the people in the village made a far better living. At first, nobody had to pay taxes. Later on, they had to pay, but very little. Travel wasn't restricted. The poor could go far away to find employment, and thus led an easy life. Furthermore, the [redacted] was built. Before that, the fields only yielded one crop a year. The amount of paddy earned increased. A lot of people could put away some savings and could build tile-roofed houses.

22. How did the local officials behave?

Almost all the officials in the village were nice to the people. Through the years, only two of the officials were arrested by the GVN for taking bribes from the people.

23. Where did the village officials come from? Were they elected by the people?

All of them were natives of the village. They all were appointed by the GVN. The people didn't elect them.

24. Was any election take place in your village?

The people went to the poll twice to elect the National Assembly.

25. How were those elections organized? Did many people take part in the elections?

Before each election, the GVN cadres came to the village to educate (sic) the people about the voting procedure. The people were also told whom to vote for. All the people went to the poll, and all of them voted for the candidate recommended by the cadres.

26. Did the people in the village know who was elected?

The winner was a man from Saigon. Before the election day, he came to the village and the people got a look of his face, but nobody knew who he was.

27. After being elected, did he prove himself to be worthy of the people's confidence? Did he do anything helpful for the people?

He presented himself to the people before the election and then disappeared for good. The people had no idea whether he had done anything good for them.

28. What do you know about the Diem regime?

I don't know anything about it.

29. Did the people in the village know anything about the fall of the Diem Government?

When Mr. Diem was overthrown, the people were informed immediately. The VC emerged from the forests, came to the village and used loudspeakers to tell the people that Mr. Diem had been overthrown by the people. The Revolution was achieved. The VC were about to leave the forests for the villages. At that time, everybody thought that the Communists had come to Saigon to overthrow Mr. Diem. A lot of people intended to join the VC. Shortly afterward, we learned that the fall of Mr. Diem was a result of the GVN's internal reshuffling. People no longer listened to the VC.

30. What did the people think of the fall of Mr. Diem?

I don't know what the people thought about it. As for me, I had no idea. It didn't make any difference to me who governed the GVN, provided that he was a nationalist.

31. Were there any GVN military forces in or near your village?

There used to be some Civil Guards stationed in the office of the village council. After the fall of Mr. Diem, they all withdrew. That's why the VC were able to move into the village.

32. How did the Civil Guards behave?

They often stole chickens and ducks from the people. They threatened and beat up the villagers. Everybody complained against them. Nobody liked those soldiers.

33. Did other GVN soldiers ever pass through your village?

In November 1965, the GVN troops carried out an operation through my hamlet. I was in the mountains, being re-educated at the time. When I came back, I was told that the GVN troops only passed through. No battle took place because all the VC had run away. The GVN soldiers behaved properly to the people this time.

34. Was your hamlet a former Strategic Hamlet?

It used to be a Strategic Hamlet; it was built in 1961.

35. How much labor and money did you have to contribute to the building of the Strategic Hamlet?

At that time, all we needed was a bamboo fence. The elderly people met with the village council and decided that each villager had to take care of a different portion of the fence depending on his income. The people in the hamlet were divided into several categories: those who had to take care of 5m of the fence, others 15m, 25m, 35m, and 45m. Each person had to manage to buy or ask other people for bamboo, and put up the fence himself. I had to take care of 35m of the fence. There was more than enough bamboo in my orchard for my portion of the fence, I even gave some to the poor. Besides that, nobody had to contribute anything.

36. What did you and others like about the Strategic Hamlet?

We liked best the solid fence and the militiamen guarding the hamlet. The VC couldn't sneak in at night.

37. What did you dislike about the Strategic Hamlet?

There was nothing that I didn't like about it.

38. What has become of your Strategic Hamlet?

In November 1963, all the GVN troops withdrew. At 9:00 PM the next night, the VC came and called on all the villagers to go destroy the fence. Nobody dared refuse. When the fence was torn down, the VC put fire to the bamboo. From then on, the VC kept coming to the hamlet. They came and went. They never stayed. It wasn't until June 1964 that they established control over the hamlet.

39. What do you think of the Strategic Hamlet now?

I'd lived with the Viet Minh before. I had experienced hardships. If the Strategic Hamlet could keep out the VC, then it doesn't matter if the people have to contribute some bamboo and labor. I liked very much the life in the Strategic Hamlet. I think others would think the same thing.

40. What did you think of your life and your future before the VC came?

Before the VC came to my hamlet, I had made a good living. I lived in abundance. I thought to myself that if things went on that way for me, my future would be much better.

41. Were you dissatisfied with anything?

There was nothing that made me feel dissatisfied or worried.

42. How could the GVN have helped you then?

At that time the GVN made loans and supplied fertilizers to the people to grow rice and sugar cane. I was also helped. Then, I only hoped the GVN would assist us more.

43. Did you have any opportunities to improve your life?

The loans of money and the supply of fertilizers had let me grow more rice and sugar cane. Thus my life would be improved.

44. What did you think about the chances of your children having a better life?

My oldest son was a good student then. He had passed the Primary School Certificate at the time. I had hoped to see him get a better education so that he might have a comfortable life later on. As soon as he finished primary school, the VC came to take over the hamlet. I tried to send him to Tuy Hoa for high school. When he returned to the hamlet for more money and rice, the VC cadres forbade him to take rice out of the hamlet. They said if the boy wanted to study in Tuy Hoa, he had to be self-sufficient. He wasn't supposed to get rice from his family in the hamlet. That was the end of my son's education. I didn't want to keep him in the hamlet for fear the VC might force him to join the guerrillas. I sent him to a relative in Nha Trang to learn to be an ironsmith. As an apprentice, he was fed. He's now a full-fledged ironsmith. He got one thousand piasters a month plus meals.

45. When was the first time you heard about the Front?

I don't remember when I first heard of the Front. I heard of the VC in 1957, a few years after the GVN had established the hamlet administration.

46. How did you hear about the VC?

In 1957 a number of people in the village ran away. They had all been members of the Communist Party since the Viet Minh period. The village council members said that they had gone to the mountain to join the Viet Cong. That was the first time I heard of the VC.

47. When did the VC cadres first come to your village?

The first time the VC ever sneaked into my village was in 1958. At that time, a regroupee came back and hid himself in the house of his acquaintance. The villagers informed the village council about him, and he was arrested by the soldiers. That's how I knew about VC presence in the village.

48. Why did that VC cadre sneak into your village? Did he want to make propaganda?

I don't know what he had come to the village for. I didn't hear him make any propaganda.

49. When the VC first came to the village, did they confiscate the people's GVN ID cards?

When the VC came to the village, they collected all the people's ID cards, except those which belonged to families of former Viet Minh cadres, and to those who worked for them.

50. Why didn't the VC take away these people's ID cards?

The cadres let these people travel freely to the GVN-controlled areas for trading or shopping or for something else, which I don't know.

51. How did the VC cadres treat the people?

The village cadres were soft-spoken, diplomatic, and seemed to be very nice to the people. Only the lower-ranking cadres, such as the farmers' cell leaders, were overbearing. They watched and controlled everybody. They wouldn't let anybody out of the hamlet. Sometimes they made up stories, suspecting this or that one of having connection with the GVN. They nagged the people off and on.

52. How did the guerrillas behave?

Some of them were nice. Others often shouted at the people.

53. What did the people in the village think of the cadres?

The people didn't say anything about the high-ranking cadres. I don't know what they thought about them. Everybody showed his disgust toward the low-ranking cadres. As for me, I think the high-ranking cadres pretended to be kind to the people to

win over their hearts. Actually it was they who ordered the low-ranking cadres to be harsh to the people. That's why I hated them all.

54. What did you know about the aims of the Front?

I didn't know anything about the aims of the Front. I didn't know anything about the Front itself. I heard the cadres say that the people had stood up to struggle and form the National Liberation Front. But I didn't believe the cadres. It was obvious that none of the people in the village had stood up to struggle for anything.

55. Do you think the Front is for peace?

I was sent by the VC to the mountain for reform from March 1965 to January 1966. While in the mountain, I heard the cadres say often that peace would mean the end of them. They said they had to fight till the last moment. It's "either you or I" would survive. So I think the VC were afraid of peace.

56. Do you think the Front is patriotic or treasonous?

Our forefathers always respected family life and private property. Now the VC import their ideology from nobody-knows-where, and want us to work together, eat together, and live together. Thus they are treasonous against their ancestors and their people. They have no love for their country and their people.

57. Do you think the VC cadres are courageous?

The VC cadres only bullied unarmed people. When the GVN troops came, they would run like mad. They were a bunch of cowards.

58. Do you think the VC cadres are ruthless?

The VC cadres always used sweet talk and seemed to be concerned about the people. In reality, it was a trick to get the people to contribute and to go on labor duty trips. They never did anything to help the people. Those who went on labor duty trips for them would be abandoned if they fell sick. Nobody would take care of them or give them a pill. Thus I found the VC terribly ruthless.

59. Do you think the VC cadres are well disciplined or too rigid?

They were very well disciplined. They always carried out the orders of the higher authorities. To the people, however, they were very rigid. If they made up their mind to force the people to do this or that for them, they'd go ahead and order the people. They paid no heed to the people's feelings. They didn't care if the people had to put up with hardships. Those who resisted their orders would be sent to re-education.

60. Did the cadres often hold meetings in the village?

There was a meeting every five or ten days. People in the hamlets or village had to come to listen to their talks.

61. What did the cadres often say in those meetings?

They often told stories of success of the front. They said the GVN was pro-American imperialists, and that the imperialists had failed in many things. They were giving like a man standing one foot on the ground, the other in water. With a little blow, he would fall completely into water.

62. Did the people believe the cadres?

Who could believe them? Right before Tet, for example, they bragged that they would take over Phu Cat, Tuy Hoa, and then all of us would celebrate Tet there. It's been four months since Tet, yet those places are nowhere in sight. The people listened when they talked, but nobody believed them.

63. You said you were sent to a reform camp by the cadres. Where was it?

I only know that the place was on a remote mountain. I don't know its location.

64. Were there were sent to the reform camp at the same time as you?

Three other villagers were sent to the camp at the same time as me. When we got to the mountain, we found another five men who had been sent there before us. They all were natives of the village.

65. Why were you sent to the reform camp?

When the GVN was in control of my village, I worked as a hamlet security man. In the early months of 1964, when all the GVN troops had withdrawn, but the VC hadn't occupied the village, the cadres already sent someone after me. They planned to arrest me and my two uncles, but I was able to get away. I took refuge in Hieu Xuong District for three months. After that, I felt sick and could no longer stay at the district town. I had to go back to the village. The VC had already established control of the village when I came back. I presented myself to the village VC authorities they said that as I had minded my way, I was allowed to stay home and make a living. In 1965, bombs were dropped often. I sold my big cow, thinking of replacing it with a calf so that if the animal was bombed to death, I wouldn't have to lose too much. The cadres accused me of planning to move away when they saw me sell the cow. They made me attend an indoctrination course for seven days in the village and then send me to the mountain for reform.

66. Describe the reform camp. What did you do while you were there?

There was a thatch house in the middle of the mountain. During the first days at the camp, everybody's feet were tied up. Some men were tied up for a month. I was chained for seven days. After that, I made a written confession that I had intended to go away in exile for/second time. I had done so once before in Hieu Xuong District for three months. I was unchained after the confession. I was sent to the forest to chop wood and process charcoal for the cadres to sell in the villages. A month later, I was ordered to till the land and grow potatoes. I worked like that for ten months, and then I was released.

67. How did you get rice to eat while you were in camp?

I had to get rice from home. All the inmates had to do the same thing. Our families had to supply rice, salt, and other food items. Each of us was provided with 15 kg of rice a month.

68. What did the cadres say when they released you?

Before the release ceremony, each man had to sign a promise never to take refuge elsewhere or to work for the GVN.

69. Were all the men released at the same time as you?

Only three were released at the same time as I. The others had to stay on. I don't know if they have been freed.

70. Did the people say anything about your being sent to a reform camp?

They were too afraid to say anything.

71. How many youths over 16 years of age were there in your hamlet?

There were many of them, but I don't know how many.

72. How many joined the ARVN?

Five men from my hamlet had volunteered to join the ARVN when the GVN was still in power. Two of them had died.

73. How many were drafted?

None.

74. How many joined the Front army?

About forty. Half of them joined the guerrilla force, the other half the regular army. When the people rushed here to take refuge, eleven guerrillas ran along.

75. Do you know why these youths joined the guerrillas or the regular Front army?

They belonged to the young generation. They knew nothing about the Viet Minh. When the cadres came to make propaganda, they were taken in immediately. The cadres said that the Front was fighting the Americans to establish Socialism, and bring happiness to all the people. The youths were excited with the idea, and they immediately volunteered. Some of them, however, didn't listen to the cadres. They were threatened and accused of nursing an intention to join the ARVN. Those who didn't join the Front army had to go on labor duty trips for three months. The youths were very afraid of labor duty trips. In the end all of them joined either the guerrillas or the regular army.

76. Did everybody have to do military duty?

No. The cadres only threatened the youths into volunteering for the army.

77. Did any women join the army?

When I came back from the reform camp, I found an armed platoon of female guerrillas in my house. The cadres had turned my house into a billet for these women. I saw them taking military training.

78. What did the female guerrillas do in the village? Did they ever do cultivation?

I only saw them taking military training. That's all. I don't think these female soldiers were made for combat. The reason for their existence was to set an example for the young men and to encourage them to join the guerrilla or regular forces.

79. What did the villagers feel about having their sons in the Front army?

Nobody wanted to see his sons join the army, but no one dared oppose or disagree. If the cadres ever heard anybody oppose the Front, they would send him to the reform camp immediately.

80. Were families with sons in the Front treated differently in your village?

Yes, they were treated differently by the cadres. They only had to go on short labor duty trips which lasted from five to seven days, while others had to make trips that lasted from ten to fifteen days.

81. How were families with sons in the ARVN treated?

The VC forced these families to ask the GVN to send their sons home. In 1964, the cadres organized a mass demonstration. The people were ordered to go to Hieu Xuong District Town to demand a stop to the bombing and shelling in the village. Those who had children in the ARVN had to lead the procession. The GVN soldiers fired into the crowd and killed one man. This man had a son in the ARVN. When the victim was taken back to the village, the cadres announced that it was his son who had cut him down.

82. How many guerrillas were there in your village? What did they do?

My village had a lot of guerrillas. There were [redacted] hamlets, each had ten guerrillas. They worked as usual in the daytime but at night they had to take up guard duty in the hamlet. They were supposed to put up a fight whenever the GVN troops carried out an operation in the village. In reality, they only sniped a few shots and then run away.

83. Did the cadres redistribute land to the people in the village?

Yes. Land redistribution had been carried out since December 1964. All the public land was distributed equally to all the families. Each family got about one sao. Land of the former GVN officials and of those who had gone to the village to settle elsewhere -- although they had not worked for the GVN -- was taken away by the cadres and given to families of VC soldiers or guerrillas.

84. Did anybody refuse his share of land?

I didn't accept my share. I told the cadres that I already had some land. Therefore I would like to let those who had no land at all have my share. Actually I knew I wouldn't gain anything because I would have to pay heavy taxes to the VC. Besides, all those who had land refused to accept their shares of public land. They probably thought the same thing as I did.

85. What did those who received land think of this land redistribution? Were they glad? Did they think they could keep the land forever?

All those who accepted the land were poor. They were very happy about it. They believed they could keep the land forever. I heard some of them say so.

86. How much land did you own? How were you classified by the VC?

I had two mau of ricefield, and two mau of orchard. I was classified as a middle farmer.

87. Did the people in your village have to pay taxes to the Front?

Yes. Taxes were levied as soon as the cadres came to the village. All the people, except those who were too poor, had to pay taxes.

88. How did the cadres determine the tax rates?

Last year (1965), the tax rates were fixed according to the people's capacity, and not to the amount of land-holding. The cadres said that even though some families owned little land, they earned more from trading or doing something else. While a family with more land might not be as well-off because it had to feed too many mouths. The cadres determined the amount of paddy each family had to pay. Then they called a meeting of all the representatives of the families in the hamlet to discuss the matter. In reality, the people didn't come to the meeting to discuss, but to take the order. Nobody dared disagree or refuse anything.

89. How much did you have to pay? Did any families have to pay more than you did?

My family had to pay 300 kg of paddy. The highest taxpayer paid 600 kg, the lowest 50 kg.

90. Have the tax rates been changed this year?

Early this year, the cadres changed the tax rates. I'd have to pay twice as much as last year. But as soon as the new decision was made known to the people, the Korean troops came to the village. All the people -- including me -- had to rush to this place to take refuge. Thus the VC haven't gotten a chance to apply their new tax rates.

91. Did you have to pay taxes when the GVN still had control of your village?

We had to pay taxes to the GVN before the VC came, but then I only had to pay 50 kg. Everybody else was taxed as lightly.

92. Did the people say anything about having to pay taxes to the VC?

Everybody thought the VC taxes were too heavy. They complained among each other. Nobody dared say anything openly, for fear of being sent to the reform camp.

93. Were the people allowed to sell their produce outside the village? What kind of people were allowed to go to the market places?

Produce could be sold outside the village. Only those who were trusted by the cadres were allowed to travel, though -- such as relatives of VC guerrillas, fighters, or cadres.

Most of them were women. All the produce, except rice, was allowed to be taken out of the village.

94. Did the people ever have to sell rice? To whom?

Most of the people in my village were farmers. My village was the largest rice producer in the district. Everybody had to sell some of his rice each year for money to buy other necessities. As the VC forbade selling rice outside the village, people had to sell it to the village's Purchasing Agency at its own fixed price which was equal to half of the market price.

95. How high was the cost of living in the village?

Rice production in the village didn't fall behind, but as the people had to sell it to the VC at low price, the amount of money earned diminished. Meanwhile prices of all other articles such as clothing, salt, "mam" and oil hiked up. Not many people were allowed to go to the marketplaces. The amount of articles they brought back was limited. Therefore everything became scarce. Besides, taxes were too heavy. People in the village have become worse-off. They produced the same amount of rice, but their life became harder and harder.

96. Did the cadres set up any organizations in your village?

There was a Village Front Committee. Each hamlet had a subcommittee. This organization took care of the village administrative affairs. It was run by the VC cadres. Besides, there were the Liberation Youths, Liberation Women, and the Liberation Farmers.

97. Did all the people join these organizations?

Not all the people were forced to join these organizations. It only was the poor and those who were trusted by the VC join them.

98. What were the aims of these organizations?

I don't know.

99. Did members of those organizations enjoy any special privileges?

I don't know.

100. Were there any secret organizations?

I don't know.

101. Where did the village cadres come from?

They all emerged from the mountains to take over the village. Some of them were strangers. Some were villagers who had gone in to the mountains. When I came back from the reform camp, all of them had left. The village was run by newly trained cadres. They were villagers who joined the VC when they first got control of the village.

102. What was the most important cadre position in your village?

The president of the Village Liberation Committee.

103. What did you think of him?

He was the most powerful person in the village. He was very nice to the people. He never hurt anybody's feeling. He used the hamlet cadres as a scapegoat for his unpopular decisions such as refusing to grant certain authorizations for some people. Almost all the people in the village had nothing to complain against him.

104. How many female cadres were there in your village?

There was only one woman serving as a member of the Village Liberation Committee.

105. How did she behave toward the people?

I don't know.

106. What kind of a person was she? What class did she belong to?

She came from a well-to-do family. All of her brothers joined the VC. In the old days, a lot of members of her family joined the Viet Minh.

107. Was there a Party Chapter in your hamlet?

I don't know if there was a Party Chapter. I only know that there were a lot of ex-Viet Minh cadres.

108. Did the cadres ever help the people?

They never did anything to help the people.

109. Did you ever hear of any conflicts between the cadres?

No. I've never heard them quarrel either.

110. Did the cadres form cliques among themselves?

I've never heard of any such cliques.

111. Has the attitude of the people toward the cadres changed since the Front got control of the village?

When the VC first got control of the village, the cadres said that their purpose was to liberate the people and to make life easy for everybody. Some people were taken in by their propaganda, felt confident and sympathetic to the cadres. Later on, everybody could see by himself that the cadres didn't practice what they preached. People had to pay all sorts of contributions. Taxes were heavier every day. Labor duty trips were forced upon the people. Life became harder and harder. Besides, the presence of the VC in the village drew fire from the aircraft. People started complaining, and right now, nobody feels sympathetic to the VC. Everybody hated them.

112. You said the cadres sent a lot of people to the mountain for reform. Besides that, did they kill anybody?

The VC killed two men in my village. A few days before the VC got control of my hamlet, a man was arrested at noon and was shot to death that evening in the field. The victim was a former member of the village's GVN administrative body. His kinfolks recovered his body from the field the next morning and gave it a burial. The people were frightened. When the VC got control of the village, some people asked them why the man's crimes hadn't been made known to the people. The cadres said the accusation had been sent to the district authorities, that's why the people didn't get to hear it. The second victim lived in another hamlet.

He was sent to the reform camp and never came back. I met one of his relatives who told me that he had been killed in the mountain.

113. Did the people say anything about these killings?

The people were frightened. They talked about these incidents among themselves. Nobody said anything openly.

114. How were labor duty trips organized in the village?

Everybody in the village had to take turns going on labor duty trips. The villagers were divided into two groups. The healthy youths had to follow the troops to transport the wounded or to carry ammo. Each trip last from one to two months. It was very hard and dangerous. That's why a number of young men would rather join the VC army or guerrilla forces than go on labor duty trips. Other people had to carry rice to the Western Highlands, or constructed rice storage in the forests. Each trip lasted from ten to fifteen days. They often had to take along ten days' supply of rice. If the trip lasted longer than ten days, they would be fed by the VC when their rice ran out. A man had to go on three trips a year. The trips were hard, time consuming, and people had to leave behind a lot of work. If a man was so unlucky as to fall sick on the road, he would be abandoned without any medicine. He had to lie on the road waiting for his group to take him back to the village on the way home. Sometimes the men were called on to go clear a certain road. People dreaded labor duty trips, but nobody dared say a thing.

115. Did the cadres turn your hamlet into a Combat Hamlet?

Communication trenches and underground shelters were dug everywhere in the hamlet. Three or four neighboring orchards had to have one common fence made of bamboo thorns. This group of orchards was called a Combat Bloc.

116. Was there anything you didn't like about the Combat Hamlet?

Communication trenches were dug all over the place in the hamlet. Sometimes they crossed the orchard gates and made it hard for the people to take cattle to the fields. Worst of all, was the cadres' explanation that the guerrillas would fire at the GVN troops from those communication trenches if the GVN troops ever set foot in the village. Thus it was clear that the people and their property would suffer damage. The people were very nervous about it. Besides, there was nothing worth liking about the hamlet.

117. How would you compare a Strategic Hamlet and a Combat Hamlet?

The Strategic Hamlet used to be surrounded by fences, but the fences were far from the people's houses. If there was shooting going on, the people's property wouldn't be damaged. There were no communication trenches in a Strategic Hamlet, so the people weren't bothered. In short, the Combat Hamlet caused inconvenience to the people, and made them nervous of some possible danger.

118. While in the village, did you hear anything about life in the VC army?

I don't know how life is in the VC army. I heard people say that the Front fighter only had rice to eat with salt, and that they had to put up with all kinds of hardships.

119. Have you ever met a Northern cadre or fighter?

Never.

120. Have the activities of the cadres changed during the last year?

I only saw the cadres make the people work harder and harder every day. They didn't only make the people pay taxes in paddy, they also make them process the paddy into rice, and then carry it to the mountain. Children had to dig trenches, and plant banana trees. Everybody had to work harder and harder every day.

121. Why do you think the cadres made the people work harder?

I think the people were the sole support of the VC, that's why they made people work hard for them.

122. Did you ever hear of the failures of the Front units?

The cadres never told the people about the failures of the Front units. While I was in the reform camp, one day I heard the cadres say to each other that a certain VC agency located in a mountain cave in Hoai Xuan Village was wiped out by GVN bombs. They seemed to be sad about it. On another occasion, I heard the guards tell each other about a lost battle in Phu Lem. I don't remember the details and the date.

123. Did the cadres often talk about the successes of the Front units?

As I told you, the cadres always cited the successes of the Front units, especially during mass meetings. But none of the people believed them. Once the cadres told the people that the VC troops had shelled the Hieu Xuong District Town to pieces, and that a cannon was destroyed. Yet, as you can see for yourself that the Hieu Xuong District Town is all in one piece.

124. In your opinion, why didn't the cadres talk about the failures of the Front?

They were afraid that talk about the failures of the Front would make the people lose confidence in the Front, and the youths wouldn't join the Front army.

125. Did your village have a dispensary or any doctors?

Before the VC came, there was a first-aid station run by a rural nurse. When the VC moved in, the nurse went away, and the station was closed down. Thus my village no longer had any medicine, nurse, or doctor.

126. What happened to those who were gravely ill?

Those who were gravely ill, or seriously wounded were allowed to be taken to the Phu Lam dispensary near Hieu Xuong District Town.

127. While in the village, did you ever hear of the Saigon government?

I didn't hear anything about the Saigon government.

128. Do you know who leads the GVN now?

I heard it was Mr. Nguyen Cao Ky.

129. Do you know what the aims of the GVN are?

I know that the GVN's aim is to make property owners out of the people, while the VC's is to strip people of all their property.

130. Do you think the GVN is weak or strong?

I think the GVN is strong because it has a lot of assistance from the allied countries. The VC are said to have the support of the Russians and the Red Chinese, but I didn't see anything, I only saw them exploit the people.

131. Do you think the GVN is compassionate or cruel?

The GVN is concerned about the people, because I saw a lot of people being helped by the GVN. For example, the refugees are helped and the sick are given medicine in the dispensaries. The GVN is never cruel to the people. Even though there were some soldiers who beat the people up sometimes, that was the case of individual cruelty, and not the GVN's.

132. Do you think the GVN is just or corrupt?

I think the GVN is just, because all those who are in need get equal help. People aren't divided into categories like it was under the VC. I don't know anything about GVN corruption. Right now I don't see anything corrupt. Under the Diem regime, some village cadres took bribes, but they have been fired.

133. Do you think the GVN is wise or confused?

In my village if the GVN planned to cut a road through somebody's property, it always consulted the parties concerned, and proposed to compensate the people according to their demand. The GVN didn't just take away people's property regardless of people's rightslike the French or the VC did.

134. Do you think the GVN cadres are doing their best in serving the people?

Years ago, village cadres had never done their best in serving the people. They only worked for form's sake. Things have changed now. When the refugees arrived in the district town, for example, the cadres rushed up and down to inquire about this one and to look for that one. They would see to it that everybody have a proper place to sleep and to eat.

135. How did you get information in your village on what was happening in Saigon?

When the VC came to the village, all those who owned radio sets had run away. Therefore we didn't hear any news from Saigon. Only the cadres owned radio sets. They listened to broadcasts, and then told the people that the people in Saigon had staged demonstrations against this or that official. That's all the news from Saigon that the people were able to learn.

136. Did you hear rumors or gossip in the market?

If those who went to the market places heard anything at all, they certainly didn't tell. So nobody knew about it.

137. Did the people in the village read newspapers?

There have been no newspapers since the VC came.

138. Did you get mail in your village since the VC came? Did you ever write to anybody?

I didn't write to anybody, and never received any mail.

139. Did you ever see or hear entertainment, such as cai luong, a play, or music in your village?

No.

140. What have you heard about life in the North?

Once in a while, the cadres let the people listen to Radio Hanoi. I remember vaguely they said that up North, one man worked as hard as two, everybody had a job, everybody owned land, nobody was rich but nobody was poor. Northern people have achieved Socialism.

141. What do you know about Socialism?

I don't know for sure, but I think it must be like what I've just said.

142. Do you believe that life in the North is like that?

I don't know whether it is true or not. The VC seldom told the truth, though!

143. What do you know about life in Red China?

Nothing.

144. Did you hear of the Chieu Hoi program when you were in the village?

I didn't know anything about the Chieu Hoi program then. Leaflets weren't dropped until the Korean troops carried out a sweep in my village, and it was the first time I learned about the Chieu Hoi program.

145. What is Chieu Hoi?

The Chieu Hoi program called on all the VC cadres and fighters to rally to the GVN. The GVN promised tolerance and good treatment to the ralliers.

146. Do you think the VC cadres knew about the Chieu Hoi program?

I don't think the VC cadres in my village know anything about the Chieu Hoi program?

147. What do you think of the Chieu Hoi policy?

I think it's a good policy. Only tolerance and good treatment could lure people to the GVN side. If the VC cadres were beaten up, other cadres would be too afraid to return to the GVN side, and the people might become dissatisfied too, because they knew a lot of VC cadres were forced to join the Front.

148. Did you say your village was often bombed?

My village has been bombed several times since the VC took over. It was bombed every month. Sometimes once or twice a month, sometimes four or five times.

149. Did the people suffer any damage? Were there any casualties?

My hamlet has three blocs. The houses in my bloc were scattered, that's why we didn't suffer much damage. People's houses in the other two blocs were burnt out. They had to put up shacks to live in. The people spent most of the daytime all the fields, and didn't come until after dark. That's why the casualty rate was low. There were some dead in all the hamlets. The most unfortunate one suffered four or five dead. My hamlet lost only one.

150. Was your village often shelled?

It wasn't shelled often.

151. Did the GVN troops ever attack your village?

In Novem[illegible] 1965 the GVN troops carried out a sweep in my village. I was in the reform camp in the mountain at the time. My family told me about it when I got back. I heard that when the GVN troops came, all the VC ran away. The GVN soldiers didn't come into the hamlet. There were no battles. Nobody was killed or captured. The second attack took place two days before Tet (January 19, 1966). That morning, the aircraft bombed the [redacted] Mountain near the village. There was nothing in that mountain. A while later, the helicopters carried Korean troops to [redacted] Mountain where they were to be stationed. Meanwhile, the aircraft came to broadcast, saying that the allied troops were carrying out an operation. The aircraft would strafe, and people would be killed if there was any groundfire. Some of the guerrillas still fired at the planes. The aircraft retaliated immediately by bombing out an entire bloc of houses, and strafing to kill four or five people; among them there were two female VC cadres who were trying to get away. When all the Korean troops had landed, the aircraft came to broadcast again. It said that no one should stay in the hamlet. All the people should go to the field, each holding a piece of white cloth. The people immediately moved out to the fields. That evening, the aircraft came to order people to go back into the houses. That night I heard several explosions near the hamlet. I thought it was the soldiers firing their guns to amuse themselves. It was during Tet, the VC had informed the people that there would be no shooting during the vacation. Suddenly a shell fell into my yard killing one of my cows. I realized then that they meant business. The whole family immediately got into the trench. At daybreak, I took the family and the remaining cow to the field. Everybody else did the same thing. There was a lot of shooting going on that morning, but we didn't know where they were taking place. The Korean troops walked into my hamlet at noon. The hamlet was emptied of people then. Seeing fire rising from the communication trenches, we knew that the soldiers were burning our paddy. As the village was bombed too often, we were afraid to keep our paddy in the house, for fear the houses might be bombed out and our paddy with them. That's why we kept it in the communication trenches. The people were afraid that the troops might burn all the paddy and the houses.

An elderly man proposed that we select ten more old people to form a delegation to walk to the hamlet and ask for a stop to the burning of the paddy. The delegation of eleven old men walked toward the hamlet. When they were near, they found that the troops were Koreans. Knowing that the language barrier wouldn't let their request come through. The men turn their heels and walked back to the field. A Korean soldier waived at them and signaled them to come back. They all did. The Koreans took them to the hamlet, lined them up on the edge of a communication trench, and without a word, shot them all. Ten men died instantly. Another one was wounded and fell down but didn't die. It was this man who told me about the incident later on. This irrational killing wasn't unique. From what I heard from the people, that very morning a similar incident had taken place in neighboring [redacted] Hamlet of the same village. Early that morning, the Korean troops came into [redacted] Hamlet. Most of the people had run into the field at the time. Only 50 villagers still lagged behind. Most of them were women, children, and elderly people. The Korean soldiers rounded them up in one place. The people thought that they were to be evacuated to the GVN-controlled areas by helicopters. That's why they all were glad. When the people were grouped together, the Koreans suddenly pointed their guns to the crowd and opened fire. Only two babies of two and three survived. They crawled on their mothers' bellies. After seeing those who were killed in my hamlet, and hearing about the massacre of [redacted] Hamlet, the people were frightened. Nobody dared come into the hamlet. They all tried to run toward the GVN-controlled areas. That night everybody slept in the field in the neighboring hamlet. We stayed there for two days, then ran to the GVN-controlled areas. Those who reached here after us, said that a number of old people, women, and children couldn't make it here on time. They were all shot to death by the Koreans. All in all, there were nearly 300 persons killed in my hamlet, 36 of them were children.

I52. Were the people warned in advance of the bombings and sweep operations?

No. The people were never warned in advance.

153. Do you think the advanced warnings would do any good to the people?

If the people were warned in advance, especially about the bombing attacks, they could minimize the material damage by taking their cattle and personal belongings to the field for shelter.

154. What did the people think of the bombing attacks?

The people blamed them all on the VC. They thought it was because the VC mingled with the people that the GVN bombed their village. The people also blamed the GVN for its failure to warn them in advance of the attacks so that they could avoid some material damage and unnecessary death.

155. What did the people think of the sweep operations?

We didn't mind much if the sweeps were carried out by GVN troops, but the people were frightened and resentful against the Korean troops' operations. Everybody agreed that the Koreans were barbarous. They went on operation without interpreters going along. They killed at random without distinguishing between the rights and the wrongs. Some people said that it was because the VC mixed themselves with the villagers, and thus the Koreans couldn't help making a mistake. I don't think their reasoning was right. I don't see why the Koreans should kill the children. Kids of two, three, or even five or seven years weren't VC. They also burned the paddy and the people's houses. They burned the cow pens and the animals inside too. Cows are certainly not VC! These soldiers carried out operations against the VC. Their barbarous acts were entirely unnecessary. Refugees who had come to Hieu Xuong District Town from other areas told me that the American troops also carried out operations in the villages, but they never burned the people's houses, they never shot anybody to death, they only killed the VC. The Americans don't understand Vietnamese either, yet why didn't they make the same mistakes as the Koreans? I don't think the fact that the Koreans killed innocent people, and burned up the people's houses and cattle is simply a mistake. I think they deliberately did it, or was it because they were driven by their natural barbarism?

156. Have you ever seen or heard of any sprayings of chemical product to kill the trees and crops?

I've never seen such operation. But the people of [redacted] Village said that the aircraft had sprayed their village and killed all the crops.

157. Did the VC raise any crops in [redacted] Village?

Yes, but very little. Most of the crops belonged to the people.

158. Did the people of [redacted] Village say why the GVN destroy their crops?

They said the GVN did it to deprive the VC of their food supply, but it was the people who suffered most, because the VC didn't have much land. Most of the land in the village belonged to the people.

159. What did the people think of those sprayings?

They complained a lot about them. They said although they had to contribute to the VC, they didn't have to contribute all their earnings. After the contributions they still had something to eat. If the crops were destroyed, it wasn't the VC who were going to starve, but they the people would starve soon.

160. What did the cadres say about those spraying operations?

I don't know. The people only told me something about the sprayings, but they didn't give the details.

161. What do you think of those sprayings?

I agree that the VC's crops should be destroyed by chemicals. But to kill the people's crops is painful, especially the people who lived in the villages near the mountains where land was scarce, and life was hard.

162. Did you ever see an American before?

Before the VC took control of the village, I'd seen some Americans. They were soldiers who crossed a place near my village.

163. What did they do then?

I don't know.

164. What do you think the Americans are doing in Vietnam?

I think they've come here to help the GVN fight against the Communists.

165. Why do the Americans help the GVN to fight against the Communists?

Our country is poor and weak, yet the Communists are enjoying the help of Russia and Red China. If the Americans don't help us, we'll be dominated by the Communists immediately. The US is wealthy, strong, and populated. She could afford to help the weaker and smaller countries. If Vietnam falls into the hands of the Communists, other small countries will suffer the same fate. Thus Communism will expand throughout the world, and some day the US herself will be endangered. Therefore the Americans have to help us stop the Communists.

166. Do you think the Americans have any other purposes besides stopping the Communists?

I don't think the Americans have any other purposes. They want nothing from us, and have taken nothing from Vietnam. But I think when the war is over and the Communists are defeated, we'll owe the Americans a lot. I don't know if the Americans will demand a repayment. If they do, I don't know what we'll pay them with. Then our national resources will be used to repay our debts. Thus our resources will be in the hands of the Americans, and Vietnam will be considered an American colony.

167. What other countries do you know have sent troops over to help South Vietnam?

I only know about the American and Korean troops. The Koreans are cruel and barbarous, the Americans are kind.

168. Which sides do you think is stronger, the GVN with its allies, or the Front with its own allies?

I think the GVN and its allies are stronger than the Front. The GVN is well supplied with foodstuffs, weapons, armored vehicles, and aircraft. I didn't see the Front have anything. Each time the GVN or allied troops carried out an operation all the VC ran away.

169. Did you ever hear of the bombing of the North when you were still in the village?

Yes. The cadres let the people listen to Radio Hanoi. According to the broadcast, a lot of bridges, factories, hospitals, and schools were damaged. It didn't say anything about the casualties. It also said that 900 aircraft were shot down.

170. Did the cadres say why the North was bombed?

They didn't say why. Radio Hanoi said that the Americans had invaded the South, now they wanted to take over the North too.

171. Do you think those bombing attacks have any effect on the North?

It's bound to suffer damage and the people would be killed.

172. Do you think the bombing of North Vietnam has any effect on the Front in the South?

I don't think so. The cadres said that the North had infiltrated troops to the South to help the Front against the GVN. If the North was bombed, these troops didn't have to return to the North, because the Chinese troops would take care of the North for them.

173. Why do you think the North was bombed?

I think the GVN bombed the North in order to stop Northern troops from going South. Thus it would be easier to defeat the Front. But according to the cadres, the North still continued sending troops South. I don't know whether it is true.

174. Why did you leave your village to come here?

I left my village to come here because, first, I was afraid of being killed by the Korean troops; secondly, I was afraid of the bombs. Before making up my mind to move away, the villagers and I stood in the field. We saw the Koreans burn our paddy, our houses, and kill our people. We were frightened and so we ran away. Nobody attempted to return to his house. I knew that if I tried to stay behind, I wouldn't be able to do anything because of the bombings.

175. Did the aircraft ever broadcast or drop leaflets in your village?

The aircraft dropped leaflets while the Korean troops carried out their operation. Those who read them said that the leaflets called on the people to move to the GVN-controlled areas. They said those who held leaflets in their hands wouldn't be arrested by the Korean troops. At the time, I was too frightened to think of picking up the leaflets. Besides it was no use!

A lot of people who left the village after us possessed leaflets, but the Koreans still shot them to death. The aircraft also broadcast, saying that the allied troops were carrying out an operation to protect the people while the latter harvested their paddy. While the aircraft broadcast those words, the Korean soldiers moved into the hamlet to burn our paddy and kill our people. It's impossible to understand.

176. Did anything make you hesitate to leave your village?

Nothing. I'd had the intention to move to the GVN-controlled areas for a long time. I'd gotten ready by selling my cow and paddy to save the money.

177. Why didn't you move away earlier?

I wanted to move away a long time ago, but I couldn't get away from the village. The guerrillas did a good job of guarding the village. At best I could leave by myself, but it was impossible to take my family along. That's why I had to bide my time and wait for the GVN troops to show up on an operation so that I might ask them to let me move to the GVN-controlled areas.

178. Have you ever taken refuge elsewhere before?

Never.

179. What did you hear about life in the GVN-controlled areas before leaving your village?

When I was in the village, I heard the cadres say that the people in the GVN-controlled areas led a very hard life, due to lack of rice and the high cost of living.

180. Did you believe the cadres then?

I believed what they said about rice being very expensive in the GVN-controlled areas, because rice produced in the VC villages wasn't allowed to be sold in GVN-controlled markets. Thus the people in the GVN-controlled areas must have suffered from lack of rice. Although I believed so, I thought it was better to suffer from lack of rice than to suffer from insecurity, from the VC, from the bombings, and from haphazard death. Therefore, I made up my mind to move to the GVN-controlled areas.

181. Now that you're here, do you still find the cadres' propaganda true?

Right now, I've found that it is true that the price of rice is high, but there is no rice shortage.

182. Could you take along anything when you left the village?

As I told you, I have a small sum of money. I came here straight from the field, so I couldn't take anything along except my money.

183. How was your trip?

As I told you, the people and I ran to a field in our neighboring hamlet. We stayed there for two days. Everybody wanted to return to our hamlet to harvest our paddy before leaving for good. But after two days, things still didn't get any better, so we just had to move on. All the people in the hamlet except the cadres and the guerrillas have moved away.

184. How long did you think you would be away from your hamlet?

I had no idea. I just let nature take its course.

185. How soon do you think you can go back to the village?

I have to stay here until security is re-established in my village. I don't know when it will be.

186. Did any villagers leave the village before you?

Three families from my hamlet had left before the VC came. After the VC got control of my village, another two families sneaked away.

187. Which classes did they belong to? Did any of those families have sons in the ARVN or working for the GVN?

Two of those five families were rich, the rest were middle class farmers. None of them had children in the ARVN or working for the GVN.

188. Did any of the refugees who came here at the same time as you return to the village?

In February 1966, after spending some time in Hieu Xuong District, all the people in the hamlet were taken back to our place by army trucks to harvest our paddy. We departed early in the morning, cut our paddy, stored it on the trucks, and got back to camp in the evening. We worked like that for five days, then we were stopped short.

189. Were you able to harvest all your paddy?

My wife and I could only harvest 25 buckets of paddy during those five days. If I could harvest all my paddy, it would add up to 100 buckets. When we were taken back to the hamlet, we just cut paddy like mad. We didn't have to harvest our own field.

190. How much paddy was harvested after five days?

About two-thirds.

191. Could you go back to the village now?

I wouldn't dare. The VC would arrest me immediately. I'd been sent to the reform camp, and then I'd taken refuge in the GVN-controlled areas. So to the VC I've committed a great crime.

192. Have you received any assistance from the GVN since you've been here?

The government gives me seven piasters a day. This grant lasts for three months. I've been here two months already.

193. Did the GVN promise any other help?

No.

194. Could you live on that assistance?

We've having enough to eat, thanks to the paddy we were able to harvest.

195. Are all the refugees helped by the GVN like you?

Not all the refugees are helped. Only those who live in the refugee camp are given 7 piasters a day each. A lot of people in my village have come here to take refuge, yet the camp is too small. Not all of them were admitted. They had to live with the people outside the camp. So they aren't given any shelter or any money. Their life is miserable. I wish that everybody would be equally helped.

196. How many live in the camp? How many outside the camp?

There are 162 refugees in the camp. The number of refugees who have to stay with the people outside is 3 times larger. They haven't received any assistance from the GVN. All of them came from my village.

197. Did any families leave the camp since you've been here?

None.

198. Did you get your ID card?

My ID card was confiscated by the VC. The GVN hasn't given me another one.

199. Are the refugees being given any education or training here?

No.

200. Do you and others want to learn a new trade? What do you want to learn?

A lot of people in this camp want to learn a new trade to earn their keep. Each has his own idea. I don't know what they want to do. As for me, I'm too old to learn anything new. I only hoped I'd have a job.

201. Did anybody find employment?

About ten people in the camp weave baskets to sell in the market, but they don't earn much. They don't even make enough to buy fish and "nam". Nobody else got employment.

202. Do you feel safe living in the camp?

I feel very safe here because I saw a lot of soldiers guarding the camp.

203. How is the leadership of this camp organized?

There's a chief, and some employees. All of them are GVN officials.

204. How often did you see the chief?

I met him every day. I don't think he's very honest. Take the distribution of mosquito nets and blankets for example, on that day a number of people went to the wild age to harvest paddy while the distribution took place without them. When these people came back and asked for their shares, he promised to give them later, but they haven't received any till now. Not long ago, the province chief came here for a visit, and asked if there were enough mosquito nets and blankets for everybody. The camp chief said yes. He told the people not to tell the province chief the truth, or they would be beaten by him. Later, we had another visit by a member of the Social Service. The people asked him for mosquito nets and blankets. He said they're all gone. Luckily for us, the camp chief is going to be transferred. Everybody is happy at the news.

205. You told me earlier that the GVN officials were just and did their best at serving the people. Yet why didn't the GVN give equal help to all the refugees, and why isn't the camp chief honest?

I think it's because the number of refugees is too large, and Hieu Xuong District doesn't have enough facilities for all of us. As for the chief's dishonesty, it's only an individual case. The fact that he's going to be transferred proves that the higher authorities are wise.

206. Are there any former members of the village council or hamlet chiefs of your hamlet among the refugees?

No member of the village council is here. Only the chief of [redacted] Hamlet is living among us.

207. Does he hold any position in this camp?

He's very concerned about the people, but he has no official job, and has no authority. Everything here is taken care of by the camp chief.

208. Do you ever get information from your village?

No.

209. Did any foreigners come here?

The Americans and the Koreans visited the camp some time ago. The Americans brought gifts of soap, the Koreans some cookies for the children.

210. What do the children of the refugees do here? Are they sent to school?

They have nothing to do. The camp leaders have made a list of the children's names. They said the children would be sent to school, but nothing really has been done about it.

211. Whom do you blame for your troubles?

All my troubles are caused by the VC. It's because the VC had taken control of my village that the place has been bombed, swept, and the people have to take refuge elsewhere and have to put up with hardships.

212. Where do you plan to go when your time in the camp is up?

I plan to build a shack near here, and then find a job to support myself.

213. If the GVN gives you land, would you be willing to live somewhere else?

Wherever the GVN gives me land and cows, I'd be willing to settle.

214. Here is a picture of a ladder. The top rung is numbered one, and the bottom rung is numbered ten. Now if rung # 1 represents the best life you can imagine, and rung # 10 is the worst, where on this ladder would you say that your life was before the VC came to your village? How about after the VC got control of your village, and right now?

Before the VC came, I lived in peace and made a good living. I could say I was at No. 5. After the VC got control of the village, I had to struggle harder for my living, and my standard dropped to No. 8. Right now I'm still at No. 8, because although I have to suffer from deprivations, and am materially worse-off than when I was in the village, I have better security here.

215. Where will you be in five years?

I have no idea.

216. Describe the worst life you can imagine for yourself living back in your village.

Being sick and unable to work, suffering from deprivations, and being mistreated by the VC.

217. Describe the best life you can imagine for yourself.

There would be no VC in the village. I would own a lot of land and cattle, and I'd be making profits. I'd be able to build a two-storied house.

218. What kind of life do you hope your son will have?

My eldest son is now a mechanic. My second son is now in the fifth grade, and I hope he'll keep up his education, and at least get his high school diploma. Then I hope he'll find a good job and be able to support his own family.

219. If you could ask three things of the GVN, what would they be?

I'd ask the GVN for a job, for help in building a house, and for my son to be sent to school.

220. What kind of government do you think would be most likely to give you these three things?

Any nationalist government.

221. How long do you think the war will last?

I think the war will last very long, because a lot of other countries are involved in it. I think if the Chinese and the Americans leave us alone, we Vietnamese people will be able to settle our problems among ourselves, and peace might be restored.

222. Why do you think so?

I don't know why, I just think so!

223. Which side do you think is winning, the GVN or the Front?

The GVN troops are stationed only in the cities, and neglect the rural areas. That's why the VC have been able to get control of the countryside and, with it, a lot of people. The GVN has a lot of food and weapons. Each side has its own strongpoints, so I don't think any side is winning right now.

224. Which side do you think will win in the end?

In the end, I think the GVN will win. This war keeps going on, some day it'll develop into a Third World War. The Communists will be on one side, and on the other, the Americans and their allies. Then the Americans will bring out all their might. As they are stronger than the Communists, they'll be the winners. If the Americans defeat the Communists, the GVN will defeat the Front.

225. Do others think like you?

It's my own opinion. I don't know what other refugees think.

226. Did this opinion of yours have any influence on your decision to take refuge here?

No. I took refuge here because of the bombs and of the VC.

227. Is either side now winning the support of the people away from the other side?

The VC have more control in the rural areas, so they have in their hands more people. Therefore the VC have more support from the people. This support is forced on the people, but it's still support. The only way to deprive the VC of this support is to draw people to the GVN-controlled areas.

228. How do you think the GVN could gain more support from the people?

As I've just told you, the people must be drawn to the GVN-controlled areas. In order to achieve this, the GVN should help all the refugees regardless of whether they are living

in the camp or outside the camp, and the program of assistance must be carried out more effectively. The refugees should be provided with jobs. If the GVN is able to do so, all the people will leave the VC-controlled areas within a year. Then the VC won't have any support from the people.

229. If the Front wins the war, what do you think life in Vietnam will be like?

If the Front wins, the people will lose all their freedoms. They will be dictated by the Communists. People of means will be stripped of all their property. There won't be any rich people, or average people. Everybody will be poor and miserable.

230. If the GVN wins the war, what do you think life in Vietnam will be like?

People will be free to go wherever they wish, to buy whatever they want. Nobody will be stripped of his property. Everybody will be happy, including poor, because the poor don't have to pay taxes to the GVN, while they have to pay taxes to the VC.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

At the end of the interview, when the interviewer thanked the subject for his cooperation, the latter said: "Yesterday when I told you about the massacre of [redacted] hamlet, I told you that all the fifty people who were gathered were killed, except two little children of two and three. Do you know what happened to them later? When the people came to bury the victims' bodies, they found the children dead. The kids weren't wounded. They only starved to death, crawling away from their mothers, among the corpses." Then he added: "You who are educated, your knowledge must be broad. Would you tell me why the government accepts the Koreans as allies, why the government lets the Koreans kill our countrymen so savagely?"

The subject was an intelligent man. He spoke softly, clearly, calmly, and seemed to be very much at ease throughout the interview. The only time his steady calmness left him was when he talked about the "massacre of [redacted] hamlet." The interviewer, however, could not detect any hatred in his voice -- only a certain bitterness and irony when he said that "cows were not VC."

He was cooperative and seemed sincere.

FD

No. AGR -58

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

1. Name of interviewer [redacted]

2. Name of subject [redacted]

3. Time and date of interview :

   From 9:30 AM to 11:30 AM on May [redacted] 1966

   From 1:45 PM to 5:00 PM on May [redacted] 1966

   From 8:30 AM to 10:30 AM on May [redacted] 1966

   Total time 7 h 15

   Interview based on : tape ( ) hand written notes (6)

4. Place of interview :

   International center Tuy Hoa

5. Sex of subject : Male (x) Female ( )

6. Age of subject : 48

7. Ethnic background : Vietnamese

8. Place of birth :

   hamlet [redacted]

   village [redacted]

   district Hieu Xuong

   province Phu Yen

9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :

   hamlet [redacted]

   village [redacted]

   district Hieu Xuong

   province Phu Yen

10. (a) Length of residence in last location :

    (b) Who controlled the place of residence:

    GVN ( ) VC (x) Contested ( )

    (c) Since when controlled or contested ? June 1964

11. Number of brothers (1) and sisters (2)

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : 1

13. Marital status : married

14. Number of children : 3

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age : 1

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject(x) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject (x) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject(x) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion : Ancestor worship

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : Farmer

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation Middle
(b) Landowner ? Yes How much land 2 mau

20. Education :
illiterate ( )
literate (x)
schooling completed : two years of elementary school

21. Any relatives in VC : none

22. Any relatives in GVN : one cousin working as secretary at [redacted] Village

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by :
(a) French
(b) GVN
(c) VC

24. When became a refugee : Jan [redacted]/1966

25. Where took refuge first

26. Present residence Hieu Xuong District, Phu Yen Province

AGR

INTERVIEW

59

[redacted]

AGR - 59

Date of Interview - ~~July~~ [redacted] 66

Subject's Category - Refugee: January 66

Home Province - Kien Giang

[Write-up: [redacted] Sept 66]

1) Q : How many refugees are living in the [redacted] pagoda where you are taking refuge?

A : Twenty days ago, there were about seventy families living there. But as the rainy season is coming, many people went back to their village to till their ricefields. Most of them were men. When we had moved out of our village we were in haste to leave, and thereby, we were forced to surrender our land and houses to the VC. Now, because of the hardships people endure, they run out of provisions, they don't have any means to protect themselves against the cold -- if they take pains to save food they might live sparely through this season (Interviewer's note : this season means this year because in South Vietnam people only grow one crop per year), but they will certainly starve next (season) -- they unwillingly returned home in secret to grow a crop for next year. Out of the seventy families I told you about, there were about 30% who have already returned to my village [redacted] and by now there are only 70% left who live packed in the [redacted] pagoda. Only 10% out of these 70% are well-off people. When the VC came to occupy the village, all of its inhabitants were determined to leave it, not to live with the VC. In my village, there was a Cambodian pagoda called [redacted] pagoda where there were about sixty Buddhist priests. After the VC's occupation there were only six or seven monks left. Even the principal priest left for four months. Therefore, we can say that since they have occupied the village they were unable to carry out their activities because the villagers all left. I don't think that the GVN doesn't like and doesn't want to help the people. Perhaps, it's only because the government is too busy to afford an appropriate assistance. However, because of that,

people couldn't endure hardships, and thereby, there were 30% who returned home. Last dry season, it was hot in day time but the cool weather at night was a helpful compensation. By now, because of this wet rainy season and because they cannot shelter from the rain they had to return home. Otherwise, even if they were poor they wouldn't like to live together with the Communits. The 10% composed of the well-off people could build or rent houses here. As for the poor people, they were forced to live on the yard of the pagoda or under the trees, etc. Their situation is actually heart-rending, miserable.

2) Q : When did the VC come to occupy the village?

A : They occupied [redacted] village a few days after last Tet.

3) Q : How long did it take to the villagers to leave the village?

A : They all left within two hours and half. Those who had garnered their paddy as well as those who were harvesting all left. This even made the VC not dare stay in the village at night. Later, they (the VC) piled up the people's suites in the sampans so that those who wanted to recover their belongings could do it by paying them. To my knowledge, people in my village took refuge in four other villages. My group composed of about 25 or 30% came to [redacted]. About 30% were bound for [redacted], 10% for [redacted] and 10% for [redacted]. Most of the people in my village are Cambodians, and the majority of people taking refuge here are also Cambodians.

4) Q : How many people became refugees at the same time you did, children included?

A : The groun-ups, those who already had identity cards, amounted to more than three thousand. If we take children into account, there were a great many people who became refugees at the same time I did.

5) Q : How many Cambodians were among them?

A : About 2,300 Cambodian people.

6) Q : Where did the principal priest of [redacted] pagoda go for four months? Why did he return to the village?

A : He also went to [redacted] pagoda in [redacted] village. He lived in a sampan which was cast in front of the pagoda. On the thirteenth day of the fifth month of the lunar calendar (Interviewer's note : about mid-June) he had to return to the [redacted] pagoda to worship for three months and half, according to the Cambodian traditions.

7) Q : What have the GVN authorities here done for you?

A : Four or five days after we had settled down in [redacted] the captain District Chief came to give each two families a hundred-kilo sack of rice and a four-liter can of vegetable oil, and each family two liters of nuoc-mam. At the same time, a Red-cross car came to distribute medicine to the sick and children.

8) Q : Did you receive anything else from the GVN authorities?

A : About one month later, the Village Administration actually granted to the people a fifteen-day allowance which amounted to 7 VN$ x 15 = 105 VN$ for each. But some people have received that allowance, and others didn't. For instance, in [redacted] village there were about 300 refugees, and only 110 or 120 people were granted that allowance. The Village Administration promised that the Government will go on helping the refugees but so far, six months have elapsed and we only received that much money. Besides,

because the people have been griping a lot, the District Chief gave each person four liters of rice per month. However, some people received seven liters, others, only four, while there were other people who didn't receive anything. This because when they (the GVN authorities) started the operation they had the tendency to distribute much and when they became aware of the shortage of rice they reduced the ration allowed, but it was still not enough and those who came late didn't have anything. Besides, during the past six months each family received clothes twice, each time one or two suits for children.

3) Q : How many people were able to manage to rub along here?

A : There were [redacted] twenty families who could shift for themselves here in [redacted] market place. Half of them are Chinese merchants, and the other half is composed of well-off Vietnamese people. Among these, there are the families of the [redacted] village, the Police Chief, and the Finance Commissioner of [redacted] village. [redacted] village belongs to Kien-Binh district, the District Chief let the [redacted] Village Administration work for the time being in [redacted] Village Office. Therefore, even if the Kien-Thanh District Chief is very generous — [redacted] village belongs to Kien-Thanh district — he cannot be fully aware of the situation of the villagers of [redacted] who are taking refuge in [redacted] as long as [redacted] Village [redacted] is in Kien-Binh district.

10) Q : How far is it from [redacted]

A : From [redacted] we have to spend fifteen piasters for bus fare.

(Paused) [redacted] village and [redacted] village belong to Kien-Thanh district.

11) Q : By now, how many people are left in [redacted] pagoda?

A : By now, there are more than ten families living in their sampans, and about forty families scattered around and even inside the pagoda. Thus counting more than fifty families in all.

12) Q : What did the villagers who take refuge in [redacted] complain most about?

A : They complained very often that they are starving. Secondly, the children got sick. Nobody hired them and thereby, they cannot earn their living. When it rained, the children cried and were sick. They complained that the Government didn't help them. They worried why the Government had called them on to take refuge in GVN controlled areas. As a matter of fact the inhabitants of [redacted] village didn't wait for the GVN's appeal to come. They entirely side with the GVN, and they consider the GVN as their father. When the father survives, children survive too, and when the father dies so do the children. Therefore, they became refugees noisily in a body. But now they are worrying and griping a lot because they are starving and enduring too many hardships. (Paused)

But they certainly know that it was not because the GVN didn't want to help the population, but it was only because the refugees' problem is a really big one, and the GVN, therefore, cannot afford an appropriate assistance.

(Interviewer's note : The subject tried to mitigate the effect of his spontaneous answer)

13) Q : Have you ever been arrested or taken away by the VC for re-education?

A : I was put in jail by the Viet-Minh at three times before the Armistice. The first time, I was detained for one month and half for having brought thatches to French

controlled areas. The second time, I was detained for three months and twenty four days for having led some villagers to the city. The third time, I was imprisoned for fourteen days because I had let my children and grandchildren play cards. Since I was born — now I'm already sixty three years old — I've never been in trouble under both French and GVN's regimes.

14) Q : How did you earn your living in your village?

A : While in the village, I had a dime store selling betel and areca, cigarette-papers, tobacco, etc. Also, I tilled my orchard and ricefields. I had inherited from my ancestors 3.1 ha of land — my name wasn't registered as the owner of that land though — and by now, it is obvious that the VC have already seized it or them all.

15) Q : How did most of the villagers earn their living?

A : Most of them were farmers. The Chinese people always cleared up the land along the river to plant pineapples, potatoes, vegetables, green onions, etc.

16) Q : How many of the other villagers owned land?

A : Unlike other villages, there never wasn't any big landlord in my village. Everybody owned a few hectares.

17) Q : Normally, how many much paddy did you get per crop?

A : With more than thirty "cong", I could harvest from 300 to 400"gia" per year, 350 "gia" on an average.

18) Q : How many crops a year?

A : Only one.

19) Q : How many members are there in your family?

A : There are I myself, my wife, my last daughter-in-law, six paternal grandchildren, and one maternal grandchild.

(The subject burst out crying)

Every day, I daren't even throw away a small piece of burnt rice. (Interviewer's note : When people cook rice, there is very often a small layer of burnt rice at the bottom of the [redacted] cooking-pot). The GVN is but able to help the people to a certain extent, the latter not being perfectly taken care of. Therefore, every day in the [redacted] pagoda I learn that there are people who are much more miserable than me. They cry bitterly and complain that the Government abandons them. I myself implore the people every day to hire me — no matter what I'll have to do, carrying earth, water, etc. — but people in [redacted] only said that they have pity on me because I'm old, and if I wanted to have ten piasters they would give me ten piasters but they couldn't afford any job. It's really too hard. But Both my sons had been enlisted in the ARVN. They are too far away to know about their old parents' situation. Even if they knew about it they wouldn't be whatever of any help.

20) Q : What religions did the other villagers practice?

A : Everybody is buddhist. There were no catholics, Hoa-Hao, or Cao-Dai in my village village.

21) Q : What education have you had?

A : I've completed the fourth year of the elementary school program.

22) Q : Was there a school in your village?

A : Yes, there was an elementary school built in two rows, the first row comprised six rooms, the second, four . Before the refugees' movement, there were seven schoolmaster and schoolmistress in all.

23) Q : Did all the children go to school?

A : There were [redacted] hamlets in my village. The elementary school I told you about was in my hamlet. In [redacted] other hamlets there were [redacted] other schools built by USOM. There were two schoolmasters in each of these two schools, and all children in my village went to school.

24) Q : When were those schools built?

A : The school of my hamlet was built in 1965. The USOM school (Interviewer's note : the subject said distinctly : USOM) in [redacted] hamlet was built in 1965, the one in [redacted] hamlet was being reefed when the VC came to occupy the village.

25) Q : When did the VC exactly come to occupy the village?

A : When the GVN post and the Village Office of [redacted] were evacuated, the villagers lost no time in moving away, and the canal was packed with sampans. The VC immediately checked in. Later, the villagers had to return there in secret to steal or to buy their own belongings from them (the VC).

26) Q : How was life in your village before 1954, during the Resistance?

A : Under the Resistance, the Viet-Minh put [redacted] villages together and called it [redacted]. But people in [redacted] didn't participate in their administration and their administrative organization was in [redacted]

27) Q : How about life?

A : At that time, I had a sugar-mill (extracted from sugar-cane) in [redacted] hamlet but the Viet-Minh forbad me to bring my produce to the city. We had to use "Ho's" money. Besides, they borrowed paddy from the villagers. As for me, I had a bad harvest that year, yet I had to contribute 75 "gia". Generally speaking, they (the VC) have borrowed from the people in [redacted] more than ten thousand "gia" of paddy. But, of course, they didn't pay anybody, and the people lost principal and interest.

28) Q : How was life in your village before the Resistance?

A : Under the French regime, life was happier, people could earn their living easily. At the time, I just got married. At that time, life was happier because people could move about freely. There wasn't any control. At night, at cock-crow, everybody could go everywhere he wanted. However, the French Government didn't help the population as the GVN is doing now.

29) Q : How was life in your village from 1954 to 1960?

A : People led a happy life. Though they were poor, they could enjoy freedom.

30) Q : What do you think of life in your village before the Resistance in comparison with

Gentlemen

that from 1954 to 1960?

A : Life from 1954 to 1960 was happier because the Government built hospitals, schools for children, etc. Under the French regime, we could move about more freely because there was no war. Provided that we paid the five-year personal tax nobody would arrest us. I can say that if life from 1954 to 1960 was ninety per cent happy, that under the French regime would be twenty per cent so.

31) Q : Did any people in your village fight against the French?

A : At that time, [redacted] village was tied up with [redacted] and under the Viet-Minh's control command. It was obvious that when the Viet-Minh ordered them to dig (damage) roads, they dug, and when the French ordered them to fill them up, they immediately did. But there was one thing I'm sure of, it was when, in 1954, there were in each village of Kien-Giang province people who became regroupees, there was none in [redacted] village. Therefore, this time, the 30% of refugees who had to return home were very heart-rending because they had been wholeheartedly been faithful to the Government and were forgotten. Of course, this might originate with the local officials who failed in their duties. But when the people complained about that, they only said that the Government doesn't help the population. The Government's policy pointed out that the Government is very lenient towards everybody even those who had fired at the GVN soldiers, and as a matter of fact they (the rebels) were treated exceptionally well while the refugees who actually are the Government's children were forgotten. By now, I know that people who are living at the pagoda are meaning a lot.

32) Q : How did the local officials behave?

A : Since the Armistice, there have been in my village three officials : the Village Representative, one Finance Commissioner, and one Police Chief. These past twelve years, many a time — four or five times — the District and/or the Province had planned to transfer them to other places but they couldn't do it because the villagers liked these three men very much. Once, the Village Representative was transferred to [redacted] village, and only two days later people in [redacted] called for him at all costs. Two years ago, the Village Finance Commissioner had to go, one day, to [redacted] hamlet to celebrate the anniversary of his father's death. He fell into a VC's ambush and was brought away. Immediately the villagers of a whole hamlet started running after the VC up to the woods where they forced them (the VC) to hand over the prisoner to them. The VC refused to meet the villagers' condition. But the villagers went on following them, and finally they had to promise that they will release him within twenty days because they had to bring him to a thought reform session. The villagers and the priest of [redacted] pagoda followed up the matter until the twenty first day when the VC had to set the Village Finance Commissioner free. To my knowledge, as yet there has not been any member of a GVN Village Council who was had been arrested by the VC and who was set free in such a short time. At least, people were detained for three months, and at most, for six months, one or two years. Moreover, once released, nobody did dare take up his work anew. But in my village, people were determined to compel him to return to his work, and as a matter of fact he is still working now. I told you, therefore, that the Village Council and the inhabitants of my village are were

like father and children. The Village Council [illegible] the villagers and vice versa. Now, the Village Council settles down in [redacted] village, assigned by the [redacted] District Chief, while the inhabitants of [redacted] village are taking refuge in four villages of Kien-Thanh district. This doesn't differ much from small fishes which are left alone by their "mother" and gradually swallowed by other big fishes.

35) Q : What are, by now, the hopes and expectations of the people of [redacted] village who are taking refuge here?

A : By now, their hopes and expectations of reduce themselves to two points. First, they would like to move to [redacted] so that the Village Council of [redacted] would be able to take care of them. Secondly, in case the Government is unable to settle them in [redacted] they would like to see the Village Council of [redacted] be transferred to [redacted]. In such conditions, I 'm sure that — I even dare stake my life on it — even those who had returned home will all go back here, as a matter of fact, because they couldn't endure hardships any more, and because they didn't receive any help they had to leave in this rainy season. This doesn't mean that they like to live with the Communists.

(Paused)

But my hopes and expectations are a little different. (Paused) I feel very sorry first, for the Government, secondly, for the Village Council (of my village), and finally for my countrymen in [redacted] village because though my village is small its resources in rice are very great. I wish,

and so do all other villagers, that the Government will take proper measures -- no matter what they are -- to enable the Village Council and the villagers to return home as soon as possible because it would be a big waste to let them (the VC) exploit avail themselves of the rice produced by [redacted] and [redacted] villages, of the betel, areca, sugar-cane, potatoes, corn, and mostly the sugar-cane, planted along Cai-Be river in Binh-An village. In regard to Binh-An village, it's still under GVN control, but even so the VC always came there at night. To my knowledge, they hold the GVN in contempt because they said that the GVN is even incapable of [redacted] dislodging them from the "Vam-lo-Tam" woods which are located between Hoa-Quan and Binh-An villages. In my own opinion, the GVN has just to install two posts, one at "Mao-Dau" canal, where this canal runs into "Cai-Lon" river, on the side of Binh-An village [redacted], and another at "Vam-lo-Tam", "Kien-Lam" canal, within the limits of Binh-An village but/also close to the limit separating Thoi-An from Hoa-Quan, to dislodging them from their position. For the time being, they collect taxes at these two points, because from Chuong-Thien province, and mostly from Kien-Hung district which belonged in the past to Kien-Giang province, rice and paddy aren't brought to Phong-Dinh province but to Kien-Giang province through Cai-Lon river, and people have to pay taxes at "Mao-[illegible]" canal. Also, from Kien-Binh district, rice and paddy are brought to Kien-Giang province through "Cai-Be" river and subject to taxes at "Vam-lo-Tam", "Kien-Lam" canal. While the GVN is only charging the people with 0.50 VN$ per "gia" of paddy, and because the villagers use to declare, for instance, 50 "gia" while they are carrying 100 "gia, of fact, they only pay on [redacted] an average 0.30 VN$ per "gia", the VC force the people to pay 11 VN$ per "gia", and they shoot at or sink the junks or sampans of those who refuse to pay.

At the harvest season, only the paddy brought xxxxxxxx from the three districts Kien-Hung, Kien-Thanh, and Kien-Binh could xxx already amount to 20,000 "gia" per day. You can fancy xxxx how important the taxes they collected from the villagers every day were. xxxxxx I'm very sad to see my countrymen and the Village Council be scattered around. I'm sure that it's impossible to find -- no matter where we go -- such good people like the inhabitants of my village who always profess a xxxxal affection.fxx I can say that one who would like to find out that such good people xxx must take his choice at least among the population of half a district.

34) Q : Were the three members of your Village Council elected or appointed?

A : Elected by the people.

35) Q : Can you recall when?

A : If I remember rightly, it seems to me that they were elected at the same time Ngo-Dinh-Diem's Government was. Four or five years later, there was another election, and the villagers voted for them xxxxxx anew.

36) Q : At those two elections did everyone vote?

A : Yes, everybody has voted.

37) Q : How many candidates were there?

A : I forget about this. I beg your pardon for it. But I think that they were from five to seven.

38) Q : What qualifications did one have to have in order to vote?

A : Each hamlet had its register of voters. I also had my voting card but I don't bring it along with me.

39) Q : What qualifications did one have to have to be a candidate?

A : At the first election there were four candidates who were elected. Among them, one was elected Deputy Village Chief. But at the second election, he couldn't get the number required of ballot-papers, and thereby, only the three others went on working as members of the Village Council which assigned him to the Education branch.

40) Q : But, what qualifications did they have to have to be candidates?

A : Those who were talented, virtuous, capable, and who had the people's confidence offered themselves as candidates.

41) Q : Were the elections honest?

A : There wasn't any trickery in [redacted] village. At that time, the GVN authorities posted up boards saying that it would proceed to a re-election if there were any claim from the people.

42) Q : What did you know about the Diem Government?

A : I don't know how the Diem government was. But when the people were compelled to set up Strategic Hamlets they weren't satisfied at all.

43) Q : Were there any Strategic Hamlets in your village?

A : At that time, in [redacted] village, thanks of the friendly and mutual understanding between the villagers and the Village Council, not only the six Strategic Hamlets in the village were rapidly set up, but [redacted] also under the request of the Kien-Hinh District Chief the villagers went to [redacted] village to give a hand to their compatriots in this village, and they were able to achieve two other Strategic Hamlets the perimeter of which amounting to 5,000 meters. At that time, in Kien-Giang province, it was recognized that [redacted] village took the lead among the eleven villages in devoting to the installation of Strategic Hamlets.

44) Q : When were these Strategic Hamlets were set up?

A : It seems to me that they were set up in 1963. I also forget about this, but it seems to me that they were set up within 1963.

45) Q : How much labor and money did you have to contribute to [redacted] Hau?

A : At that time, my two sons were still living with me, and we did work everywhere we were called to, but we didn't contribute any money.

46) Q : What did you and others like about [redacted] Hau?

A : To my knowledge, it was rumored — I don't know where the villagers got that information, and whether or not it was true — that the Government paid for the labor in setting up the Strategic Hamlets, but the District, through the medium of the Village Council, only ordered the people to fulfill the task. At that time, the Captain District Chief also ordered us to assist the people in both [redacted] and



villages, but we have refused. Only when the Village Council asked us to give a hand to the villagers in [redacted] because they were too slow in working and also because the authorities wanted to celebrate the grand opening day of the Strategic Hamlets in every village at the same time, we, the villagers in [redacted] then went to [redacted] to help its inhabitants. Therefore, when it was rumored that the Government paid for the people's labor while the villagers worked for nothing they were actually very sad.

47) Q : [redacted] What did you and others dislike about them?

A : To my knowledge, after having set up the Strategic Hamlets the villagers were very dissatisfied because they heard that the Government paid for their labor while they were forced to be on fatigue duty.

48) Q : What happened to [redacted] them?

A : Even when the GVN post was evacuated last Tet the Strategic Hamlets [redacted] still remained intact. Only after the GVN post had been evacuated, [redacted] to cut barbed wires, [redacted] pull the poles and took them away.

49) Q : How do you feel about them now?

A : In my opinion, by now, they have certainly compelled the people to destroy everything [redacted] and [redacted] my village was certainly opened up already.

50) Q : How do you feel about them now? (The interviewer stressed upon this)

A : By now, they have certainly forced the people who returned home to destroy everything.

51) Q : What did you and the other villagers think about the fall of the Diem government?

A : Trg I beg your pardon but I daren't say or guess about this. However, I regret the Strategic Hamlets of my village very much because my village actually took the lead in Kien-Giang province in setting up Strategic Hamlets. Ours were the most st solid and secure.

52) Q : Were there any GVN military forces near your hamlet?

A : No.

53) Q : How did you protect your Strategic Hamlet?

A : The villagers in [redacted] were hand in glove together. For instance, if there were 1,000 people in the village they could be considered like 1,000 Village Councils. Besides, the Strategic Hamlets were more solid than those of other villages. There was in the village the GVN post of [redacted] and in my opinion, if we include the Village Council and the USOM organization, there were at most in the village 85 guns, not even 100 guns to rely upon. However, because the villagers professed a mutual affection and understanding, they always kept knives, machetes, and things in readiness to assisting the Village Council. Therefore, they (the VC) held the villagers of [redacted] in awe, and they often said that they could attack the District Headquarters but not [redacted] village because they dread its inhabitants. They actually closed in upon the village twice, each time for more than ten days, but they didn't dare attack it. Only recently, when the local authorities received order to evacuate the GVN post, the villagers were forced to withdraw too. As a matter of fact, [redacted] has been never attacked , and the VC certainly hated most my village among those of Kien-Giang province.

54) Q : Why did the GVN evacuate the GVN post of [redacted]

A : I don't know. But before that withdrawal, though they (the VC) had shut the post in twice, the first time in December, the second time in January 1966, and they were always defeated. The first time, they left behind seven or eight killed, the second time, two corpses were left behind but on their way of escape they let trails of blood everywhere in the village. There were three GVN posts in [redacted] village: [redacted]. Last December, they closed in upon [redacted] post. The GVN soldiers, after having broken the blockade all withdrew. Then, at the beginning of January, they attacked and [redacted] defeated [redacted] post. On our side, there were two killed and three wounded, among these there were the Chief of the post and his assistant who could escape to [redacted] village. Next day, the Lieutenant Colonel [redacted] Province Chief and the Captain District Chief came there by helicopter. They told the villagers that they would send more troops to guard [redacted] and [redacted] posts and to overhaul [redacted] post. The villagers were overjoyed and endeavored to accelerate their harvesting by working even at night. However, a few days later, people in the [redacted] post received order to evacuate it, and the villagers had to follow them like ants dislodged from their nest. [redacted] unit of the [redacted] division had come there the night before to lay an ambush to protecting the soldiers of the [redacted] post and the villagers on their way of withdrawal. The villagers started to leave the village in their sampans at 8:00 AM, and towards 10:00 or 10:30 AM the soldiers in the post also withdrew. At 4:30 PM, everybody was gone.

55) Q : Did the VC secretly infiltrate into [redacted] to carry out their activities or to organize any meeting before and/or ag after their attacks of GVN posts?

55) A : They actually came in secret, at night, to the hamlets bordering on the village, e.g. the [redacted] hamlet, also called [redacted] hamlet, the [redacted] hamlet/also called [redacted] hamlet, the [redacted] hamlet/also called [redacted] hamlet, and the [redacted] hamlet/also called [redacted] hamlet. In regard to the hamlet [redacted] also called [redacted] hamlet, and the hamlet [redacted] also called [redacted] hamlet, they couldn't sneak in because those two hamlets were close to GVN posts. However, for instance, if tonight they can call five or six people together to talk to, tomorrow those people will report to the Village Council everything they have said. Because of that, they couldn't attack [redacted] village.

56) Q : While in your village, did you know the names of any leaders of the present Saigon Government? Who told you?

A : I don't know.

(Paused)

It seems to me that the leader of the present Government is Lieutenant General Nguyen-Cao-Ky (Interviewer's note : the subject actually said "Lieutenant General"). Recently, in [redacted] months, when the priest picked up Radio Saigon, I heard him [redacted] (Gen. Ky) state that within a few months — or how long, I don't remember — he will bring peace to the people, and he also talked about the assistance given to the refugees who escaped from the Northern Communists, etc. I cannot recall all of his statements.

57) Q : Did you or others read newspapers?

A : I rarely read newspapers because I had two pieces of orchard where I grew areca,

jack-trees, mango-trees, etc., and I was busy taking care of them all the day long. Others often read newspapers, most of them were Cambodians though. This was because the Village Council really paid attention to their education. In [redacted] village, most of the villagers were Vietnamese, yet there wasn't any elementary school, and the kids who were schooling well were all sent to [redacted] to perfect their education.

58) Q : Where did the newspapers came from?

A : The villagers went for them from [redacted] market through ferry-boats.

59) Q : While in [redacted] did you ever see or ever hear entertainment, such as "cai-luong" or "rong-co"?

A : No, twelve months a year I never went anywhere. I was always busy keeping my orchards clean. At that time, even if I didn't go shopping for three days I still had enough to eat because I've grown every kind of vegetables in my orchards.

60) Q : What have you heard about life in North Vietnam?

A : Nothing.

61) Q : Did you ever hear about the Chieu-Hoi program?

A : Yes, before the evacuation of the [redacted] post aircraft often dropped leaflets.

(Paused)

In my opinion, now the Cambodians of my village are very sad. Otherwise, they wouldn't return home to till their ricefields in this rainy season. This is because the villagers are cut off from the Village Council, and thereby, don't receive any help. (Looked very sad)

62) Q : Have you seen or heard about the use of chemicals to destroy vegetation or crops?

A : This didn't happen to my area yet, but I've heard that other places had been sprayed.

63) Q : Where?

A : I heard that Phong-Dinh province was sprayed most. Then, it was Quang-Tri province which came in the second place. The [illegible] reported that many beautiful orchards of theirs in Phung-Hiep, Phong-Dien, Thot-Not, An-Giang were all destroyed.

64) Q : What did you hear about the reasons for the spraying?

A : I heard that [illegible] these places were [illegible] sprayed because they were in or close to liberated areas. This year, many trees and orchards have actually been destroyed. It didn't happen to my village to be attacked like that.

65) Q : Who was said to be doing the spraying?

A : I don't know. I didn't hear about this.

66) Q : How about crops?

A : I didn't hear about crops being sprayed like that.

67) Q : What effects did it have on the health of the people?

A : I've heard that since the destroying of vegetation by chemicals, it was easier for the people to get sick. The number of patients raised by 40%, the GVN having enough hospitals and medical facilities though.

68) Q : Who told you about this?

A : One can notice every day that these past three years the sick people became more and more numerous. Everybody can witness with his own eyes and hear about with his own ears.

69) Q : Have you heard of the spraying doing damage to the Front organizations or units?

A : I didn't hear about this.

70) Q : Before you came here, have you seen any Americans in Vietnam?

A : Yes, I saw them every time the Captain District Chief came to the village, or on the occasion of the school vacation when the American advisors brought a lot of gifts to the kids who were smart in school and to the Village Council.

71) Q : What did you think they were doing in Vietnam?

A : This is hapning beyond my comprehension.

72) Q : What did you think about them?

A : I only noticed that these past two years, on the occasion of the school vacation or the beginning of school year, the students and schoolmasters were given much more books and notebooks, and other school-materials than in the previous years. As a matter of fact, the education branch of my village was promoted a lot.

73) Q : Did USOM have an office in your village?

A : No. But on the eve of a school vacation or of the beginning of a school year, they came to the Village Office to distribute gifts.

74) Q : Do you think the Americans are like the French, or are they different?

A : In my own opinion, they are different from each other.

75) Q : How come?

A : In the past, under the French regime, provided that people paid their taxes the French were there to watch over their subjects safety so that they could earn their living. But the French didn't help anyone. Now, the Americans, as a matter of fact, are helping the farmers. For instance, they lend fertilizers to the farmers, and it doesn't matter if the latter are unable to pay them. The education branch was also assisted as I told you. We, refugees, xxx were also given assistance. But, in fact, that assistance amounted to nothing. — aren't too exacting though. If we couldn't have a shelter, two meals per day or a job — no matter what kind it is — would be enough. As a matter of fact, by now the refugees are already too miserable. They are complaining a lot but they don't know what to do. These past six months, each one has only received 105 VN$ xxxx (7$ x 15). How could they live in such conditions? They want to work as hired laborers but nobody wants to hire them. Now, we only hope that the Government will speed up its activities so that we will be able to return home soon, or it will bring us a more tangible aid because we are going hungry by devoting to the GVN. (Looked very sad).

76) Q : Have you seen or heard about American gifts to villagers? (Food, clothing, tools, etc.)

A : They didn't send gifts to the village, but from time to time, when the Province Chief or the Captain District Chief came to the village, the American advisors followed him, and they gave the war-dead families money, milk, powder milk, etc. To the young boys or girls they gave books, papers, pens, etc. It happened two or three times a year.

77) Q : What did you and others think or say about those gifts?

A : We think that they are humane, they like the population. Every time the American Major or [redacted] the American Lieutenant-Colonel came to the village, the villagers were very glad and immediately gathered in masses. The Americans also appeared to be cheerful.

78) Q : Have you seen or heard about other foreign countries assisting the GVN and sending troops to South Vietnam?

A : I heard that the Koreans are ready to support the GVN.

79) Q : What did you personally hear?

A : The villagers who bought and read newspapers told me about this, and when I took refuge in [redacted] I also saw them (the Koreans).

80) Q : What did you think about their being in your country?

A : I only saw a small group of them, and I'm only able to tell you what I've witnessed. For example, I noticed that the Americans are good-natured, conciliating, [redacted] and humane. In regard to the Koreans, I don't know about the officers, but as for the privates they are coarse and nasty towards the population.

81) Q : Did any Korean have any regrettable action while you were still in your village?

A : I didn't see any before I became a refugee. But when I [redacted] as a refugee, I [redacted] on duty there, and I noticed that, in comparison with them, the Americans were more humane.

82) Q : Have you heard about the air bombardment of North Vietnam?

A : One day, [illegible] in the pagoda at [illegible] village, some refugees, after having read newspapers, reported that dozens mfg of gasoline storage-tanks and dozens of factories or manufactures in the North had been bombarded, and the smoke had darkened the Northern sky. It seems that there were much damage, and a great stir in the North.

83) Q : Did the persons present make any comments?

A : There were about ten persons who were sitting there, and they decided in the American government's favor saying that the Americans are right in bombing the North because only in such a way we can hope that this war will be ended soon. Let's say that the North is a coconut, and the VC in the South are its sprout which just emerges from the coconut itself. If the American government goes on cutting that part of the sprout which emerges from the coconut, it will go on shoot out. If, for instance, the Americans cut it once a year, after having cut it ten times in ten years it will go on shoot out. On the contrary, [illegible] even if the sprout will be able to shoot out by one meter while they are opening the coconut, when this one is opened, the sprout will certainly die, it won't be able to become a coconut-palm. Roughly, the villagers agreed with each other that the American government was right to bombard the North because such actions will put an end to the war sooner than one can expect.

84) Q : What property did you bring along with you when you left your village?

A : On that day, I could bring along with me one divan, four wooden chairs, one mirror-wardrobe. In regard to my clothes, I left a lot behind and could only bring a couple suits with me.

Because of the urgent character of our withdrawal, I couldn't bring along with me heavy things, such as rice-hulling-mill, plank-bed, etc. I hid those things in the ditch and in two fish-ponds I had dug — because I had planned to breed fishes — Five or six days later, I arranged with the owner of a ferry-boat in my hamlet to return to the village at night to picking up — in secret — a few other things, such as a set of shelves — I had this when I still had my dime store —, two altars, two bamboo-beds, four jars ~~xxxxxxxx~~ used to contain fresh water, a few small jars which had been intended for liquid sugar while I still had my sugar-mill, a round table, etc. I had to spend three nights to bringing those things here, making one tour per night.

35) Q : How could you pick up those things? Didn't the VC prevent you from taking them away?

A : Because at that time, they (the VC) just started to occupy the village, and the village is wide. Therefore, at night, the owner of the ferry-boat waited until they moved to another hamlet ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ for their nightly patrol to carry to his boat the belongings of the refugees who had hired him for that purpose. Later on, he told us that it was no more possible to do it for they (the VC) started to be more rigid. Besides, he also let me know that the kiosk of my gasoline station which had been in front of the elementary school was also dismantled, and they brought it to the cross-~~xxxxx~~ roads of the [redacted] pagoda, near the concrete bridge where they turned it into their control-post. In my orchards, I had ten ~~xxxx~~ areca palm-trees, six "sao" trees — the bark of which is used to dye fishing-nets —, five clumps of bamboo-sprouts, and five hundred "tram" trees — used to build houses or cattle-sheds —

They cut down my bamboo and "tram" trees to build bridges so that they could move from one hamlet to another, from one canal to another. Since I have taken refuge here I often went to the landing-stage of [redacted] village to inquire after my belongings, my house, my orchards, etc. When I left the village I locked my houses, but by now, they have already damaged everything.

86) Q : Is the owner of the ferry-boat still in the village? Didn't the VC put difficulties in his way?

A : In the past he had a contract with the Village Council, and because of his profession the VC didn't create difficulties for him. There were two owners of ferry-boats in my village, one lived in [redacted] hamlet, another, in [redacted] hamlet. The latter was arrested by the VC last April, and by now, his wife and children are ferrying people across. Because of their deposits paid to the Village Council, the ferry-boat owners endeavor to work to recover their money. Last April, a cousin of mine who was teacher in [redacted] village was also arrested by the VC when he came to my village to visit his family.

87) Q : The VC certainly collected taxes from the ferry-boat owners. Didn't they?

A : They didn't collect taxes, but the way they behaved was worst than if they had collected taxes. One told the ferry-boat owner to buy him a fountain-pen, another, a Thermos flask, etc. The ferry-boat owner couldn't no spare himself from buying those things and if he bought them, he couldn't get his money back.

88) Q : If all of the villagers already became refugees, who are using ferry-boats?

A : As I told you, 30% of the refugees left their wives and children here and returned home to grow crops for the next year. Furthermore, they let the villagers go to and fro freely, provided nobody carries away his belongings, with a view to having the villagers return home. Therefore, ferry-boats go on moving back and forth, and although the clients are fewer than before the evacuation of the GVN posts, the ferry-boat owners can earn their living by not charging their customers with fifteen piasters each instead of ten piasters, the former rate. Also, the children who were in the past free of charge have to pay now five piasters each.

89) Q : Who come with you to take refuge here?

A : My wife, two daughter-in-laws, six paternal grandchildren, one maternal grandchild. For the time being, my first daughter-in-law is beside her mother who is sick. She left us twenty days ago.

90) Q : Why did you choose this place to come?

A : I came here because I saw that [redacted] village is safer than others, and not because I was forced to come here by the Village Council.

91) Q : Did you expect to leave your hamlet for a long or short time?

A : Three or four days before our withdrawal, the Lieutenant-Colonel Province Chief had come — by helicopter — to the village to talk to the Village Representative. After that, the latter told the villagers that he had received order to evacuate the post. Therefore, everybody should be ready to move out. But, he added, this

withdrawal will neither exceed a crop-season, nor prejudice the people's interests. This will only enable the Government to dislodge the VC from their hidings and to bring back security to the village. Then, everybody will be able to return home in a short time.

92) Q : But did you yourself expect to leave your hamlet for a long or short time?

A : In my opinion, if the Lieutenant-Colonel Province Chief and the Captain District Chief of Kien-Binh are dedicated, the villagers of [redacted] will be able to return home soon. Once, the Lieutenant-Colonel Province [redacted] Chief has come to [redacted] and said that [redacted] village is the lovercorthiest in Kien-Giang province. Also, the Captain District Chief has told the Village Representative that in the future, the villagers of [redacted] will be the first who return home.

93) Q : How long do you think you'll be here now?

A : I cannot guess, but we, refugees, will be very grateful if the Government can enable us to return home soon. In my opinion, if the Lieutenant-Colonel Province Chief is dedicated in helping [redacted] people in my village, we will certainly return home soon. In regard to the District Chief of Kien-Thann who was also District Chief of Kien-Binh in the past, he really loves the people, and mostly now it seems to me that he loves us even more than when he was still in Kien-Binh.

94) Q : What would happen to you if you went back now?

A : I'm in no position to know. However, first, because I've been here six months ago, secondly because my two sons work for the GVN, if I went back they (the VC) wouldn't spare me.

95) Q : How many of the people here earn extra-money with part-time jobs?

A : People don't hire me because I'm old. By now, there are in [redacted] pagoda about fifty families left. From time to time, men were hired for a few days to work either on the ricefields, or as housekeepers. Women couldn't get any job, they all know how to till ricefields though. This season, those who know about farmer's work can get jobs more easily than those who do housework.

96) Q : How much did they get paid per day?

A : Here, there are two ways of paying the labor work. The employers can pay each hired laborer 150$ per day, or they can pay outright by "cong" of ricefield the man has worked on. When a man has uprooted a "cong" of riceseedlings he is paid 35 [redacted]. Usually, a laborer can work — to uproot riceseedling — on seven "cong" per day on an average. The [redacted] capable can [redacted] achieve five "cong", the most capable, ten "cong" per [redacted] day. Therefore, those who are paid outright earn more money. Those who clear up the land are paid like those who are hired on a daily basis.

97) Q : How is the leadership of this refugee-camp organized?

A : Nobody is leader. Everybody is but busy searching for a job. Every month the Captain District Chief of Kien-Thanh came to visit the refugees twice, the first time towards the beginning of the month, the second time, towards the end of the month. The Village Representative of [redacted] is zealous, but the District Chief is even better.

98) Q : What do the children of the refugees do here?

A : They (both parents and children) are unemployed, laying down there in a body, sparing food, and not knowing what to do now.

99) Q : What suggestions about the children would you make to the authorities?

A : In my opinion, we are going through a cold rainy season, and people would appreciate very much if only the Government gave them a few worn-out clothes or blankets or mosquito nets to relieve them of the cold, and mostly the rice because they are on the verge of starving.

100) Q : Whom do you blame for your troubles?

A : I think that in the past Mr Ngo-Dinh-Diem encountered many difficulties, and Mr Nguyen-Khanh, then, also went the same way. By now, of course, Mr Nguyen-Cao-Ky must have in turn that heavy responsibility, and only his virtue and his assistance can enable the people to live.

101) Q : But, can you tell me whom do you blame for your troubles?

A : I would commit a sin if I spoke, but even so I tell you that the VC must assume the responsibility of this matter for they have made the people's life a burden once. Fortunately, at the time the Geneva Accord brought the Armistice to the people who could enjoy peace for a while. The Geneva Accord split up Vietnam into two sides, each one having its own share. ~~[illegible]~~ Yet, the Northerners, because of their covetousness, have invaded the South bringing about hardships the Southerners are enduring. We can say that these past ten years, the people in The South have been enduring hardships because of the North. Even an old man like me is unemployed. The American Government and the GVN waited for ten

years before bombarding the North -- we can say that they waited for the last minute to do it -- but the people in the South have been enduring hardships ten years ago, and how hard their life has been!

102) Q : If you were given land, would you be happy living somewhere else? Or will you wait until your village will be recaptured?

A : I only hope that the Government will wholeheartedly help the Village Council of our village so that we will be able to return home. If it were impossible, I would rather stay in [redacted] because of two reasons. First, I'm now tired of everything and don't want to grow rich any more. I know that if the Government gave me land and houses in another village, that village would be at most as safe as [redacted] or perhaps only fifty per cent. Secondly, we have been living -- my family -- for four generations in [redacted] and our ancestors' tombs are there, and we don't want to leave our village. Now, I would rather receive from the GVN four liters of rice per day to raise my family than five thousand piasters.

103) Q : How long do you think the war will last?

A : I cannot guess.

104) Q : Which side do you think is winning now?

A : These past two weeks, to my knowledge, every time the refugees inquired of each other what was going on, everybody said that the GVN was winning a great victory. Everybody was touched with emotion because of the story of the coconut I told you about.

105) Q : What made you think the GVN is winning?

A : In my opinion, I beg your pardon, I'm Vietnamese but I believe in Cambodian sacred books which say that Fate decided that the Communists had to rise to make the people's life a burden for a certain time. But they [redacted] won't be able to carry the day. If the war were protracted indefinitely there would be, I think, nothing left but water and earth. The people cannot live under their regime.

106) Q : How could you know that people cannot live under their regime?

A : [redacted] In the past we didn't evacuate the village which was under their communist control. At that time, I did my utmost efforts to work day and night never minding mosquitoes and/or bugs to harvest earner my paddy and rice so that I could relax a few months per year. But they came with a meterstick to estimate my stock and charged me with 50% or 60% of taxes, they had never given me a hand in tilling my ricefields even for a while, though. Do you think that was fair? Do you think they would be pleased if I came to measure their rice or paddy stock?

107) Q : When did it happen?

A : Three or four months before the Geneva accords.

108) Q : [redacted] your village ever been bombed?

A : Yes.

109) Q : How many times?

A : It had been bombed under the Resistance. Last year, [redacted] hamlet was also

bombed because the VC were organizing a play, and the people in the CVN post ~~[illegible]~~ sent for aircraft to ~~[illegible]~~ have the VC withdraw, but the village didn't suffer much damage.

110) Q : When did it happen? What month of last year?

A : It seems to me that it happened in September 1965. At that time, the Village Council didn't agree to call to aircraft for fear of the damage which might be caused to the villagers rather than to the VC who always know how to dodge. However, the Chief of [redacted] post who had just come from [redacted] village was determined to send for aircraft to bomb the village. Fortunately, there were only two houses which were caved in, two ~~[illegible]~~ buffaloes and one cow killed, and one sampan broken. Nobody was killed, or wounded. ~~[illegible]~~ After that, the Village Representative called the villagers together to ask for their opinions. The villagers all suggested that the Chief of that post should be transferred, and as a matter of fact, the District Chief of Kien-Binh assented to this. Therefore, as I told ~~[illegible]~~ you yesterday, in my village the Village Council loves the people as the latter love it.

111) Q : How many aircraft participated in the bombing?

A : Two.

112) Q : What kind of aircraft?

A : They were called cormorants. (fighter-bombers)

113) Q : Has your village ever been attacked by artillery?

A : Never.

114) Q : Is either side now winning the support of the people away from the other side?

A : In my opinion, 90% of the villagers love the GVN now, but as they are still cornered and repressed by the VC, and thereby, cannot escape from their villages they have to stay in the VC areas, they always turn to the GVN side though. As I told you, with the VC regime, the people only go on living with them because of the circumstances.

115) Q : If the Front wins the war, what do you think life in Vietnam will be like?

A : In my opinion, I think that I won't dare recognize my belongings and eat my hard-gottenwins without their permission, that is to say, there will be no freedom.

116) Q : If the GVN wins the war, what do you think life in Vietnam will be like?

A : If the GVN wins the war, and if I'm still alive at the time and still able to work I hope I'll have enough to eat first, and then, I'll endeavor to grow rich. If I won't be able to work, I'm sure that the GVN won't leave me alone.

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INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

The subject seemed intelligent and cooperative.

The interview was conducted in privacy and didn't deteriorate with time.

The interviewer presented himself as a member of a Social Sciences Research Group, and the subject was very at ease.

Many of his statements are worth consideration.

INTERVIEW #AGR-60 MISSING—

INTERVIEW NOT COMPLETED

INTERVIEW #AGR-61 MISSING—

INTERVIEW NOT COMPLETED

INTERVIEW #AGR-62 MISSING—

INTERVIEW NOT COMPLETED

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INTERVIEW

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INTERVIEWS CONCERNING THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR-63

Date of Interview : August [redacted] 1966

Subject's Category : Refugee: August [redacted] 1966
Landless peasant[redacted]

Area of Residence : Phu Cat District
Binh Dinh Province

This interview is for the information of US and Vietnamese official agencies and personnel on a need-to-know basis. Permission to distribute or show this interview to non-official persons requires the prior approval of The RAND Corporation and the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs.

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1. How long had you and your family lived in your village before you became a refugee?

   Before I became a refugee I had lived in my village since my childhood.

2. How big was your village?

   My village consisted of [redacted] hamlets and more than [redacted] people.

3. How did you earn your living there?

   I was a hired laborer and my wages were about twenty piasters a day. I had to provide my own food for lunch.

4. How did most of the villagers earn their living?

   Most of the villagers earned their living by farming.

5. Were most of them well-off or poor? Did they have enough to eat?

   Very few people in our village were well-off. About one-third of them had enough to eat while the remaining people lacked food all year round.

6. How many members are there in your family?

   My parents died long ago. I was living with my wife and my four children. My eldest son is only thirteen years old.

7. What is your religion?

   I am a Buddhist.

8. What religion did the other villagers practice?

   Three-fourths of the villagers were Buddhists while the rest were either Catholics or Caodaists.

9. Were there ever conflicts between members of different religions?

   I found no conflicts between members of different religions.

10. Were there any ethnic minorities in your village?

All the people in my village were Vietnamese.

11. What education have you had?

While living, my parents were very poor and didn't send me to school. I'm unable even to read Vietnamese.

12. Was there a school in your village?

There were for the whole village two primary schools where children could have a complete primary education. Besides, each hamlet had a school with two or three classes for little children.

13. Did all children go to school?

Most of the children had one or two years of school, except for those from very poor families who had to work from their youngest days.

14. Who were your best friends in your hamlet?

My best friend in the hamlet was the hamlet chief, [redacted], who left the village when the Front started controlling the area. I was an inter-family group leader in the GVN administration and could talk with him about everything. But after the Front people came, there was no one in the village to whom I could talk freely. The VC called me [redacted] a word purporting to mean a man who had been working for the GVN. Every instant I was afraid of being arrested by them, so I kept quiet all the time to avoid any possible trouble.

15. Which people in your village were the most important?

The most important and respected man was the village representative, [redacted] who fled to Phu Cat District-Seat when the Front came and who is still the representative there for GVN for all the villagers now taking refuge in a camp located in [redacted] Village.

16. Who was the best informed about what was happening in the district, in Saigon and elsewhere?

It seemed to me that [redacted] was the best informed man in my village.

17. How was life in your village before 1954?

I didn't participate in the Resistance before 1954, but I know that people's life at that time was excessively miserable.

18. Did any people in your village fight against the French?

I was told that the front's leader now in my village had been a Resistance member.

19. What [illegible] after 1954?

I don't know.

20. Did [illegible] in your village improve after 1954?

Life in my village visibly improved after 1954. The people were decently dressed and better fed. Some people succeeded in building brick houses, but many of them still remained very poor because nothing was done to increase the farming land in my village.

21. How did the local officials behave?

They behaved properly.

22. Were they local people or strangers? Were they elected or appointed?

They were local people elected by the villagers.

23. Have you ever participated in an election in your village?

The last time there was an election for the village [illegible] approximately.

24. Did everybody vote?

All those who had an election card went to the polls.

25. How many candidates were there?

There were six or seven candidates.

26. What qualifications did one have to have to be a candidate?

All the people 18 years old and above were qualified to vote.

27. What qualifications did one have to have to be a candidate?

I don't know.

28. Were the elections honest? Explain.

The election seemed to be honest, as no claim was made after the election.

29. Did the village officials promise any social improvements?

They promised to ask the district chief for American aid. Food, clothes and building materials were to be given to the villagers but the gifts were trifling and distributed unequally.

30. How were the gifts distributed?

The gifts seemed to be held at the disposal of the Catholic community only. The Catholic people received most of them while members of other religions were given nothing or very little. Nevertheless we still trusted the village officials because the gifts distributed to the villagers didn't depend on them but on higher authorities.

31. What did you know about the Diem Government?

The Diem Government helped the villagers live in peace for many years.

32. What did you and the other villagers think about the fall of that government?

Most of the Catholic people in my village were sorry when they got news of the fall of the Diem Government. But the other people showed no indifference as they had a grudge against Mr. Diem's regime for the discrimination they had been victims of.

33. Are there any GVN military forces near your hamlet?

There was a company of popular forces in my village. They were from various hamlets and mainly in [redacted] the village's administrative center.

34. How did they behave during and after the Diem Government?

They always behaved properly towards the villagers, as all of them were village youths.

35. Did other GVN [illegible] ever pass through your village?

Besides the Local Forces, a company of Regular Forces stayed permanently in my village. It was relieved every fifteen days by a fresh company.

36. How did they behave?

They stayed quite apart and didn't disturb the villagers.

37. Did you ever live in a Strategic Hamlet?

I started living in a Strategic Hamlet at the end of December 1962.

38. How much labor and money did you have to contribute to it?

Every villager 18 years old or above had to participate in building up the fence around the hamlet. I had to go to the forest to cut trees and bring back trunks in sufficient quantity to build the part of the fence attributed to me. As I was poor, the corvee-labor I was compelled to do sometimes prevented me from getting food for my family who went hungry. The well-off people had to hire others to do the job for them.

39. What did you and others like about it?

We felt [illegible] in a Strategic Hamlet.

40. What did you [illegible] dislike about it?

What I disliked about it was the lack of food caused to my children when I had to do the labor for the Strategic Hamlet. Some complained that part of their rice-fields was [illegible] by the fence. Others said that the fence caused them to [illegible] a lot of time in going to the rice-field and coming back.

41. What happened to the Strategic Hamlet?

At the end of 1964, the VC came and urged the villagers to take down the fence and burn it down.

42. Was there any reaction from the government officials and the forces in charge of the village's protection?

At that time the VC were about to control the village. At night when they came, the GVN officials and SDC dared not come out from their refuge for fear of being killed by the Front members.

43. Before the Front came, how did you feel about your life and future?

Despite being very poor, I wasn't worried about my life because I was able to easily get a job from any landowner.

44. What things dissatisfied you most?

I received nothing from the American aid.

45. What did you think about your opportunities to improve your life?

I thought of seeking a good job outside my village.

46. What did you think about the chance of your children having a better craft?

I wish that my son, who is now 13, would become a carpenter.

47. When did you first hear of the Front?

I first heard of the Front in 1958, but I didn't pay any attention to it. I was told once by the hamlet chief that the Liberation Front had been set up to overthrow the South Vietnam Government and drive the Americans out of the country.

48. What kinds of people belonged to the Front in those days?

I don't know.

49. What activities did they engage in?

I don't know.

50. When the Front people first came to your hamlet, what did the GVN officials do?

In my village, the GVN officials were so afraid of the Front that they closed their eyes to the VC's activities.

51. When did your village first become controlled by the Front?

My village first became controlled by the Front in February 1965. One night at the beginning of February, a VC battalion launched an attack on the village. The four platoons of GVN Popular Forces offered a weak resistance during the night and withdrew to the district seat at dawn. They suffered two casualties.

52. What about the GVN Regular Forces which used to camp in your village?

There were no GVN Regular Forces in my village at that time.

53. Why couldn't the GVN forces control your village?

It was very difficult to control a village like mine which is surrounded on all sides by mountains and forests. The Front was able to assemble at any time in the mountainous area a battalion-sized force for a surprise attack on the village.

54. What did the Front people do to the people's GVN identification cards?

The Front cadres could collect only a small number of the people's GVN identification cards because most of the villagers hid theirs and stated that they had been lost or destroyed by fire.

55. How did the Front cadres, soldiers and guerrillas behave?

The Front cadres outwardly seemed to be polite and gentle but they were in fact ruthless. The Front soldiers and guerrillas behaved correctly towards the villagers.

56. How did the villagers feel about them?

The villagers were afraid of the cadres but they sympathized with the Front soldiers and guerrillas.

57. What did you know about the aims of the Front?

The cadres said "The Front is going to liberate the country and give food and clothing to the people".

58. What did you think of those aims?

I didn't believe their words because I know that the Viet Minh cadres said the same during the Resistance, and they sowed only misery and famine.

59. What are the names of the leaders of the Front?

I know only one name, that of Nguyen Huu Tho who is the Chairman of the Liberation Front.

60. When the Front first controlled your village what words would you have used to describe the Front?

Outwardly the Front appeared to be peace-loving and patriotic as it always talked about patriotism and love of peace. But it was in fact dangerous, treasonous, cowardly, ruthless and rigid.

61. Kindly explain your choice?

The Front cadres were only telling lies and weren't afraid of sacrificing human lives for the Party's interest.

62. Did the Front hold meetings in your village? How often?

The Front hold meetings in the hamlets every week and general meetings for the whole village once a month.

63. What did they say about your own village?

They said "After the Front achieves the revolution, there will be no wants in the village. Food and clothes will be equally distributed to every one".

64. What about the GVN?

They said: "The GVN is a lackey for the American imperialists".

65. What about the Americans?

They said, "The Americans are invading this country to exploit the Vietnamese people".

66. What about North Vietnam?

They said, "North Vietnam is exploiting several mines, setting up all kinds of factories, and developing industries for the people's benefit. Everyone receives a secondary education at least, has enough food and clothes and lives in happiness".

67. What about China?

"China is the best friend and best adviser".

68. What about Russia?

"Russia gives aircraft and missiles".

69. What did they say about the future of the war?

They said, "The Front is sure to win this war and it is in a position to capture Qui Nhon within a short time".

70. What did you and the other villagers think about what they said?

Except for those who had connections with the Front people, the other villagers paid no mind to what they said. As for myself, I didn't believe them.

71. Did the Front ever take any villagers away for re-education?

Most of the villagers who had worked for the GVN, such as family group leaders, hamlet chiefs or low ranking members of the village council, were taken away for re-education.

72. How long were they gone? What happened to them?

Usually from one to six months. Some were taken away longer. A police guard called [redacted] was sent away for re-education and nobody has had news from him for two years. A family group leader was taken away for eight months. Most of them came back from the re-education center in bad condition.

73. How did the villagers feel about it?

The re-education couldn't change the villagers' minds. They remained what they had been.

74. What did the cadres say?

The cadres said that re-education was useful for the people to change their minds, but I don't think so.

75. How many young men joined the Front and how many joined the ARVN?

I don't know the figure but I know that over 50% of the young men served in the ARVN because many who had joined the Front forces fled in order to serve in the GVN forces.

76. What do you think made them choose one side rather than the other?

About 20% of the families in my village were sympathetic with the Front, but few of the young men from those families willingly joined the Front forces. They also were afraid of hardships they would have to suffer or of having little chance to survive the war. So I can say that most of them joined the Front forces with no enthusiasm, under persuasion or pressure from the Front cadres. Those who chose to join the ARVN did it of their own free will. They knew that they would be well paid and would be able to support their families.

77. What forms of persuasion did the Front use?

The Front usually asked women or young girls to proselyte young men into its forces. The cadres always promised that the Front would support all the Front fighters' families.

78. How old were the new recruits?

The Front recruited all young men who were able to handle a rifle, however old they might be.

79. When did the Front begin to draft people?

The drafting wasn't still in force in my area.

80. How did the villagers feel about the young men joining the Front?

The villagers said, "Those who join the Front forces have no chance to survive".

81. How did the villagers feel about the young men joining the ARVN?

The villagers felt that the young men joining the ARVN would enjoy good living conditions and would be less exposed to danger.

82. Were families with sons in the Front treated differently in your village?

The families with sons in the Front were well seated at every meeting. All the poor ones were given land in the land distribution.

83. How about families with the sons in the ARVN?

Those people were kept apart at meetings. They had no seats and had to stay on the ground. The poor families were also on the list of beneficiaries from the land distribution but the cadres took those shares for themselves. From time to time those people were requested by the cadres to go to the district-town to stage protest demonstrations for the release of their children from the ARVN, and this under the risk of being beaten up or killed.

84. What effect did it have on the economic life of the village?

Many families lacked food and clothes because their children couldn't support them.

85. How many Front guerrillas were in your village?

I don't know.

86. When did the Front make a land distribution in your village?

A land distribution was made in my village in April 1965.

87. From whom did the Front take land away?

The distributed land consisted partly of communal properties and partly of that left by the villagers who fled to GVN-controlled areas.

88. To whom did they give it?

About 190 hectares were distributed. The poor villagers were each given half a "cong" that is about 500 sq.m., while each cadre appropriated 15 to 16 "cong".

89. How did the villagers feel about it?

The people felt dissatisfied about it because they benefited so little while having a bad reputation of appropriating other people's properties.

90. Was it done fairly?

The distribution was done unfairly. A regroupee who hadn't yet come back to the village was also given a share. Most of the time regroupee's families were unable to cultivate the land then, it would be automatically turned over to the cadres. You can see that most of the distributed land was in the cadres' hands.

91. Did you receive any land?

I received half a "cong". But I didn't feel satisfied about it because I knew that I would have to work hard and would enjoy little.

92. How was your family classified by the Front?

I was a landless villager and so was classified as very poor.

93. Were you afraid of it ever being taken away from you?

The land distributed to me came from communal properties. So I wasn't afraid of it ever being taken away from me.

94. What did you think would happen to the land if the GVN returned to your hamlet?

I thought the distributed land would have to be given back to the owners.

95. Were the other people who received land satisfied?

Except for the cadres and the families who had connections with Front people, most of those who received land weren't satisfied. Only the Front people were better-off than before.

96. Had there been land reform before the Front came?

No.

97. What taxes did you and others have to pay to the Front when it first controlled your hamlet?

Each family had to pay a Liberation Tax which amounted to 20% of the crop after ration allowances had been made for each family member.

then the villagers had to subscribe to a war bond the amount of which varied from 200 to 10,000 piasters depending on the family's situation. Besides each family had to put aside everyday two handfuls of rice in a pot, the contents of which would be used to feed the village guerrillas.

98. How much did you pay in 1963?

I paid sixty kilos of paddy out of my crop amounting to one hundred twenty kilos.

99. How much did you pay this year?

I haven't paid yet. The villagers started tilling rice in April and the tax payment would be made at harvest time, that is in September or October.

100. What did the Front cadres say about the taxes?

The cadres said: "Every one has to do some sacrifice in order to give full support to the Front troops who are liberating the country from the imperialists' hands".

101. What did the villagers say?

The people bit their lips in paying taxes. They felt oppressed but dared not say a word of complaint.

102. At the time you left your village, were the Front taxes higher or lower than the GVN taxes had been?

The Front taxes were at least ten times higher than the GVN taxes.

103. What happened to a villager who was late in paying his taxes?

After the harvest if someone was late in paying his taxes, the cadres immediately sent their men to that man's house and took away the taxable amount.

104. What happened to a villager who refused to pay his taxes?

This man would be sent away for re-education, and he would have make a promise of payment on his release.

105. Where did the villagers usually sell their produce?

They weren't allowed to sell their produce outside the village.

106. What happened to the cost of living?

The villagers needed only food and very few commodity goods. As they were self-sufficient in food, the disruption of movement didn't affect much their cost of living.

107. If the economic conditions in your village had changed in the last year, what were the reasons?

The villagers worked with no enthusiasm because they knew that they would enjoy little from their labor. So the production decreased and the economic conditions in my village visibly worsened.

108. Did the Front set up organizations in your hamlet?

There were many Front organizations in my hamlet, but I don't know how they were set up and what their activities were because I was kept apart from those organizations since I had worked for the GVN.

109. Tell me about the Front cadres in your village?

I know only a few persons who were members of the village administrative committee.

110. What sort of persons were they? Where did they come from?

They all are natives of the village, but some were former members of the Resistance and others were people who joined the Front in underground activities the past years.

111. What was the most important cadre position in your village?

The most important cadre position in my village was the chairman of the Front committee.

112. What did you think of him? What did the other villagers say?

I didn't like him but I was very afraid of him. So were most of the other villagers.

113. Were there any women cadres? What positions did they hold?

I know that there was a woman in the Standing Committee but she seemed not to be an influential person.

114. Was there in your hamlet a Party Chapter?

I don't know.

115. What did you and the villagers think about the way the Front cadres acted in your village?

The Front cadres thought only of their interests at the expense of the people.

116. How did the villagers feel about that?

The majority of the villagers didn't like them.

117. Have the cadres in your village changed?

They were always the same ones.

118. Did you ever see or hear about any conflicts between the cadres?

There were disagreements between the cadres only about the unequal distribution of bribes or spoils from the people.

119. Has there been any change in the attitudes of the villagers towards the Front cadres?

Because of increasing hardships they had to endure under the Front regime, most of the villagers have become more and more distrustful towards the cadres.

120. Did the Front ever arrest, punish or kill any villagers?

[redacted] a member of the National Revolutionary Movement under Diem regime, was assasinated by the cadres. [redacted] a member of the village police, was tortured to death by them.

121. What did you think about it?

I thought the Front seeked to exterminate all the elements having some education and a good will toward the GVN.

122. What did the other villagers say about it?

Most of the villagers felt sorrow about it, but had to conceal their sentiments for fear of getting in trouble themselves.

123. Were you or other villagers ever made to perform work without pay?

All the villagers who had collaborated with the GVN were regarded as suspects and weren't authorized to go out of the village even for corvee labor. Other aged people also performed unpaid labor in the village, while the young and healthy people had to move quite far away in order to perform their job in the front line at the hazard of their life. They made an easy target for the aircraft attacks.

124. What did you think about it?

I thought the Front had no regard for the people's rights. The villagers were exploited to the utmost limit.

125. What did the other villagers say about it?

The villagers said among themselves that they saw little hope that the people who were sent away for corvee-labor would come back to their families. All those who had succeeded in coming home were ill and lost a long time in recovering their health.

126. Did the Front ask the villagers to do more corvee-labor the past months?

The last five months no one in the village has had to do labor work.

127. Why?

The Front organizations' [illegible] in the village have [illegible] still [illegible] of the cadres took refuge in the mountains following the last Korean operation.

128. Was your hamlet a "Corbet [illegible]"?

Yes, it was.

129. What did you like best about it?

I liked nothing about it.

130. What did you like least about it?

What I disliked most about it was that the VC cadres forced only those people they looked upon as suspects to do digging work for the "Combat Hamlet".

131. How well did it protect your hamlet from military attacks?

The "combat hamlet" defenses were useless in face of a GVN sweep operation.

132. How would you compare it to the GVN's Strategic Hamlet?

I think the Strategic Hamlet defenses were stronger.

133. In your village what had you heard about conditions of life in the front forces?

I was told by a laborer coming back from the front line that the front soldiers were suffering more and more hardships because of the frequent American air attacks on their camps and their supply lines.

134. Had you spoken with any villager who returned from the front forces?

I hadn't spoken with any villagers who had returned from the front forces.

135. Had any crippled front soldiers returned home?

I sometimes saw crippled front soldiers staying for one or two days in my village. But all them were in the NVA and none of them were natives of the village.

136. Did you know how many villagers from your hamlet serving in the Front forces had been killed or wounded?

I don't know.

137. Did you think a soldier's chances of surviving were better in the Front or the GVN forces?

I thought a villager who served in the GVN forces had much more chance of surviving.

138. Which did you think suffered more casualties, the GVN or the Front?

I wasn't in a position to know this.

139. Which side did you think was better armed and stronger?

Thanks to the Americans, the GVN was better armed and stronger.

140. Had you ever met any soldiers or cadres working with the Front who weren't Southerners?

I met from time to time North Vietnamese soldiers crossing my village.

141. What did they do? What did you think about them?

They only passed through my village and always showed a good behavior. I had compassion for them.

142. Have you ever heard about defeats suffered by Front units?

I have never heard about it.

143. What did the cadres say about Front victories?

On all occasions the cadres kept talking about Front victories in An Hoa, Quang Ngai, Zone D and other places, and about the heavy GVN-American losses in men, aircraft and other war material. But I paid no attention to this. The occupation of my area by the Korean troops last March was an obvious Front setback. The cadres nevertheless talked about it to the villagers in such a way that it sounded like a victory for them. According to them, dozens of aircraft had been shot down and hundreds of Allied troops had been killed before they could set foot in the area. No one in the district agreed with their statements.

144. While in your village what had you heard about the present Saigon Government? Who told you?

While in my village, I was told by the cadres that the present Saigon Government was a puppet one.

145. Do you know the name of any of its leaders?

I know that General Ky is the leader.

146. Which of these words do you now think best describe the GVN: Strong/weak? Compassionate/cruel? Just/corrupt? Wise/confused? Dedicated/lazy?

I just can say now that the GVN is strong and compassionate.

147. Explain your choice.

The GVN is defeating the Front and helping the villagers live a new life.

148. What do you know about the more recent behavior of local, district, and provincial GVN officials?

I know nothing yet about them.

149. How did you get information in your village on what was happening in Saigon?

While in my village I got no information on what was happening in Saigon.

150. Did you ever hear about the Chieu Hoi program?

I heard about it many times from GVN aircraft loudspeakers, but the broadcasts were usually not clear because the aircraft flew high and fast.

151. Did any rallier ever return to your village?

I don't know.

152. Was your village ever attacked by the ARVN or by its allies?

My village was swept over by the ARVN many times, but nothing serious happened until the last mopping-up operation conducted by the Koreans.

153. Describe the attacks. Describe the weapons used.

The attacks were made by ground troops supported by artillery and aircraft. All weapons were simultaneously used. Artillery shells, bombs and machine-gun fire all converged on my village like a hail.

154. Why did you think your village was attacked?

I thought the allied forces attacked the village to free the people from the VC grip.

155. What did the front say?

The front said the allied troops would be bogged down soon. The cadres tried to stir up the peasants' hatred for the Americans and other foreign troops.

156. Were Front soldiers in or near your village when it was attacked?

There were no front soldiers near my village at that time. As for the VC cadres and guerrillas, each one tried to work out his salvation.

157. Were any of the villagers killed or hurt?

Many were killed and wounded.

158. Was any property destroyed?

Most of the houses in my village were burnt down by fire or demolished by the bombs.

159. Before the attacks was your village given any warnings?

No.

160. Would such a warning have been useful to the villagers?

This might have a certain number of lives.

161. How did these attacks make you feel about the GVN and its allies?

I was afraid of being killed. That's all.

162. What did other villagers say?

Most of the villagers at first insulted the Americans, the GVN and the Koreans. Soon after getting in contact with the Korean troops, they forgot their anger because they found that those troops were correct and gave them a lot of help.

163. How did these attacks make you feel about the Front?

I didn't like the VC and this made me more angry with them.

164. What did the other villagers say?

Except for the families who had close relations with the VC, the other villagers didn't complain about the attacks.

165. Who do you blame for the attacks? Explain.

I blame the VC for the attacks because if there were no VC, the villagers would have lived in peace.

166. Did you think there were better ways for the GVN to counter the Front?

I didn't think there were better ways other than frequent attacks.

167. Have you seen or heard about the use of chemicals to destroy vegetation or crops?

I haven't.

168. Before you came here, had you seen any Americans in Vietnam?

I hadn't seen any Americans before I came here.

169. What did the Front say about the Americans?

The VC said that the Americans were the worst capitalists that came here to suck our people's blood.

170. Was the Front correct in what they said?

I didn't understand how the capitalists were and how they sucked our people's blood.

171. What do you think the Americans really want in Vietnam?

In fact I don't know it.

172. What is the relationship between the GVN and the Americans?

I don't know.

173. Do you think the Americans are like the French, or are they different? Explain.

The Americans are unlike the French. They are very friendly even with children. They themselves do all kinds of work for the people.

174. Have you seen or heard about American gifts to villagers?

I haven't seen it yet because I only came here fifteen days ago.

175. Have you seen or heard about other foreign countries assisting the US and sending troops to South Vietnam?

The Korean troops conducted sweep operations in my area. When they entered my village after the fighting, they showed a blameless behavior. They didn't plunder the villagers and quite the contrary helped the poor and the war victims.

176. What did you think about their being in your country?

I thought they were helpful to us.

177. Which do you think is stronger: the GVN with its allies or the Front with its allies?

The GVN with its allies is much stronger. The VC have no aircraft, no helicopters, no tanks, no big guns.

178. What were the reasons that made you leave your village and come here?

First I was a suspect of the VC and had been closely watched by them. Second, I was unable to earn enough to maintain my family and was afraid that it would starve some day. Third, I wasn't sure of being able to harvest what I had sown.

179. Which did you think was the most important reason? Explain.

I thought the most important reason was the fear of lacking food.

180. Did you ever read leaflets asking you to leave?

I can't read.

181. What reasons made you not want to leave your village?

I was closely watched by the VC.

182. Why didn't you leave earlier?

I should have left last March but the VC gave me no opportunity to move. They took me away during the first days of the Korean troops sweep.

183. Have you ever taken refuge before?

I haven't.

184. Before you left your hamlet, what had you heard about present conditions in GVN areas?

Before I left my hamlet, I heard from a lady who used to go to GVN markets that conditions in GVN areas were much better than those in Front areas.

185. Were you told that the GVN would do anything for you and other refugees?

No.

186. What preparations for leaving did you and your family make?

I made no preparations at all, as I had no property to bring with me.

187. What did you leave behind?

Just a small hut and half a "cong" of land I had received from land distribution.

188. Who came with you?

My wife, my four children and my sister.

189. Describe your trip here.

My family had made no difficulties. Since the Korean troops camped near my village, the VC slackened their activities, particularly those last days, and it was easy for my family to get to move to Phu C.. District Seat. From there we were sent to this refugee camp.

190. Did you expect to leave your hamlet for a long or a short time? Explain.

I expected to leave my hamlet until the time when the GVN would take over that place.

191. How long do you think you'll be here now?

I don't know.

192. How many families have left your village?

About eight thousand people have left the village.

193. How many remained there? Why did they stay?

About four thousand people remained there. They stayed because part of them had connections with the Front cadres and part lived in hamlets located near the mountains where the Front still exercised tight control over the population.

194. Did any families leave your hamlet or village for other Front controlled areas.

The Front herded a lot of families into [redacted] mountain. I heard that two or three battalions of Front forces were staying in [redacted] on the mountainside looking out over [redacted] Village. I wish that the Allied forces would launch an operation in order to release those people from the Front.

195. Have any people who left your village to come here now gone back?

No one has gone back.

196. What would happen to you if you went back now?

If I went back now I would be taken right away into the mountains for detention for a long period of time.

197. What have the GVN authorities here done for you?

The GVN authorities have done nothing yet for me except provide a shelter.

198. Have they kept their promises? Are you satisfied?

When I first arrived at the district seat, the GVN authorities promised to give each one of my family, as well as others, a bag of rice and a tin of oil, but I have received nothing yet for 17 days.

199. Have you enough food, money, medicine, good shelter and sanitation?

When I first arrived at the refugee camp, I had to beg rice from my fellow-villagers. A few days ago the Korean troops gave forty bags of rice to the camp. So I had my small share. I haven't yet received any money and medicine. For the shelter, I'm sharing it with another family from my hamlet.

200. Have you been given identification cards?

I still have my former card.

201. Are you being given any education or training here?

No.

202. How many of the people here earn extra money with part-time jobs?

I only know that a lot of the people here have been employed by private persons and some are working in American construction sites.

203. What do they do? How much do they earn?

Most of them are working as hired laborers. A few who are working with the Americans seem to be quite satisfied.

204. How many refugees are in this camp?

About four thousand people.

205. How many refugees have come here and how many have left since you have been here?

I don't know.

206. How is the leadership of this camp organized?

The refugee camp is in [redacted] Village not far from my native one. The local authorities seemed to have given consent to the first refugees and some materials for the construction of the center. We have to be self sufficient now. [redacted] our former village representative with the GVN, is now the camp leader.

207. Do you ever get information from your village?

Since I came here seventeen days ago, I have gotten no information from my village. I have pity on the other villagers who were taken away by the Front. They are probably starving.

208. Have you seen any foreigners here?

I have seen only Korean soldiers and some American officers.

209. What are they doing? How do they behave?

Three times came to give us rice. One or two American officers just walked through the center, looking at the houses and people. They were polite and seemed to be gentle.

210. What do the children of the refugees do here?

They are doing nothing. I have a son 17 years old. I wish he would become a carpenter.

211. When you leave here, where would you like to go?

I will try to stay here until the time when the GVN will be able to again control my village. For the present time, if I can, when that I would be given a job as a laborer in an American construction site to earn a living for my family.

212. Here is a picture of a ladder. The bottom rung is numbered ten, and the top rung is numbered one. Now, let's say that the top rung represents the best life you can imagine, and the bottom rung represents the worst life you can imagine. Where on this ladder would you say that your life was before the Front came to your village? After it came to your village? At the time you left your village? How about right now -- Where on the ladder would you put your life now? Where do you think your life will be five years from now. (Explain).

I think my life before the Front came to my village was at the rung number 6. After the Front came it was at number 8, and at the time I left my village number 9. Right now I would say my life is at the rung number 8. I hope my life will be at the rung 5 five years from now.

213. If you could ask three things of any Vietnamese Government, what would they be?

Following are the three things I would ask:

1/ I will be given a job in an American construction site.

2/ The GVN forces will carry out another operation in my area to crush the Front forces now staying in the mountains and free other villagers.

3/ The GVN will give the refugees enough aid to help them live more decently.

214. How long do you think the war will last?

I have no idea about this.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

The subject seemed not to be healthy, as his skin was full of scabs and showed that he had been living in very poor conditions during the days before he arrived at the refugee camp. He is illiterate and seemed dull of comprehension, but he showed a very cooperative attitude.

The interview was conducted in the village hall amid a large and inquisitive audience who from time to time spoke over the subject's shoulder to make up for his dullness. The interviewer, many times, had to request those people to leave him and the interviewer alone. When one group left another one took no time to fill the place. The subject, although being a very poor peasant, seemed to show no regrets for having left the Front area. He and other refugees showed a genuine gaiety in seeing the American with the interviewer. After the interview was finished, the interviewer told a group of refugees who encircled him "What do you think about the Americans staying here for ever". One of them said loudly, "We prefer the Americans to the Communists".

MASTER COPY

NO. AGR -63

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

1. Name of interviewer [redacted]

2. Name of subject [redacted]

3. Time and date of interview :

From 1:45 PM to 5:30 PM on August [redacted] 1966

From _____ to _____ on _____ 196___

From _____ to _____ on _____ 196___

Total time 3 hours 45'

Interview based on : tape ( ) hand written notes (X)

4. Place of interview :

[redacted] Village Refugee Camp

5. Sex of subject : Male (X) Female ( )

6. Age of subject : 45

7. Ethnic background : Vietnamese

8. Place of birth :

hamlet [redacted]

village [redacted]

district Phu Cat

province Binh Dinh

9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :

hamlet [redacted]

village [redacted]

district Phu Cat

province Binh Dinh

10. (a) Length of residence in last location : since childhood

(b) Who controlled the place of residence:

GVN ( ) VC (X) Contested ( )

(c) Since when controlled or contested ? February 1965

11. Number of brothers ( ) and sisters (X)

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : _____

13. Marital status : Married

14. Number of children : _____

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age : _____

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject( ) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject (X) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject(X) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion : Buddhist

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : Hired laborer on farm

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation Very poor
(b) Landowner ? _____ How much land _____

20. Education :
illiterate (X)
literate ( )
schooling completed : Nil

21. Any relatives in VC : No

22. Any relatives in GVN : N.

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) Killed by :
(a) French
(b) GVN
(c) VC

24. When became a refugee : August [redacted] 1966

25. Where took refuge first [redacted] Village

26. Present residence [redacted] Village

AGR

INTERVIEW

64

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

THE RAND CORPORATION

INTERVIEWS CONCERNING THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR-64
(NVA)

Date of Interview : August [redacted] 1966

Subject's Category : Refugee, July [redacted] 1966
Fisherman

Area of Residence : [redacted] Hamlet, [redacted] Village
Phu My District, Binh Dinh
Province

This interview is for the information of US and Vietnamese official agencies and personnel on a need-to-know basis. Permission to distribute or show this interview to non-official persons requires the prior approval of The RAND Corporation and the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs.

1. How long have you been in this city?

I came here one month ago.

2. How long had you and your family lived in your village before you became a refugee?

My family and I had lived in my village since my childhood.

3. How big was your village?

My village consisted of [redacted] hamlets. There were about [redacted] electors in all.

4. What was the total population?

I don't know exactly how many.

5. How did you earn your living there?

I earned my living by fishing. I had a small junk by means of which I went fishing along the seacoast bordering my village.

6. How did most of the villagers earn their living?

Only the people in my hamlet were fishermen. Those who lived in the four other hamlets were farmers.

7. Were most of them well-off or poor? Did they have enough to eat?

Before the Front came, about one fourth of the farmers were well-off while the rest often lacked food. With regard to the fishermen, one fifth were well-off while the other four fifths didn't have rice all year round. But under the Front control no one had enough to eat.

8. Did you own any land?

I owned no land but I had a one ton junk with which I did upon fishing with my brother and two children.

9. How many members are there in your family?

I have eleven children, three sons and eight daughters. My eldest son is 1J and was already able to help me in the fishing work. My eldest daughter is 27 and the next ones are 25, 23, 19 and below.

10. What is your religion?

I'm a Catholic.

11. What religion did the other villagers practice?

In my village two-thirds of the people were Catholics while one third were Buddhists.

12. Were there ever conflicts between members of different religions?

There were no conflicts between Catholics and Buddhists.

13. What education have you had?

I didn't go to school, so I am illiterate.

14. Who were your best friends in your hamlet?

My best friend in my hamlet was the village representative [redacted] who had left his post and also the village a few days before the front started controlling the area. His successor was also my friend in the village. That man has always been my village's representative with the GVN but his office has been placed at the district seat since the front controlled the village. To those people, I could talk freely about everything.

15. How about after the Front people came? Could you then talk more freely or less freely?

After the Front came, I was unable to talk freely to any one except the village church deacon.

16. Which one in your village were the most important?

The most important and also the most respected man in the village was the representative [redacted] because he was well-educated and had good connections with people in the district-town and the province center.

17. Who was the best informed about what was happening in the district, in Saigon and elsewhere?

He was the best informed man in the village.

18. How was life in your village before 1954?

Until 1952 the villagers easily earned their living. Then Viet Minh cadres conducted their activities in the open and forced the people to do much unpaid labor so that they failed to earn enough for their families. After the Geneva Agreement in July 1954, the population was free to do their own business and gradually improved their living conditions.

19. Did any people in your village fight against the French?

[redacted], one of my neighbors, was active in the Viet Minh ranks for two years prior to the Geneva Agreement. After that date, he didn't regroup to North Vietnam and lived quietly in my hamlet. Nevertheless, his son disappeared from the hamlet to join the Front two months before it started controlling the village.

20. Did life in your village improve after 1954?

After 1954, the fishermen were free to go to sea, and the farmers were also free to devote themselves to agricultural production. The fishermen were able to catch more fish and to buy rice at a relatively low price. So many were able to save money.

21. How did the local officials behave?

The local officials behaved properly. They didn't take bribes from the villagers and didn't oppress them.

22. Were they local people or strangers? Were they elected or appointed?

All them were local people and elected by the villagers.

23. How were the elections conducted in your village?

After 1954 there were three elections for the village representative and all the electors performed their duty.

24. How many candidates were there?

There were six or seven candidates each time.

25. Were the elections honest? Explain.

I don't know whether the elections were honest or not.

26. Did those officials devote themselves to their tasks?

All those officials were dedicated. As the majority of people in my village were very poor, the officials always strived to get from the Government some material aid in [illegible] clothes to make up for their poor income. The last village representative was generous. Sometimes he gave the poor villagers aid from his own pocket.

27. What do you know about the Diem Government?

I know nothing about the Diem Government.

28. What did you and the other villagers think about the fall of that Government?

I only know that many villagers cried when they got news of the Diem Government's fall.

29. Were there any GVN military forces near your hamlet?

Before the VC came, there were about fifty Civil Guards in my village. They used to arrest members of families suspected of sympathizing with the VC and beat them up. In my hamlet alone, fifteen families were suspected and were often given trouble. Those people had no freedom of movement, and each time they wanted to leave the village, they had to get permission from the family group leader. The civil guards seemed to be unfair toward those families.

30. How did the villagers feel about them?

Only those who had connections with the VC disliked them.

31. Did GVN soldiers ever pass through your village?

The GVN regular forces passed through my village every fifteen days.

32. How did they behave?

The GVN regular forces always showed good behavior toward the villagers.

33. Did you ever live in a Strategic Hamlet?

I did.

34. When was it built?

At the end of 1962.

35. How much labor and money did you have to contribute to it?

I had to contribute 1,000 piasters to the Strategic Hamlet. Despite the fact that I had to borrow part of this sum, I felt satisfied because I thought the Strategic Hamlet would bring security to the villagers.

36. What did you dislike about it?

What I disliked about the Strategic Hamlet was that the hamlet leader embezzled part of the sum entrusted to him by the villagers for the supply of wood necessary to build the fence.

37. What happened to it?

At the end of 1964, the VC proceeded to demolish the Strategic Hamlet. The first night fifty of them came to the village and pulled down the wood fence and cut to pieces the barbed wire. The population, especially the old people, objected to this. As a result, the VC took away three of them for detention. They also said those people would be killed on the spot if they were younger. During that night, they sent their men around the Strategic Hamlet in search for GVN officials. [redacted] the deputy hamlet leader was assassinated and the police chief succeeded in narrowly escaping by hiding in my own house.

38. In those days, before the Front came, how did you feel about your life and future?

In those days, I felt satisfied about my life and also my future because I earned enough for my family's living.

39. What things dissatisfied you most?

Nothing.

40. What did you think about your opportunities to improve your life?

I was thinking of motorizing my junk in order that I might go further so as to catch more fish each time. I was able to spare 30,000 piasters I had entrusted to the parochial priest for the purchase of a small hydrodynamic engine. Suddenly the VC came to control my village and deprived me of an opportunity to improve my life.

41. What did you think about the chances of your children having a better life?

I was thinking of making him join the ARVN when he was 18 years old. Right now my 15 year old son is asking me to let him join the army, but I think he is still too young to be accepted as a soldier.

42. When did you first hear of the Front? How did you hear about it? What did you hear?

About December 64, I was told by the deacon that the Liberation Front might come to the village within a short time and give us trouble. He advised me to move to the South to earn my living. I didn't believe him, thinking that the GVN was strong enough to oppose any Front move. I kept going on with my occupation as usual, but contrary to my expectation, the Front took control of the village with no difficulties. One evening just a few days prior to the Front take-over, while I was having a talk with the deacon in the village chapel about how to get money to have more furniture for the chapel, three VC suddenly appeared and said, "Why do you store hand grenades here? We have been hiding near your place and have been listening to your conversation. You talked of using hand grenades in catching fish and...We are Front people, kindly hand over to us the weapons in your possession". Thereupon the deacon said,"I have been talking only of my intention to ask the village council to give me two hand grenades for that purpose, but this hasn't been done yet." The VC left us without saying any more, but since then I have had the impression that the Front would soon come.

43. What kinds of people belonged to the Front in those days?

Most of them came from families whose members had participated in the Resistance against the French?

44. What activities did they engage in? Did some first come secretly to your hamlet?

At the beginning, they only came at night and used to wear masks to avoid being indentified by the villagers. They conducted propaganda, insulted the GVN and praised the Front policy.

45. When the Front people first came to your hamlet, what did the GVN officials do?

When the Front first came to my hamlet, all the GVN officials were afraid of being killed by them and no one dared to stay home at night. Then one by one they took refuge in the district-town.

46. What propaganda did the Front make? By what means?

They had no electric loudspeaker and just spoke to the people through a paper horn. They urged the villagers to side with the Liberation Front in an endeavor to throw down the GVN. Once, during a meeting, an old man feigned to be drunk and said, "I think that the GVN has been doing everything in in its power to give food and clothes to the population. Why do you want a change? I already had an awful experience with the Viet Minh during the Resistance. In those days the people suffered the greatest hardships they had ever experienced." As a result the old man was taken away by the VC for a month.

47. When did your village first become controlled by the Front?

My village first became controlled by the Front in February 1965.

48. Were there battles in or near your village at that time between the Front and the ARVN?

About half a month before the Front effectively controlled the area, three VC sneaked into the hamlet and suddenly

fired with their rifles at the football grounds where most of the civil guards were playing soccer. The spectators fled in confusion but the GVN soldiers fortunately succeeded in reaching their arms which were kept in a corner of the grounds and fought back, killing all the VC. After that incident all GVN officials and soldiers were afraid of reprisals from the Front forces and one by one fled to the district seat, as they had been threatened by news about Front forces in sizable number being stationed in the hills surrounding the area. So the Front people were entirely free to take over the village without any opposition from the GVN forces.

49. Why couldn't the GVN forces control your village?

The GVN forces stationed in the village were quite insufficient to stop any surprise attack by Front forces from the surrounding hills.

50. What did the Front people do to the people's GVN identification cards?

The Front cadres collected all the villagers' GVN identification cards and kept them in a hiding place. I and a few other fishermen were able to keep our cards as we made the cadres believe that we had lost them in one of our frequent wrecks. The Front however found it advisable to collect all the women's cards so to prevent their husbands from fleeing.

51. How did the Front cadres, soldiers and guerrillas behave?

Outwardly the Front cadres seemed to be the most polite and obliging people, but in fact they weren't and the took people away for reeducation as soon as they made mistakes.

52. How did the villagers feel about them?

Except for the families who sympathized with the Front, most of the other villagers were dissatisfied but always feigned submission to avoid being suspected of collaborating with the GVN.

53. How did you feel about the guerrillas?

The guerrillas only carried out instructions from the cadre. We had nothing to complain about them except for a few who were too zealous.

54. What did you know about the aims of the Front?

The Front cadres said, "The Front takes control of the village in order to better the living conditions of the people."

55. Did you believe in their words?

The majority of the people in my hamlet didn't believe them.

56. What are the names of the leaders of the Front?

I don't know any names because I avoided attending Front meetings. As often as I got news of a meeting to be held, I stayed away to see.

57. When the Front first controlled your village, which of these words would you have used to describe the Front: peace-loving/dangerous? patriotic/treasonous? brave/cowardly? sympathetic/ruthless? well-disciplined/rigid?

In my opinion, the Front is always dangerous, treasonous, cowardly and ruthless. They like assassination, killing and war. They place the Party above the nation. They often indiscriminately kill women and children in their terrorist activities.

58. How often did the Front hold meetings in your hamlet?

The Front held meetings in my hamlet every five or six days, but only twenty percent of the villagers attended meetings and the audience consisted mostly of young people and children.

59. What did they say?

The cadres said, "If South Vietnam is placed under the communist regime, within a short time the people will have ploughing machines for farming and motorized boats for fishing." A villager said, "You always talk of all kinds of machines. Until now we haven't seen any but have been only having more and more taxes to pay. The GVN didn't do that." After the meeting that villager was taken away for reeducation. The cadre also said, "The Front helps the poor people while the GVN only pays attention to a minority of rich people."

60. What did they say about the Americans?

They said, "The American imperialists come here to exploit the people."

61. About North Vietnam?

They said, "In North Vietnam every one has enough food and clothes and they aren't exploited by foreigners."

62. About China? and Russia?

According to them, China and Russia were striving to give assistance to North Vietnam and the Liberation Front.

63. What did you think about what they said?

I didn't believe any of their words.

64. What did the other villagers say?

Very few people in my village believe them.

65. Did the Front ever take any villagers away for reeducation?

About nine or ten people from my village were taken away for reeducation. [redacted] a former family group leader, was detained for seven months. All the other family group leaders were also kept away for a period from three to five months. Upon their release, every one got a serious illness and had to stay home a long time recover.

66. Did the Front ever take you away for reeducation?

I was taken away for reeducation for 15 days.

67. Why and when were you taken away for reeducation?

When the Front first controlled the village, they asked me to show them the caches which had supposedly been built in the chapel precinct by the priest. As I was aware that there were no caches in the chapel, I got angry with the cadres and said "There are only cesspools here." These words cost me fifteen days detention.

68. How did the villagers feel about taking people away for reeducation?

The villagers regarded it as an imprisonment.

69. What did the cadres say?

The cadres said reeducation helps people get rid of their corrupt practices.

70. How many young men over 16 were in your hamlet?

I don't know.

71. How many joined the Front?

About ten joined the Front.

72. How many joined the ARVN?

Two.

73. What do you think made them choose one side rather than the other?

Most of the young men who joined the Front came from families whose members had been regroupees or who had close relations with the Front people. Those from other families, particularly the Catholic fishermen, did their best to avoid being drafted by the VC. They pretended they would be unable to adapt themselves to the life of a Front fighter who had to live in mountainous areas because from their childhood, they had been living only at the seaside and working in the open sea. A Catholic family in my hamlet had six sons, some of them were in the military age. The VC cadres obliged that family to send one of their sons to serve in the Front forces. The young man got seriously ill after only 15 days in a Front camp and had to return to the village. Unfortunately he was caught later by the GVN forces which conducted a sweep operation through the village. Now he is detained in Phu Ly District.

74. Did those who joined the Front always do so of their own free will?

I don't think so, because every one knew that a Front fighter's life was all the time in danger.

75. What recruiting propaganda did the Front use?

The VC used to tell the youths that their families would be cared for by the Front if they joined the Front forces.

76. Did the Front begin to draft people in your village?

They didn't.

77. How did the villagers feel about the young men joining the Front?

The villagers thought the young men who joined the Front would have no chance to survive.

78. How did they feel about young men joining the ARVN?

According to them, the young men who joined the ARVN would have a more secure life. They would be better paid and would be able to give more support to their families.

79. Were families with sons in the Front treated differently in your village? Explain.

The families with sons in the Front were well treated. At meetings each one had a chair to sit on. Occasionally, they were given medicines. They were exempt from standing guard and from carrying rice for the Front forces.

80. How about families with sons in the ARVN?

There were in my hamlet two families whose sons had joined the ARVN before the Front came. They were closely watched by the Front people.

81. What effects did the recruitment have on economic life in the village?

The recruitment had little effect on the economic life in the village.

82. How many Front guerrillas were in your village?

[illegible] about fifty for the whole village. In my hamlet I saw only five or six guerrillas about age 15 or 16.

83. What did they do?

They mounted guard, asked papers of passers-by, set booby-traps and sometimes sniped at GVN soldiers.

84. Did the Front take away land from any villagers and give it to others?

There was no land distribution in my hamlet, as we did no farming and earned our living exclusively by fishing.

85. What taxes did you have to pay the Front when it first controlled your hamlet?

In my village, the people started paying taxes to the Front only at the end of 1965. Nothing has been done yet this year. All the people in my hamlet paid taxes in money. The well-off families and those who had enough to eat paid amounts varying from 500 to 1000 piasters. The poor ones paid 200 or 300 piasters and the very poor 100 piasters. In hamlets where people lived by farming they had to pay up to fifty percent of their crop. I don't know exactly how the cadres determined the tax amount for those people.

86. What did the Front cadres say about the taxes?

While collecting taxes, the cadres said, "The Front needs the help of everyone in order to drive the Americans out of this country and will compensate them with ploughing machines or hydynamic engines when the revolution is achieved."

87. What did the villagers say?

Many villagers protested against the tax collectors. Some said, "I owe you nothing, why do keep nagging me?" Most of the people whose houses were burnt down by the GVN sweep operations asked to postpone their payments to the following year.

88. How much tax did you pay in 1965?

I was requested to pay 400 piasters, but I was unable to make any payment because at that time my house was burnt down and most of my family were victims of a plague epidemic. I was authorized to defer my tax payment and until now nothing has been paid.

89. Didn't the Front take you away for reeducation for refusing to pay taxes?

I didn't refuse to pay taxes. I only was unable to do it because of circumstances.

90. Were you allowed to sell your catch at GVN markets?

We used to sell our catch to a few middle-men who seemed to be allowed to carry fish to GVN markets. Those people had to pay a tax at the rate of 80 piasters a pole load. (Interviewer's note: contents of two baskets usually carried on a pole across the shoulder.)

91. Did you have enough rice to eat?

All year round, we had to mix 40 percent rice with 60% substitutes such as manioc, potatoes or maize.

92. Did the Front set up any organizations in your hamlet?

I know nothing about Front organizations in my hamlet.

93. Tell me about the Front cadres in your village?

All the Front cadres in my village came from families who had actively participated in the Resistance against the French under the Viet Minh direction.

94. What was the most important cadre position in your village?

That was the chairman of the village committee. His name is [redacted]. He had been conducting underground activities for the Front before they controlled the village.

95. What did you think of him?

I didn't like him because he was ruthless and suspicious with the Catholic people.

96. What did the other villagers say?

I don't know about people living in other hamlets, but most of those in my hamlet disliked the VC cadres and wished that the area would return to the GVN administration.

97. Did the Front ever arrest, punish or kill any villagers?

In April 1965, the Front arrested and killed two young people they suspected of giving information to the GVN forces. Then they buried alive in a sand-hill a former youth leader and two former hamlet chiefs with the GVN.

98. Why did the Front do it?

They accused those people of being spies for the GVN.

99. What did you think about it?

I felt indignant but I had to keep quiet.

100. What did the other villagers say about it?

I guessed that most of the people in my hamlet were angry. In my opinion the VC cadres created enemies among them.

101. Were you or other villagers ever made to perform work without pay?

Every villager 18 to 45 years old was requested to do corvee-labor.

102. What did you do?

I had to carry rice uphill for three days. After doing my job, I got ill with malaria for three months. Being a fisherman living most of the time on the sea, I wasn't accustomed to work as laborer in mountainous areas. That is why I became ill so easily. Most of the fishermen who had some money hired other people to perform hard labor for them.

103. What did you think about it?

Only a few days of corvee-labor brought me a lot of misery. Every night I prayed to God.

104. What did the other villagers say about it?

Every one complained about it.

105. Was your hamlet a "Combat Hamlet?"

The Front built no "Combat Hamlet" in my village.

106. In your hamlet what had you heard about conditions of life in the Front forces?

While in my hamlet, I knew nothing about conditions of life in the Front forces, as I never got in contact with any Front soldiers. As we formed a group of Catholic fishermen, we lived almost apart from the Front people.

107. Did you think a soldier's chance of surviving was better in the Front or the GVN forces?

I thought a Front fighter had little chance to survive.

108. Which did you think suffered more casualties -- the GVN or the Front?

The Front should have suffered more casualties.

109. Which side did you think was better armed and stronger?

The GVN was better armed and stronger.

110. Had you ever met any soldiers or cadres working with the Front who weren't Southerners?

No.

111. Have you heard about defeats suffered by Front units?

I haven't heard about it.

112. While in your village, what had you heard about the present Saigon Government?

Nothing.

113. Do you know the names of any of its leaders?

No.

114. What do you know about the more recent behavior of local, district, and provincial GVN officials?

Since I came here, I have had no contact with the local officials. I have seen the Catholic priest in charge of Qui Nhon diocese who helped me find a place on the beach where I could set up a small shelter for my family.

115. How did you get information in your village on what was happening in Saigon?

In my village, I didn't get any information on what was happening in Saigon.

116. Did you ever hear about the Chieu Hoi program?

I have seen leaflets floating on the sea. One day I picked up a sheet and asked my son to read it aloud for me. Then I tore it up, as I dared not bring it to the village for fear of getting in trouble by the VC.

117. Why did the GVN drop leaflets on the sea?

I think the GVN aircraft drop leaflets on mountainous areas for the Front fighters but the wind drove them to the sea.

118. What did the leaflets say?

The leaflets urged the Front people to rally to the GVN, as they would be welcomed and well-treated.

119. What did you think of the program?

I didn't pay much attention to the Chieu Hoi program because no member of my family had joined the Front forces or become active in the Front.

120. Was your village ever attacked by the ARVN or by its allies?

The ARVN had been carrying out many sweep operations in my village but it never stayed there for a long time. The first big attack was made one month ago by the GVN para-troops supported by fire from tanks and armored cars, artillery shellings from warships and aircraft bombings.

121. Why did you think your village was attacked?

My village had been seized by the Front from the GVN. I thought it was normal that the GVN troops came to recover it and weed out the Front people from the population.

122. What did the other villagers say?

I know that most of the people in my hamlet didn't complain about the attack in spite of the damage they suffered. I think the families who had close connections with the Front should have been angry.

123. What did the Front say?

The Front cadres were afraid that the villagers would take this opportunity to leave the village. So they said, "The front is making preparations to capture Phu My District-Town during the rainy season and Qui Nhon City after Tet. For sure those who take refuge there will be arrested and killed by the Front." The villagers didn't believe their words and talked among themselves: "The Front has been unable to control Binh Duong, a GVN market place close to Phu My District-Town. How do they expect to seize Qui Nhon City?"

124. Were Front soldiers in or near your village when it was attacked?

The Front soldiers used to camp on hills surrounding the village. When the village was attacked, they fled away and seemed to have taken refuge in Nui Lon (Great Mountain) near My Thang village. I was told by some other refugees that the Front troops were in a sizable number there, and I wished that the GVN aircraft would come to annihilate them all with bombings.

125. Were any Front people killed?

Just a few guerrillas were killed.

126. Were any of the villagers killed or hurt? Were any properties destroyed?

Many villagers were killed by the attacks and most of the houses were burnt or knocked down.

127. Before the attacks, was your village given any warnings?

No.

128. Would such a warning have been useful to the villagers?

Such a warning would have been useful to the VC only, as they would have been able to herd all the village population to the mountains. No one would have been able to flee to GVN areas.

129. How did these attacks make you feel about the GVN and its allies?

I felt thankful to the GVN and its allies for giving many villagers an opportunity to escape from the Front area.

130. What did other villagers say?

Most of the villagers shared my feelings, as they had been expecting to be released from the Front's grip.

131. How did these attacks make you feel about the Front?

I had more hatred for the Front.

132. What did the other villagers say?

In my hamlet most of the people started insulting the VC.

133. Whom do you blame for the attacks? Explain.

Naturally, I blame the Front for the attacks because it was they who first instigated troubles.

134. Did the attacks make anyone join the front?

I think no one joined the Front because of the attacks. I was aware that the VC had taken off paddles from most of the fishing boats. That is why many fishermen couldn't escape from the area. A flight by road is more difficult because the VC are still mounting guard on many sections of the route to Nha My District-Town.

135. Have you seen or heard about the use of chemicals to destroy vegetation or crops?

I have never seen or heard about the use of chemicals to destroy vegetation or crops.

136. Before you came here, had you seen any Americans in Vietnam?

Before I came here, I hadn't seen any Americans.

137. What did the Front say about the Americans?

The Front said that the Americans were ruthless and arrogant and that they despised the Vietnamese.

138. Was the Front correct in what they said?

I found what the Front said about the Americans wasn't correct. During my flight to the South my junk and five other ones were about to sink because of heavy seas. Fortunately an American ship came to the rescue and towed all six junks to Qui Nhon. The Americans in the ship were so kind. They gave us butter, milk and also rice. If they didn't help us, we all would have died in the deep sea.

139. What do you now think the Americans really want in Vietnam?

I think the Americans really want to help the GVN fight communism.

140. What makes you think so?

I know that the Americans supported the GVN forces in their attack against my village with a view to releasing the population from the Front.

141. What is the relationship between the GVN and the Americans?

The GVN and the Americans are friends.

142. Do you think the Americans are like the French or are they different? Explain.

The Americans behave towards the Vietnamese like friends. I think Vietnamese and Americans can live side by side.

143. Have you seen or heard about Americans gifts to villagers?

My family received some food from the American ship that towed my junk to Qui Nhon. That is all we have received.

144. Have you seen or heard about foreign countries assisting the GVN and sending troops to South Viet Nam?

While in Qui Nhon City, other refugees told me that Korean troops also came here.

145. What did you think about their being in your country?

I think they were sent here with the same purpose as the Americans.

146. What were the reasons that made you leave your village?

I am Catholic so I felt very unhappy at being unable to practice my religion while I was living with the Front in my hamlet. I wasn't authorized even to say my prayers. My family suffered the greatest hardships during that time.

147. Which do you think was the most important reason?

I think the most important reason for my leaving the village was my concern about my religion.

148. What reasons made you not want to leave your village?

I was unable to leave earlier because I had been closely watched by the Front people. If I had no family, I would have left at the time when the Front started controlling the area. The ARVN attack offered me the only opportunity to flee along with my great family.

149. Before you left your hamlet, what had you heard about present conditions in GVN areas?

Before I left my hamlet, I had never heard about present conditions in GVN areas. I did it on my own as I never thought of any assistance from anyone.

150. Did anyone in your village try to stop you from leaving?

No one stopped me from leaving. The Front people in charge of watching us were busy seeking safety in flight to the mountainous areas.

151. What preparations for leaving did you and your family make?

We made no preparations at all.

152. What property did you bring? What did you leave behind?

My house had been entirely burnt down, and each one left the hamlet with just a suit on him. All the other property consisted of the junk that carried us to Qui Nhon.

153. Who came with you?

All the members of my family and that of my brother, consisting of twenty-four people in all.

154. Describe your trip here.

The ARVN started attacking my village on July [redacted] at 1:00 PM. The artillery shellings and aircraft bombings lasted about three hours and knocked down or set fire to most of the houses. My house was demolished but my junk fortunately was saved. At dusk we left our shelters, had dinner, and then at 8:00 PM we got into the junk and set sail at 10:00 PM. The voyage was quite normal until 2:00 PM the following day when the sea became rough. My junk would be wrecked if an American ship hadn't come to tow it here as well as the five other junks that accompanied us in the flight. We reached Qui Nhon at 8:00 PM.

155. Why did you choose this place to come?

I thought Qui Nhon city would be the most secure place to come.

156. Did you expect to leave your hamlet for a long or a short time?

I expected to leave my hamlet for as long as the GVN would take to annihilate the Front. I would stay here forever if the war can't be ended.

157. How many families have left your hamlet?

About one hundred families out of five hundred have left my hamlet. In my opinion, except for fifteen families who were active with the Front, all the rest were eager to leave.

158. What have the GVN authorities here done for you?

The GVN authorities have done nothing for me yet. I think they may not know that we are here. When we came here, we just saw the Qui Nhon diocese Catholic priest who helped us in moving shelter at the beach. We are now living on our own.

159. Have you been given identification cards?

I still have my old identification card. As for the people who lost their cards, they are requesting the Catholic priest to do that is neccessary for them with the local authorities.

160. Do you feel safe here from military attacks?

I feel quite safe here because I live now in the center of the town. My family and I have just escaped from hell. Now we enjoy living here, despite the fact that it is difficult to fish in Qui Nhon waters.

161. Here is a picture of a ladder. The bottom rung is numbered ten, and the top rung is numbered one. Now, let's say that the top rung is numbered one. Now, let's say that the top rung represents the best life you can imagine, and the bottom rung represents the worst life you can imagine. Where on this ladder would you say that your life was before the Front came to your village? After it came to your village? At the time you left your village? How about now -- Where on the ladder would you put your life now?

On this ladder I would say that my life before the Front came was at the rung numbered 9. After it came to my village it was at number 7. At the time I left the village it was at number 9. Right now it is at number 7.

162. Where do you think your life will be five years from now?

I think five years from now I will be able to motorize my fishing junk. So I would say that my life at that time will be at rung No 3.

163. How would you describe the worst life you can imagine yourself living back in your village?

If I stayed back in my village, I think my family would die of hunger or illness.

164. Now try to describe the best life you can imagine for yourself. What would it be like?

I would like to have enough money to motorize my fishing boat. This would make my job less hard and more productive and would enable me to devote more time to religious activities.

165. What kind of life do you hope your son will have?

My oldest boy is only 13 years old. He, however, has been thinking of joining the ARVN, which I think is now quite impossible. I am already old and only would like him to be able to replace me in order to support the family.

166. If you could ask three things of any Vietnamese Government, what would they be?

I would ask the following things:

a) I would be given a good motorized junk capable of going far away from the shore.

b) A new chapel would be rebuilt in my village at the place of the one now demolished by the bombing.

c) My young children would be able to receive a good education.

167. What kind of Government do you think would be most likely to give you those three things?

I think any non-Communist government would be able to give me those three things.

168. How long do you think the war will last?

I have no idea about the length of the war.

169. Which side do you think is winning now?

I think the GVN is winning and will win a complete victory.

170. Why do you think this?

I rely on the Americans, as I have seen here huge stocks of their war material.

171. Is either side now winning the support of the people away from the other side?

The GVN is now winning the support of the people away from the Front. I am sure that in my village most of the fishermen are eager to leave the area and it is highly likely that many farmers also wish for an opportunity to change their living conditions which should be now unbearable.

172. How do you think the GVN could gain more support of the people like yourself and others you know?

The GVN just has to conduct more frequent and stronger operations on Front areas in order to kill all the VC.

173. If the Front wins the war, what do you think life in Vietnam will be like? Explain.

If the Front wins the war, I think life in Vietnam would be like hell, as people wouldn't be free to believe.

174. If the GVN wins the war, what do you think life in Vietnam will be like.

If the GVN wins the war, I think that with the American help every Vietnamese living in the South would have plenty of food and clothes.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

The subject, although 57 years old, looked very healthy. He was quite eager to cooperate but due to his illiteracy and poor intelligence it took him a long time to understand a question and to answer it properly. The interview was conducted in privacy in the interviewer's hotel room, and it is regrettable that the subject was unable to give any information other than that concerning his own community. Being a fervent Catholic he is naturally anti-communist and his answers showed a complete lack of objectiveness.

No. AGR 64

QUESTIONNAIRE II
For Refugees

1. Name of interviewer [redacted]
2. Name of subject [redacted]
3. Time and date of interview :
   From 3:00 PM to 6:00 PM on August, [redacted], 1966
   From 9:30 AM to 12:30 PM on August, [redacted] 1966
   From _____ to _____ on _____ 196___
   Total time 6 hours
   Interview based on : tape ( ) hand written notes (X)
4. Place of interview :
   QUI NHON City (Hotel Room)
5. Sex of subject : Male (X) Female ( )
6. Age of subject 57
7. Ethnic background : Vietnamese
8. Place of birth :
   hamlet [redacted]
   village [redacted]
   district Phu My
   province Binh Dinh
9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :
   hamlet [redacted]
   village [redacted]
   district Phu My
   province Binh Dinh
10. (a) Length of residence in last location : Since childhood
    (b) Who controlled the place of residence:
    GVN ( ) VC (X) Contested ( )
    (c) Since when controlled or contested ? February 1965

11. Number of brothers (2) and sisters (1)

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : _____

13. Marital status : Married

14. Number of children : 11

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age : _____

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject( ) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject (X) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject(X) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion : Catholic

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : Fisherman

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation Middle
(b) Landowner ? _____ How much land No

20. Education :
illiterate (X)
literate ( )
schooling completed : _____

21. Any relatives in VC : No

22. Any relatives in GVN : No

23. Any relatives (how many? when?) killed by :
(a) French
(b) GVN
(c) VC

24. When became a refugee : July [redacted] 1966

25. Where took refuge first July [redacted] 1966

26. Present residence [redacted] City ([redacted] Hamlet)

AGR

INTERVIEW

65

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THE RAND CORPORATION

INTERVIEWS CONCERNING THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR-65

Date of Interview : September [redacted] 1965

Subject's Category : Refugee, January [redacted] 1965
Village Teacher

Area of Residence : [redacted] Hamlet
[redacted] Village
Hoai Nhon District
Binh Dinh Province

This interview is for the information of US and Vietnamese official agencies and personnel on a need-to-know basis. Permission to distribute or show this interview to non-official persons requires the prior approval of the RAND Corporation and the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs.

1. How long had you and your family lived in your village before you became a refugee?

My family and I had lived in my village since my childhood.

2. How big was your village?

My village was a pretty big one. It consisted of seven hamlets comprising about seventeen thousand people.

3. How did you earn your living there?

I taught children in my hamlet's school from 1955 to 1963, then I joined the village SDC of my own free will. I served until the time when the Front took over the village.

4. How did most of the villagers earn their living?

Most of the villagers earned their living by farming.

5. Were most of them well-off or poor? Did they have enough to eat?

During the nationalist regime, most of the villagers were well-off or had enough to eat. Only a few of them lacked food.

6. Did you own any land?

My parents had some land but I have received nothing from them yet. When I grew up I became a school teacher, so I have never farmed since.

7. How many of the other villagers owned land?

I only know that a lot of villagers own land but I don't know how many.

8. How many members are there in your family?

I lived apart from my parents with my wife, my two children and a young brother.

9. What is your religion?

I practice ancestor worship.

10. What religions did the other villagers practice?

The majority of the villagers were Buddhists or practiced ancestor worship and about twenty per cent were either Catholics or Caodaists.

11. Were there ever conflicts between members of different religions?

Members of different religions were living in peace side by side in my village.

12. What education have you had?

I had six years of school.

13. What education did the other villagers have?

Most of them just knew how to write and read Vietnamese.

14. Were there schools in your village?

There were in my village a school where children could have a complete primary education and three other schools teaching up to the third form only.

15. Did all the children go to school?

Before the Front came, all the children went to school.

16. Who were your best friends in your hamlet?

My best friend was [redacted] who had been a village council member before he became a member of the Chieu Hoi center in Hoai Nhon District-town. He was the man to whom I used to tell all my secrets.

17. How about after the Front came?

What man left the village at the time when the Front came. I had no more friends to whom I could talk freely, except one of my relatives who like thought of fleeing the Front area every instant.

18. Which people in your village were the most important?

The most important man in my village was a former village representative called [redacted]. He resigned from his function long before the Front came because of illness. Due to his having good connections with local authorities, he was the best informed about what was happening in the district, in the province and also in Saigon.

19. How was life in your village before 1954 (before and during the Resistance)

I only remember that life in the village prior to the Geneva Agreement was the most miserable. All people lacked food and clothes.

20. Did any people in your village fight against the French?

Two members of the village committee now, [redacted] and [redacted] were members of the Resistance against the French under the "Lien Viet Association" before they regrouped to the North. Those VC were highly indoctrinated people who devoted themselves to the communist cause. [redacted] also were members of the Resistance but they stayed inactive in the village during the Diem regime. Nevertheless they were arrested and released by the local authorities many times.

21. Did life in your village improve after 1954?

Life in my village improved visibly each year after 1954 and many villagers succeeded in building brick houses during that period.

22. How did the local officials behave?

When the GVN began taking over the village from the Resistance, the local officials made a mistake in arresting and beating up all the Resistance members. That is why a lot them joined the maquis and now returned to the village to lend a hand to the Front. Apart from this, the village officials behaved properly and made some effort to protect the peasants' interests.

23. Were the local officials local people or strangers? Were they elected or appointed?

All of them were local people but appointed by high authorities. Never has an election for the village representatives been held in my village.

24. Have you ever had any other elections in your village?

The villagers have participated in two referenda for the President of the Republic and two elections for representatives in the National Assembly.

25. Did every one vote?

Every one voted.

26. Were there many candidates in the National Assembly election?

Each time there were two or three candidates for a seat in the National Assembly.

27. Were the elections honest? Explain.

The elections weren't honest at all. The same man, [redacted] was elected twice. Under pressure from high authorities the local officials went around the village and openly urged the people to vote for [redacted]. He was the only man who was given all facilities to talk to the villagers or to see them personally. The other candidates were unable even to address the villagers at meetings. What was ridiculous is that the villages competed with each other in getting the highest vote percentage for the man designated by the Government. So in many villagers the local officials felt it wise to change the poll by substituting a new ballot-box.

28. Did these officials promise any social improvements?

Their position depended entirely upon higher authorities who appointed them. So they always avoided promising any social improvements, as they were afraid that this might annoy their superiors.

29. Did you trust them?

I didn't trust them entirely.

30. What did you know about the Diem Government?

The Diem Government at first did an excellent job in consolidating the central authority in eliminating the Binh Xuyen and various dissident religious sects which divided the country. It also helped improve living conditions in cities as well as in rural areas. But the nepotism that prevailed in that Government made it gradually unpopular.

31. What did you and the other villagers think about the fall of that Government?

Most of the villagers who weren't Catholics first rejoiced at the news of the fall of the Diem Government, as they had been angry about the Catholic people seizing most of the power. But not long after the first reaction those people felt regretful about the fall of that government because they found out that they were losing security and that their financial situation was getting worse.

32. Were there any GVN military forces near your hamlet?

In the village there was permanently a platoon of SDC equipped with automatic rifles and sub-machine-guns. In each hamlet about a squad of combat youths operated with hand grenades only.

33. How did they behave during the Diem Government and after?

All the SDC were local people so they behaved correctly toward the villagers during the Diem Government as well as after it.

34. How did the villagers feel about them?

The villagers had nothing to complain about them.

35. Did other GVN soldiers ever pass through your village?

The GVN regular forces only passed through my village from time to time but never stayed there.

36. Did you ever live in a Strategic Hamlet? If so? When was it built?

I lived in a Strategic Hamlet which was built in my village in 1963.

37. How much labor and money did you have to contribute to it?

Being a SDC, I was exempt from corvee-labor in the construction of the Strategic Hamlet. But my wife had to make contributions in money amounting to 1,000 piasters or so.

38. What did you and others like about it?

I and most of the other villagers first felt satisfied about it, but due to the small number of civil guards--just a platoon for seven Strategic Hamlets--the VC had no difficulty in demolishing them one by one. The population got tired of having to make frequent repairs to those hamlets and finally left them at the mercy of the VC sabotage.

39. What happened to it?

At the end of 1964 the Strategic Hamlets were entirely demolished.

40. How do you feel about it now?

I think the building of Strategic Hamlets with a view to weeding out all the communist elements from the population is an excellent idea. But I also think the Government didn't give the people an adequate education with regard to their own responsibilities in the protection of the Strategic Hamlet. So the people did nothing but rely on a few civil guards, who themselves had an inferiority complex in the face of the VC.

41. In those days before the Front came, how did you feel about your life and future?

In those days the villagers enjoyed relatively good living conditions. Most families had bicycles and lived in comfortable houses. The village representative, Phan Mau, was dedicated to the villagers' interests and was respected by everyone. Suddenly the National Revolutionary Movement intervened with the district authorities to remove him from the post he had been holding for a long time and put one of its men in that function. The latter then contrived to replace most of the council members by men of his clique who only thought of serving the National Revolutionary Movement at the expense of the people. I was a victim of the circumstances.

42. What things dissatisfied you most?

Before the change happened in the village council I had been leading a normal life in the village, despite the fact that I had a brother who regrouped to North Vietnam. Some members of the new village council didn't like me and frequently tried to give me trouble, even about my job. My brother went to the North when I was still very young. It wasn't a mistake of mine. Why did those people keep on discriminating against me? Then in order to prove my loyalty to the GVN I joined the SDC of my own free will, thinking I could use my ability to serve my country that way. But I again had no success in my new job although I was better educated than most of my superiors; many a time I got so angry that I wanted to bring to light my case with higher authorities. One of the village representatives was so corrupt that he could only stay in office for three months. That man is now a secret agent for the security service in Qui Nhon. At the present time he has an eye on me and is trying to harm me. I don't know why the Government continues to keep those people in service.

43. What did you think about your opportunity to improve your life?

I am relatively better educated than most of my fellow-villagers. I thought I would become a influential member of the village council and this would help improve my life.

44. What did you think about the chances of your children having a better life?

I thought of giving my children at least a secondary school education. This would help them have more chance to have a better life than mine.

45. When did you first hear of the Front?

The Front started their activities in the village in July 1964.

46. What kinds of people belonged to the Front in those days?

Most of them were people who had been active in the Resistance or were members of their families who, due to the ill-treatment of the GVN officials, had joined the maquis.

47. What activities did they engage in?

They first came to remote places to conduct propaganda and then proselyted the dissatisfied people into becoming their agents in hamlets.

48. How many of the villagers knew who the Front people were?

I knew some people who were natives of my hamlet, but I first didn't believe that the Front would be able to control the area.

49. When the Front people first came to your hamlet, what did the GVN officials do?

All of them remained cloistered in the village hall. During the day the SDC were sent to various hamlets to get information about the Front's activities, but from dusk to dawn they did nothing except hide from the VC who were free to do anything they liked to.

50. What propaganda did the Front make? By what means?

They secretly saw families separately and told them that the Front was preparing to fight against the Americans who were invading the country and taking hold of it.

51. When did your village first become controlled by the Front?

My village first became controlled by the Front in December 1964, but being a village SDC before the Front came, I was afraid of their reprisals, so I fled to the district-town alone, leaving my wife and children in the hamlet. I succeeded in going later to Nha Trang to earn my living, but I was anxious for my family, and in April 1965 I returned to my district-town to wait for an opportunity to go back to my hamlet with a view to taking away my family. A sweep-operation was conducted by the ARVN through my village in that month. I followed them there but when I came close to my hamlet I was arrested by the VC who took me right away for reeducation. After my release they kept me in the hamlet under strict surveillance.

52. Were there battles in or near your village at that time between the Front and the ARVN?

There were no battles at all. The GVN civil guards and officials just faded away, leaving the Front people free to take over the village.

53. Why couldn't the GVN forces control your village?

The permanent GVN forces were quite insufficient for the village's protection. They were there just as a matter of form.

54. What did the Front people do to the people's GVN identification cards?

The Front cadres only collected cards from people who had been arrested and detained by them. The others were allowed to keep their cards.

55. How did the Front cadres, soldiers and guerrillas behave?

The Front cadres outwardly appeared to be kind and polite, but they were ruthless toward those who didn't obey their orders. The Front soldiers used to behave properly. The guerrillas also showed a correct attitude, but the villagers didn't like them because they kept tight control over all the people's activities.

56. What did you know about the aims of the Front?

I knew that the Front was aiming to control South Vietnam so as to enable the Communist Party to take over all the country. They made propaganda about a crusade against the Americans in order to conceal their true ambitions from the people and to pull the people to their side.

57. What did you think of these aims?

I didn't agree with the Front because I was aware that a man living under the communist regime would never be able to emerge from a poor condition and that the Front used honeyed words to keep the people in perpetual slavery.

58. What are the names of the leaders of the Front?

I have been told that the Front Chairman is the lawyer Nguyen Huu Tho.

59. Which of these words would you have used to describe the Front: peace-loving/dangerous? patriotic/treasonous? brave/cowardly? sympathetic/ruthless? well-disciplined/rigid?

In my opinion, the Front is always dangerous, treasonous, cowardly, ruthless and rigid. The Front used war to impoverish the people. They can sacrifice the nation's interests to those of the Party. They aren't afraid of killing children and women in their sabotages and they assassinate all the people who don't obey them. They all the time take cover in a safe place and urge the peasants to stage protest demonstrations against the GVN at their own risk.

60. Did the Front hold meetings in your hamlet? How often?

They often held meetings in my hamlet, at least one a week.

61. What did they say about your village?

They talked only about of sabotage, road demolition, and all kinds of earth work.

62. About the GVN?

They said: "The national leaders dispute over power among themselves and so their governments fall. The GVN cadres are corrupt to the backbone and have the habit of beating up the people to exact money from them. The GVN troops are undisciplined and various arms fought with one another for girls and amusements".

63. About the Americans?

"The Americans are ruthless and find pleasure in killing rural people. They come to take hold of this country for colonization".

64. About North Vietnam?

"The Party becomes more and more powerful. All the state-enterprises doubled their work for more production necessary for the war in South Vietnam. All the people in North Vietnam live in happiness, as there are no accumulated riches nor wants. One can see there only schools and no jails".

65. About China?

"China is ready to give North Vietnam any assistance it needs".

66. About Russia?

They didn't talk about Russia.

67. What did they say about the future of the war?

They said, "The Front will win because they have been winning the people's hearts".

68. What did you think about what they said? What did the other villagers say?

In my opinion, they were boasting about themselves in order to lure people to their side and to make people die for them. All my colleagues, I say the village teachers, were fed up with their nonsense and have fled the area.

69. Were there any villagers who believed in their words?

About one third of the families in the village had connections with the Front people. So I think the people who believed them couldn't exceed one third of the population and that figure would have decreased since.

70. Did the Front ever take any villagers away for reeducation?

When the Front got news of any move from the GVN troops, they promptly took away all the suspected people to the mountains for reeducation for five to ten days. All the well-to-do villagers who showed some reactionary attitude and the people who had been active with the GVN were sent away for reeducation for a period lasting from one to three months.

71. How did the villagers feel about it?

The villagers felt most miserable because those measures usually prevented them from earning daily food for their families.

72. How many young men in your village joined the Front?

I don't know how many served in the Front main forces but I know that all the remaining people were village guerrillas.

73. How many joined the ARVN?

About seven or eight young men joined the ARVN before the Front came. I think more would have joined the ARVN if they weren't afraid of VC reprisals against their families.

74. Did the Front begin to draft people in your village?

Not yet.

75. How did the villagers feel about the young men joining the Front?

The villagers felt that the young men joining the Front forces had little chance to come back alive. It took the Front about a year to advise the families of their children's deaths.

76. How did they feel about young men joining the ARVN?

They were satisfied because their sons ran less risk of being killed. Moreover, they could receive financial support from them.

77. Were families with sons in the Front treated differently in your village?

They were well considered by the Front people. They were well seated at meetings, but as far as I know they have received nothing yet as financial aid from the Front.

78. How about families with sons in the ARVN?

Those families were often insulted by the VC people. They were called traitors receiving money from the American imperialists and were often compelled to move up to the district town to stage demonstrations against the GVN.

79. What happened to young men who tried to leave the Front forces?

They were arrested and taken away somewhere.

80. How many Front guerrillas were in your village?

Each hamlet had at least two squads.

81. What did they do?

They mounted guard and watched over the people.

82. Did the Front take away land from any villagers and give it to others?

At the beginning of 1965 the Front took land from the villagers who had left the area and from communal properties to give it to poor people.

83. How did the villagers feel about it?

Those who were active in the Front felt satisfied about it; most of the other people refused to take the land distributed to them. The latter were called cowards and were kept under strict surveillance.

84. How many people benefited from the land distribution?

In my hamlet about 20 people were given land. Each one received one or two "Cong" (one Cong = one-tenth of an hectare of land).

85. Was it done fairly?

I never paid attention to the distribution of land, so I didn't know whether it was done fairly or not.

86. Did you or your family receive or lose any land this way?

My family and I received nothing from the land distribution.

87. Were those who received land satisfied--better-off than before?

They weren't better-off than before because of high taxes.

88. What taxes did you (and others) have to pay the Front?

I lived with the Front only for eight months in 1965. I had to pay 1,000 piastres for the year. Each villager had to pay according his ability, and the payments, either in kind or in rice, varied from 100 to 10,000 piastres in value.

89. What did the Front cadres say about the taxes?

The Front cadres said we had to tighten our belts in order to feed the Front forces who were risking their lives in the front line fighting against the Americans and their valets.

90. What did the villagers say?

The villagers were dissatisfied because they couldn't enjoy the fruits of their labor.

91. What happened to a villager who refused to pay his taxes?

A villager who refused to pay his taxes was regarded as a reactionary and arrested on the spot.

92. Where did the villagers usually sell their produce?

The villagers weren't authorized to sell their produce outside the area, but a lot of people, mainly women, smuggled their produce to GVN areas in order to gain more money for the support of their families.

93. Did the Front set up any organizations in your hamlet?

I only know that there was a village administrative committee, but I don't know how it was organized, as I wasn't allowed to get out of my hamlet.

94. What did you think of the Front cadres in your village?

I disliked them because I knew they lived at the expense of the villagers. Of the land taken from those who had left the village, they appropriated the best share and gave the poor people only what they deemed unfruitful. Most of [illegible] lacked education, yet they despised the people better educated than they. When the GVN troops swept over the village, they completely disappeared and left the villagers in a fix.

95. What did the other villagers say?

Seventy percent of the villagers were angry with them but had to keep quiet.

96. Did you ever see or hear about any conflicts between the cadres?

I think there were no conflicts between them.

97. Has there been any change in the attitudes of the villagers towards the Front cadres?

Because of the increasing hardships they had to suffer, the villagers became more and more dissatisfied with the Front cadres, and their discontent increased with time.

98. Did the Front ever arrest, punish or kill any villagers?

When the Front first came, they summarily killed [redacted], a member of the National Revolutionary Movement; [redacted], a village youth; and [redacted], a member of the SDU. All those people were accused of having been spies for the GVN.

99. What did you think about it?

I thought the Front people were criminals in executing people that way.

100. What did the other villagers say about it?

Most of them shared my opinion but only talked about it among themselves.

101. Were you or other villagers ever made to perform work without pay?

All the farmers and village youths had to perform work without pay, and the work lasted at least ten days each time. The cadres said as a rule everyone had to complete three months of corvee labor a year.

102. What did you do as corvee labor?

At the time the VC cadres ordered me to do it, I asked to defer my duty to a further date, pretending that I was ill and that I wouldn't be able to carry rice. Fortunately during an allied sweep I succeeded in leaving the village with my family before the date set.

103. What did you think about it?

I was very afraid of that kind of work because since my childhood, I have never done hard labor. I also didn't like to toil for the VC.

104. What did the other villagers say about it?

The other villagers complained among themselves. They were afraid that their families would go hungry when they performed unpaid labor for the Front.

105. Was your hamlet a Combat Hamlet?

The VC made it a Combat Hamlet.

106. What did you like best about it?

I found the Combat Hamlet was unnecessary, because it couldn't protect the village from any military attacks.

107. How would you compare it to the GVN's Strategic Hamlets?

The Combat Hamlet wasn't as strong as the Strategic Hamlet, but the VC knew how to mobilize people for the protection of the defense works against sabotage.

108. In your village what had you heard about conditions of life in the Front forces?

Every one knew that conditions of life in the Front forces were unbearable.

109. Who told you about them?

The laborers coming from the front lines.

110. Had you spoken with any villagers who had returned from the Front forces?

I had no opportunity to speak with them.

111. Had any crippled Front soldiers returned home?

I haven't seen any of them.

112. Did you know how many villagers from your hamlet serving in the Front forces had been killed or wounded?

Two youths serving in the Front forces were killed in a clash with the ARVN in Phu Cu Village in April 1965.

113. Did you think a soldier's chances of surviving were better in the Front or the GVN forces?

I took it for sure that a young man serving in the Front forces had little chance of surviving the war.

114. Have you heard about defeats suffered by Front units?

Last year, after we heard about the death of two villagers who had served in the Front forces, there was rumor that the Front had suffered a serious defeat and many of their men had died in the Phu Cu battle. That is all I have heard about Front defeats.

115. What do you think about them?

I think the Front should have suffered many more defeats around the country.

116. What did the cadres say about Front victories?

They repeated again and again the names Ap Bac, An Khe, and Dong Xoai to remind the people about their victories over the GVN in those places.

117. Did the Front ever set up a school in your village?

The Front never set up a new school in my village. They maintained the schools that had been previously built by the GVN, but they lacked teachers.

118. Did you teach while in your village with the Front?

I had to do it to earn a living for my family.

119. How many children went to school?

In comparison with past years, the number of schoolboys decreased considerably.

120. Please explain why?

Less children went to school because they had to help their parents earn a living for the family. Besides, there were no professional teachers because most of them had left the village by the time the Front first came. I have to mention that the adults had no spare time to attend night courses as in past years.

121. While in your village, what had you heard about the present Saigon Government? Who told you?

While in my village I had some opportunity to listen secretly to Radio Saigon. The radio set belonged to one of my cousins. So I knew that the present Government was a military one and the leaders were General Nguyen van Thieu and General Nguyen Cao Ky.

122. Do you know what their aims are?

It is obvious that they are radically anti-communist and that they are aiming at uprooting all the communist forces from South Vietnam to make it a free country.

123. What do you know about the more recent behavior of local, district and provincial GVN officials?

I have not had much contact with the local officials because since I came to Qui Nhon, I have been living in a Catholic refugee camp under the control of a Catholic social welfare organization, despite the fact that I practice ancestor worship. But I still have the impression that the low ranking officials' behavior remains same as before, and I think if the Government succeeds in changing those people's minds a great majority of the rural people will tightly cooperate with the Government and the Communist people will have no place to live in South Vietnam.

124. Did you hear about the Chieu Hoi Program?

I heard about the Chieu Hoi Program long ago, that is during my first flight to GVN areas. In my opinion the Chieu Hoi Program was most useful in making people living in Front areas believe in the GVN's leniency. Without it no one would have moved to GVN areas because they have been so afraid of the GVN authorities.

125. Was your village ever attacked by the ARVN or by its allies?

My village was swept over by the ARVN many times, but the most important attack was the one conducted by GVN paratroops and elements of the American Airborne Division in January 1966.

126. Describe the attack.

There was no fighting in or near my hamlet. American aircraft came first to the area and bombed heavily the hamlets located close to the hills. During that time all the Front cadres and guerrillas fled to take refuge in mountainous areas, leaving the villagers alone. So when the GVN and American troops were lifted to the place, they had no difficulty landing near the village and then camping on the surrounding hills. From there they sent daily patrols throughout the area.

127. Why did you think your village was attacked?

I thought the allied troops attacked the village in order to extend their control over the country.

128. What did the other villagers say?

Most of the other villagers felt happy at being able to move to GVN areas.

129. What did the Front say?

The Front cadres said, "the allied forces won't be able to stay here long as the Front forces are able to drive them out of the area any time they like to".

130. Were any of the villagers killed or hurt? Was any property destroyed?

It seemed that the hamlets close to mountains suffered many casualties and material damage. My hamlet suffered only minor damage.

131. Before the attacks was your village given any warning?

No.

132. Would such a warning have been useful to the villagers?

Such a warning would be of no use to the villagers.

133. How did these attacks make you feel about the GVN and its allies?

These attacks showed the GVN's strength to the villagers and made them change their mind about the balance of force between the two sides.

134. What did the others villagers say?

Many of them were now convinced of the GVN's strength. So they started to dislike the Front guerrillas and weren't afraid of advising them to cease their activities for the Front.

135. Whom do you blame for the attacks?

I blame the VC for the attacks. It is they who started creating trouble for the people.

136. Did the attacks make anyone join the Front?

I don't know, but I think no one dared join the Front after having seen the force displayed by the allied troops.

137. Did you think there are better ways for the GVN to counter the Front?

I think that along with such operations the GVN should have sent teams to conduct propaganda deep in remote hamlets and help the villagers in their distress.

138. Have you seen Americans in your village?

Before I came here, I saw many of them in the village.

139. What were they doing?

They mounted guard in some places on main road crossing my village and made repairs to that road with their heavy machines.

140. What did you think about them?

Sincerely, I always have a good idea of them. They behaved properly toward the villagers. They liked kids and gave them a lot of things. I think they behaved better than our fellow countrymen.

141. What did the Front say about the Americans?

The Front depicted the Americans as bloody monsters who took pleasure in killing people.

142. Was the Front correct in what they said?

The Front were telling lies about the Americans. I have been discovering quite the contrary of what they said. The Americans respected human lives and took care of all wounded without any discrimination.

143. What do you think the Americans really want in Vietnam?

I think the Americans really want to help South Vietnam fight against the communists. I am fed up with the

Front people and their ideological indoctrination. In my opinion most of those who have experienced communism would welcome the Americans, who come here and root out the communist people, even at the risk of being subjected to a new domination. I myself would like better to be commanded by wise people than those ignorant ones.

144. What is the relationship between the GVN and the Americans?

It is like a man who helps his friend get out of a fix.

145. Have you seen or hear about other foreign countries assisting the GVN and sending troops to South Vietnam?

I have seen Korean troops in Qui Nhon city and I have read in newspapers about Australian troops fighting in the South.

146. What did you think about their being in your country?

I thought they came here with the same purpose as the Americans.

147. Which do you think is stronger--the GVN with its allies or the Front with its allies?

I think the GVN with its allies is stronger. The VC lack heavy weapons and aircraft, and furthermore they begin to be forsaken by the rural population who now realize that they have been deceived.

148. Have you heard about the air bombardment of North Vietnam?

I heard about the air bombardment of North Vietnam when I still was in the village by secretly listening to Radio Saigon. The VC cadres sometimes talked at meetings about it, but they always took care to mention the heavy losses in aircraft supposedly suffered by the Americans.

149. What a re the effects of the bombings of North Vietnam on the Front in SVN?

I have no idea about it because I had no contact with the Front people while in my village.

150. What did you and the other villagers think about the bombings?

I and many villagers thought that those bombings were the prelude to a future invasion of North Vietnam. And this would result in a collapse of the Liberation Front.

151. What were the reasons that made you leave your village and come here?

First, I was no longer able to stand the communist oppression. Second, my family suffered too many hardships.

152. Which do you think was the most important reason?

The most important reason was the continual oppression to which I was subjected.

153. Did you expect to leave your hamlet for a long or short time?

I expected to leave my hamlet until the time when the GVN would again recover its full control of the area.

154. What have the GVN authorities here done for you?

The GVN authorities here have done nothing for me. I was lucky enough to have moved to this well-organized camp where each refugee was given some means to earn his living. According to his ability each one worked for the organization and it provided him shelter and food.

155. What have you been doing in this camp?

I have been helping the camp leader in his office work and teaching young children.

156. Are you satisfied with your living conditions now?

I am quite satisfied.

157. Did the camp recieve any gifts from the Americans?

We received from time to time flour and rice given by the Americans.

158. How many refugees are in this camp?

More than two thousand people.

159. How many refugees have come here and how many have left since you have been here?

I don't know about that, but the number of refugees has been increasing. The Government has given this social welfare association a large waste area. The refugees have been clearing the land for small scale farming and making it a permanent residence.

160. Here is a picture of a ladder. The bottom rung is numbered ten, and the top rung is numbered one. Now let's say that the top rung represents the best life you can imagine. Where on this ladder would you say that your life was before the Front came to your village? After it came to your village? At the time you left your village? How about right now -- Where on the ladder would you put your life now?

I would say that my life before the Front came to my village was at the rung number 4, after it came at rung 6, at the time I left the village at the rung 8 and right now at the rung 4.

161. Where do you think your life will be five years from now?

If the communists are rooted out, I think my life five years from now will be a little above rung 4.

162. What kind of life do you hope your son will have?

I hope my sons will be able to receive a good education and I'll leave them to choose a profession responding to their natural endowments.

163. If you could ask three things of any Vietnamese Government, what would they be?

I would ask the following things.

1) The GVN will make every effort to speed up the pacification of my area so that my family may soon return to the village.

2) The GVN will give me a job suitable to my ability.

3) The GVN will help the villagers make repairs to the damage caused to houses in the village.

164. How do you think the GVN could gain more support from people like yourself and others you know?

I think it is now quite easy to gain more support from people like myself if the Government can see its way to closely watch over the behavior of the local officials, those who are in close contact with the villagers.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

The interview was made in the office of the refugee camp's leader. The subject was at ease, as he has been working there as a helper for the camp leader. He seemed intelligent and cooperative and was an interesting person. The interviewer regrets that the trip schedule did not afford more time for the interview.



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No. AGR 65

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

1. Name of interviewer [redacted]

2. Name of subject [redacted]

3. Time and date of interview :

From 9:00 AM to 12:45 PM on Sept. [redacted] 196 6

From _____ to _____ on _____ 196___

From _____ to _____ on _____ 196___

Total time 3:45 hrs.

Interview based on : tape ( ) hand written notes (x)

4. Place of interview :

Qui Nhon City [redacted] Settlement camp)

5. Sex of subject : Male (x) Female ( )

6. Age of subject : 34

7. Ethnic background : Vietnamese

8. Place of birth :

hamlet [redacted]

village [redacted]

district Hoai Nhon

province Binh Dinh

9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :

hamlet [redacted]

village [redacted]

district Hoai Nhon

province Binh Dinh

10. (a) Length of residence in last location : since childhood

(b) Who controlled the place of residence:

GVN ( ) VC (x) Contested ( )

(c) Since when controlled or contested ? Dec. 1964

11. Number of brothers (2) and sisters ( )

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age . 2

13. Marital status : married

14. Number of children : 2

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age :

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
1 Brother with subject (x) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject (x) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject (x) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion : Ancestor worship

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : Village school teacher

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation Middle
(b) Landowner ? How much land No

20. Education :
illiterate ( )
literate ( )
schooling completed : 6 years of school

21. Any relatives in VC : Eldest brother Regroupee to North Vietnam a nephew and a step brother in the GVN regular forces

22. Any relatives in GVN

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by :
(a) French
(b) GVN
(c) VC

24. When became a refugee : Jan [redacted] 1966

25. Where took refuge first Hoai Nhon District Till Feb. Qui Nhon City to date

26. Present residence [redacted] Refugee camp

AGR

INTERVIEW

66

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THE RAND CORPORATION

INTERVIEWS CONCERNING THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO: AGR-66
(AGR-II)

Date of Interview : August [redacted] 1966

Subject's category : Refugee, August [redacted] 1966

Area of residence : [redacted] Hamlet, [redacted] Village, Phu Cat District, Binh Dinh Province

This interview is for the information of US and Vietnamese official agencies and personnel on a need-to-know basis. Permission to distribute or show this interview to non-offical persons requires the prior approval of The RAND Corporation and the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs.

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1. What was your family economic status?

Middle Class.

2. Did you own any land?

No.

3. Why were you classified in the Middle Class?

We owned a pair of buffaloes and I worked as a hired laborer for others. This way we had enough to eat. The VC first decided to put us in the Middle Class, but when I protested they reclassifed us to the Poor Class

4. How big was your village?

I don't know.

5. How many hamlets were in your village?

[redacted] hamlets.

6. How many people lived in your hamlet?

I can't tell you that. I don't know how many families there were. But I know that there were 300 voters.

7. How did most of the villagers earn their living?

Their only profession was farming.

8. Did most of the villagers have enough to eat? Were many well-off or poor?

Generally speaking, some villagers were well-off, some poor. They belonged to all sorts of classes.

9. Were there many who didn't have enough to eat?

Quite a few.

10. What did they do to earn their living?

They were rural people and farming was their profession. They also went to the woods and made charcoal for sale.

11. Did you work for the people in your village?

Yes.

12. Did the people you worked for have much land?

Some had more than others -- three or four mau of land.

13. How much did you get paid for one day's work?

The other hired laborers received 15 piasters and three meals a day. As for me, for each day of ploughing I received 12 gia of unhusked rice. But I didn't get paid until after the harvest season was over.

14. Why did the others receive so little pay?

They worked as hired hands doing such works as gathering weeds and so on. Also they ate their meals with the employers. As for me, I ploughed the fields and ate my meals at home.

15. How many villagers owned land?

Quite a few.

16. How much land did the richest man in your village own?

I don't know. Quite a few people were rich. Those people are still there.

17. Where?

In the village. They remain there. They don't want to come out here.

18. Why don't they want to come out here?

Because they sympathize with the communists.

19. How do you know that they sympathize with the communists?

They are VC cadres.

20. Has any rich family come out here?

None. They are attached to their properties and they don't want to leave their village.

21. Those who have come out here, what classes did they belong to?

We are the poor ones. We came here because we wanted to get away from the bombs and bullets. We were unable to earn our living back in our village, but spent all days in the trenches, so frightened we were. We wanted to come to the Nationalists so that we could begin to work and earn our living again.

22. Weren't the rich frightened of bombs and bullets too?

They were too, but they were rich and so they could afford to do nothing and still have something to eat. If the poor remained in the trenches all the time, they would die of starvation.

23. Did you make enough to support your family?

No. My wife and children worked also.

24. What is your religion?

We were Buddhists.

25. Have you been converted to any other religion?

No. We were Buddhists but now we are refugees and stay where the Government tells us to. There is no pagoda around and we don't practice our religion any longer.

26. How often did you go to pagoda when you were in your village?

Once every fifteenth of the month.

27. How long haven't you been to a pagoda?

For about 1 year.

28. After the VC came to your village, did they forbid the villagers to go to pagoda?

After the VC had taken over the village, we stopped going to the pagoda. We were so afraid of bombs and bullets, we didn't want to go.

29. You didn't go to the pagoda because of the VC or because of your fear of bombs and bullets?

We were afraid of bombs and bullets. And truthfully speaking, the pagoda has been destroyed by bombs.

30. What do you think about your pagoda being destroyed by bombs?

The VC caused troubles to the people. They mingled with the people. What could the Government do but to drop bombs where the VC were stationed.

31. What religions did the other villagers practice?

Some were Catholics, others were Caodaists.

32. Were there ever conflicts between members of different religions?

No, there has never been any conflicts among us.

33. After Mr. Diem had been overthrown, did any incidents happen between the Catholics and the Buddhists?

No incidents at all. I don't know if any incidents happened in any other place, but nothing happened in my own hamlet. We were more concerned about making our living.

34. Were other villagers of different ethnic background from you?

No.

35. Was there a school in your village?

Yes. It was built in 1964 by the Nationalists. It had three classrooms. After the VC took over the village, the school was closed down and since then none of the children have had the benefit of any education at all.

36. When you were in your village, did you often discuss things with the others in your village?

No. I was poor and I had to work to support my family. I didn't have much leisure time.

37. What about after evening meals when you sipped tea in front of your house for example?

Not even then.

38. Who were your best friends in the village?

I am an old person -- 43 years old. I worked all day and in the evening I came home to eat and after the meal I went to sleep so that I could get up to-morrow. I am not young anymore. I couldn't go around. With the VC in the village, we spent days and nights in the trenches.

39. What about your work?

We spent days and nights in the trenches and were unable to work at all. We left the fields unfarmed, the chicken and ducks untended. My own house was bombed and completely destroyed.

40. When did the VC come to your village?

They came in June 1964.

41. After the VC came, could you talk as freely as before or less?

What could we say or talk about? We didn't dare to say anything.

42. Did the VC say anything?

They didn't say anything to us in particular. The VC only communicated with those who "clung to their feet." To tell the truth, when the Nationalists were in the village, I was a member of the Local Forces. Later the VC accused me of working for the enemy. They put me under house arrest.

43. How long were you under house arrest?

When the VC came they asked me for the hand-grenades and when I told them I didn't have any, they tied me up and took me to the woods where they interrogated me again. After they found out that I had told them the truth, that I hadn't keep any weapons with me even through I had been a member of the Local Forces, they released me and for six months they kept their strict surveillance over me. Meanwhile, I stayed home and continued to work as a hired hand for the others as usual. This was to deceive them into thinking that I had no intention of leaving the village. Then when the opportunity presented itself, I made my escape.

44. What did the VC do to you when they put you under house arrest?

Anyone who had any connection with the Nationalists were kept under strict surveillance. They took all those whom they suspected of being pro-Nationalists to the woods and made them stay there.

45. Before the VC came to your village, which people in your village were the most important?

Do you mean important to the VC?

46. No. Before the VC came to your village, which people in your village were the most important?

Important to the GVN? I don't know. I couldn't know that.

47. Which people in your village were the most respected?

I don't know about my village.

48. What about your hamlet?

Are you talking about those who were pro-VC or pro-Nationalists?

49. It doesn't matter which side they were with.

The village chief and the hamlet chief were the most respected people. But, when the VC came, they all left the village and came out here. They never gave trouble to anyone and everyone in the village liked them.

50. Who were the most informed in your village?

Informed about the GVN or the VC?

51. Informed about what was happening or had happened in your village, and district?

I don't know. How could I know? It is beyond my understanding.

52. How was life in your village before 1954?

In 1964...

53. Not in 1964 but before 1954.

Oh, you mean in 1953? Well, we were happy under the Nationalists.

54. How was life in your village during the Resistance?

You mean during the fight against the French? The people went on earning their living as usual. Nothing happened during that time.

55. Did any fighting occur there?

There was no fighting at all.

56. Did any people in your village fight against the French?

I don't know about my village.

57. What about your hamlet?

There was none from my hamlet.

58. After 1954 how did the local officials behave towards the villagers?

They were good to the people. There was no such thing as the rich oppressing the poor. The officials never gave the villagers any trouble.

59. Were those officials elected or appointed?

They were elected by the people. Under the Nationalists the officials were elected for three years. One official stayed in office for only three months and then he resigned because he was too old. On the whole, none of them behaved badly toward the villagers. That old man is dead now. He was too old and he was sick.

60. What happened to the recently elected officials?

They left the village right after the VC took over. They were very good to the people. They never oppressed them and the people liked them very much.

61. Were those officials local people or strangers?

They were from my hamlet.

62. Have you ever had an election in your hamlet?

No.

63. How did you elect your officials?

Some hamlet officials recommended this or that candidate for the office and asked the people to vote for him. The people raised their hands to indicate whether they wanted this or that candidate. The one who had more hands raised for him won.

64. Did everyone participate in choosing the officials?

Yes, women included.

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65. What did you know about the Diem Government?

Excuse me, don't ask me about that Government.

66. Why don't you want me to ask about that Government? Do you know anything about it?

Of course I know something about it. He was in office and so everybody should know about that.

67. What else do you know?

I don't know. I was a farmer and lived in a corner of the wooded area. Also it has been a long time ago. To tell the truth, I don't remember much.

68. What did you think about the fall of that Government?

It was beyond my understanding. I don't understand why he was killed.

69. What were you told about the fall of that Government?

Nothing.

70. What did the people think about the fall of that Government?

I didn't hear them say anything. We all thought that he must have done something wrong and that was why he was overthrown. We are rural people and knew little about what happened on the outside since there were no radios or newspapers to tell us. I told myself that Mr. Diem must have committed some injustice while he was President such as keeping for his personal use something which had been given to the people by the Government. We are simple minded people and I can only tell you what I know. I can't make up stories. Those things were very hard to understand.

71. Were there any GVN military forces near or in your hamlet?

There were the SDC and the Militia. They were stationed in the village. It's about two kilometers from my hamlet to the village.

72. How many of them were there?

Three platoons.

73. How far was it from one hamlet to the next? from the first to the [redacted] hamlet?

Each hamlet was about one kilometer from the next.

74. How did the SDC and the Militia behave towards the people?

There were stationed in the village and my hamlet was quite far from it. But when I went to gather firewood I heard that these SDC people were good to the villagers.

75. Didn't they bother the villagers? stealing their chicken and fruits?

I don't think that ever happened.

76. How did the villagers think about these Militia and SDC?

They didn't think anything about the Militia or SDC. They thought to themselves this: These SDC and Militia are Government soldiers and they are here to protect the village. The people treated them all right.

77. Did you ever live in a Strategic Hamlet?

My hamlet was a Strategic Hamlet.

78. When did your hamlet become a Strategic Hamlet?

While the Nationalists were in control of the village.

79. In what year was your hamlet a Strategic Hamlet?

I don't remember exactly.

80. How much labor and money did you have to contribute to it?

I did the fencing and then my wife and children went out to cut down the tree branches for me. The work was divided up among the villagers. Each family had to fence two or three meters here and there. Those families who couldn't cut down the trees had to buy bamboo instead. At first the hamlet was fenced in with barbed wire and then later it was decided that communication trenches should be dug around the hamlet. And so the barbed wire was pushed aside. We dug communication trenches and later fenced in the hamlet with bamboo and tree branches.

81. How much did it cost your family alone to build that Strategic Hamlet?

About 3000 piasters including the labor cost. Families that couldn't do the work themselves hired us to do it for them.

82. What did you like about the Strategic Hamlet?

To tell the truth it was hard on us when we had to do the fencing of the hamlet — what with the work and the cost. But it was safer to live in the Strategic Hamlet because it prevented the VC from infiltrating into our midst.

83. What did you dislike about the Strategic Hamlet?

There was nothing I didn't like about it at all.

84. What about having to work without pay while the Strategic Hamlet was being built?

It was true that that cost us quite some money and also after the Strategic Hamlet was built the VC came and destroyed the fence over and over. The people had to repair it and that was hard too. But the Strategic Hamlet protected us from the VC.

85. What happened to it?

The VC came and destroyed all the fences and the Strategic Hamlet was abandoned.

86. Did the people move to some other place afterwards?

No. They still remained there but the hamlet was no longer a Strategic Hamlet.

87. How do you feel about it now?

The VC have destroyed it and that was the end of it. What else should I think about it? Each hamlet fenced itself in and that was good. What else?

88. In those days, before the Front came, how did you feel about your life and future?

Before 1964, when the Nationalists were still in control of my village, we were free. We could work when we pleased and enjoyed the fruits of our labor. After the VC came, life became very hard because we could only work now and then for fear of bombs and bullets. And later, we had to spend more and more time hiding in the trenches.

89. What things dissatisfied you most?

Nothing at all.

90. Did you blame the Government for the hard life you had to lead?

Not at all. I was happy because I could work freely to earn my living.

91. What did you think about your opportunities to improve your life and the chances of your children having a better life?

I believed I could improve my life because we were free under the Nationalists and could work as much as we pleased. I thought if I could work steadily, spend little and save the rest, I could be richer. I had one pair of buffaloes and I worked for others, but we were free.

92. When did you first hear of the Front?

I don't remember. The VC came at night and rounded up the people for meetings. I didn't know who they were because they wore masks.

93. What kinds of people belonged to the Front in those days?

No one from my hamlet belonged to the VC then. I don't know about my village or about other hamlets. My hamlet was far from the village and so I don't know.

94. When did the VC first come to your hamlet?

I don't remember the date. This is the truth.

95. How did you know the VC came to your village and held meetings?

You see, the Nationalist forces were stationed in the village and the village was quite far from my hamlet. Also my hamlet was close to the mountain and so at night the VC came. The people were very afraid, they remained behind their closed doors, and didn't dare come out. The VC came to each house, knocked at the door and invited the people to come to the meeting.

96. What did the VC say at the meetings?

They said this and that.

97. What was this and that?

They said they were trying to liberate the South, to bring happiness, food and clothing to the people. That was what they said but I haven't seen any of their promises become true yet.

98. What else did they say?

They said the people would be free but this wasn't true. They also said the Americans came here for this and that.

99. What did they say the Americans came here for?

The Americans came here to help Vietnam.

100. Did the VC say that?

The VC said that the Americans came here with guns, that they were imperialists and so on, but this was all nonsense. They weren't telling the truth. I don't remember everything they said.

101. By what means did the VC make this propaganda?

They talked to the people.

102. Did they have microphones?

No, they just talked to the people.

103. Were there battles in your village at that time between the VC and the GVN forces?

Whenever the GVN forces raided the village, the VC ran into hiding.

104. Was there any fighting when the VC took over the village?

There was some fighting but not in my hamlet. It occurred in the village. Three platoons of Nationalist forces fought with the VC but the SDC had to withdraw afterwards because they were outnumbered. There was probably one battalion of VC. The SDC called for reinforcements but they never came and so they had to retreat. There were no casualties on either side.

105. Why couldn't the GVN forces control the village?

To tell the truth, at that time there were only two or three platoons of GVN forces. With so few men, how could they protect the entire village? They couldn't possibly deploy the men everywhere. Had the Korean troops been there then as they are there now, the VC wouldn't have been able to take over the village at all. My village wouldn't have been in the hands of the communists.

I06. Didn't you tell me that your village was still in the hands of the VC?

It is true, my village is still under the VC's control.

I07. And the Korean troops haven't been able to drive the VC out?

When the Korean troops came, the VC ran into hiding; and after the Korean troops had gone, they returned to the village again.

I08. What did the Front do to the people's GVN identification cards?

I left my identification card in a book and when my house was destroyed by the bombs, it was burned too.

I09. What did the VC do the other people's identification cards?

Nothing.

II0. You mean the VC didn't confiscate their identification cards at all?

The VC asked for mine and I refused to give it to them, but it was destroyed by the bombs afterwards .

III. Didn't they ask for other people's identification cards?

They confiscated cards from those whom they suspected of working for the Nationalists.

II2. Did they confiscate them from other people too?

They went around asking for them from everyone. Those who were too frightened of the VC turned their cards in, but many others told the VC that they had lost theirs and refused to turn them in.

II3. What happened to those who refused to turn their cards in?

Nothing. The VC couldn't do anything to those who had lost theirs. I didn't give them mine either but I lost it anyway.

II4. How did the VC cadres, soldiers and guerrillas behave towards the villagers?

To tell the truth, the VC cadres and guerrillas were very nice to the people Politically speaking, they knew how to appeal to the villagers. When they wanted something, they asked for it. Their talks were very appealing. But once you refused to give them what they wanted, they turned around and

accused you of being bad and spies and so on. Truthfully speaking, these VC cadres and guerrillas knew how to sweet talk the people, but they would stop at nothing to get even "your bowels out."

II5. How did the villagers feel about them?

To tell the truth, the people were frightened of them. They hated those cadres and guerrillas but didn't dare say it out loud. The people were harmed by the VC. For example, one family made about 50 kg of rice a year, enough to sustain them till the next season. But, the VC took away 20 kg which they called taxes. The people didn't like the VC, but they didn't dare express their feelings.

II6. How did the people feel towards them when they first came to your village?

I don't know about other people in other hamlets, but the people in my hamlet didn't like the VC at all.

II7. Why did the people dislike them? When they first came to your village, they didn't make the people pay taxes right away did they?

No, but we knew that if they came we would be miserable.

II8. How did the people know that?

We figured it this way: where could the VC get their food while they engaged in fighting? It must come from the people. And so, although the VC asked nothing when they first came to the village, the people who didn't "cling to the VC's feet" disliked them very much. Of course, those who "clung to their feet," those underground agents who had been working secretly for them without the people's knowledge, liked them. The people knew for sure that the VC's presence would bring them many miseries.

II9. What kind of miseries did the people think the VC's presence would bring them?

The people had had experience with the communists and they became very weary of them. They had made the people go on transportation missions for them. These missions lasted for months or weeks. The healthy became sick and the sick became sicker.

I20. When did that happen?

When the Viet Minh were in the village. The people knew that if they came back this time, they would make them do the same thing again. That was why the people disliked them.

I2I. What did you know about the aims of the Front?

The first time they came to the village, they rounded up the people and held a meeting. They told the people what I had told you before: The Americans were Imperialists and so on. The VC were bringing food and clothes to the people. This was their propaganda. The people haven't received any food or clothes from them. It has been a long time ago. I don't remember all I have heard.

I22. In your opinion, what are the aims of the VC?

I don't know. That is beyond my understanding. I can only tell you what I know and understand. I only know that the VC are here and they came to my village and their presence caused much suffering for the people. At first they came and said they were going to liberate the South. And when the Nationalist forces couldn't fight against them, they took over the village.

I23. Didn't you want to see the South liberated and have food to eat and clothes to wear?

Not at all.

I24. Why?

This was only propaganda. The VC couldn't possibly carry out their promises. The people would have to feed them instead. They collected rice from the people. Families that had just enough food to eat would have to go hungry in order to feed them. And also, they made the people carry rice from one place to another. How do you think the people could stand it?

I25. Don't you want to be liberated?

Not at all. I don't want the VC to liberate me any time.

I26. Why?

I don't mind which Government I have to serve if I am allowed to work freely. This is what I like most.

I27. Do you want the Americans to stay here?

I don't want the VC to liberate me. If the Americans stay here, we can be free. When the VC came, they expected the people to do this and that for them. The people had to dig trenches, carry rice to other places and

do so many other things. To tell the truth, the people could only work four or five days in a month to support their own families. The rest they had to work for the VC.

I28. What other things did the villagers do for the VC?

Husking the rice and transporting it to their desired areas. At night they got the women to go to different villages such as [redacted] and [redacted] to transport the rice back to [redacted] Sub-Hamlet (mine was [redacted]. Then they distributed it to these women. Each received a few dozen kg. They husked the rice and then brought back the husked rice to the VC for weighing. Then they got the men to carry the polished rice across the pass which was located somewhere around [redacted] Village, Phu Cat District. How could the people like the VC when they had to work like that for them? The VC only brought more miseries.

I29. Do you know who is the leader of the VC?

I don't know, it is beyond my understanding.

I30. Did you hear the cadres mention the name Nguyen Huu Tho?

I heard that Lawyer Nguyen Huu Tho was in the Liberation of the South.

I31. What did the cadres say about Mr. Nguyen Huu Tho?

I didn't remember the name at first. You have to remind me. They said he was in the Liberation of the South; he was to liberate the South.

I32. Did the cadres say what position he holds in the Front?

I don't know what position he holds, but the VC mentioned his name.

I33. What other names did the VC cadres mention?

The VC mentioned that name during a meeting held in the hamlet. They didn't mention any other name.

I34. Did they mention the name Ho Chi Minh?

Ho Chi Minh is in the North.

I35. How often did the VC cadres hold meetings in your village or hamlet?

Three or four times a month.

I36. What did they say during these meetings?

They said they were liberating the South and would bring food for the people to eat and clothes to keep the people warm. They said many things besides. Other times, they would inform the people in the hamlet that three or four persons in each hamlet should make their preparations and be ready to go whenever they were needed. These people should bring along their clothes and their own rice.

I37. What did they say about your own village or hamlet?

They called those who had worked for the Nationalists vicious and American lackeys. They said the landowners, the rich and the middle class people disliked them. Although these people didn't say so publicly, the VC had heard it somewhere that these people were frustrated. And so the VC called them the frustrated elements, the ruffians.

I38. What did they say about the Nationalist Government?

They said that the Nationalist Government would put 40% of the entire land in auction. The poor people would receive no land, they wouldn't have money to put up with the rich and the land would end up in the hands of the rich. The VC said things like that.

I39. What did they say about the Americans?

They said the Americans came here to lord over the country and to make the people servile to them. And so they had to stand up to liberate the country and bring food and clothes to the people. This was their propaganda, because the people have yet to receive anything from them.

I40. What did they say about China?

They said China sent weapons and ammunition and other things to assist them in the liberation of the South. They also said that if they asked, China would send troops here to help them.

I4I. What did they say about Russia?

They didn't mention Russia at all. They only talked about China.

I42. Did you believe what you were told?

Not at all.

I43. Why didn't you?

They said China assisted them but I didn't see anything as yet. I only saw the Vietnamese fight against the Vietnamese. I have to see the Chinese troops fighting to believe that China really helps the VC.

I44. Did the villagers believe what the VC told them?

Only those who worked for them believed them. Those who were with the Nationalists doubted everything they said.

I45. Have there been changes in what the VC said in these meetings?

They repeated the same propaganda over and over.

I46. Did the VC ever take the villagers away for re-education?

The VC took many people to the mountain for re-education.

I47. Where was the mountain located?

They kept people someplace in the mountain where the Nationalists wouldn't be able to find it. These people were kept there for their re-education.

I48. Why were these people sent away for re-education?

When the VC came to the village, these people disliked them and so they were taken away for re-education.

I49. Why did these people dislike the VC in the first place?

The VC brought about hunger and miseries. The people couldn't stand it any longer and they complained of this and that. The VC accused them of being pro-Nationalist. These people were sent away for re-education so that they would understand the VC views and policy.

I50. How many people in your hamlet were sent away for re-education?

Quite a few, because many people in my hamlet disliked the VC. The VC sent all those who didn't like them away.

I51. How long did the re-education last?

The VC would say, for example, that the re-education would last for three days. Each day the people came to the appointed places and stayed there listening to their speeches till evening. The people were allowed to go home but had to come back the next morning. And so for three days the people were like prisoners. The VC detached thirty men to conduct the re-education of the people in my hamlet.

152. How did the people in your hamlet feel about it?

They had to obey the VC. They disliked having to leave their work and listen to their talks, but the VC told them they had to come. And so they came inspite of themselves.

153. What did the cadres say?

They didn't say anything They knew that the people disliked them and so they had to re-educate them to their views.

154. How many young men over 16 were in your hamlet?

I don't know about the village. In my own "xom" there were just two or three over 17. The rest were farmers.

155. How many people in your hamlet have joined the VC?

No one in my xom joined the VC, but many people in Loc Thanh Xom worked for the VC.

156. In your opinion, why did many people in [redacted] join the VC?

Because many of their relatives or family members were regroupees. We had none in my xom.

157. How many people have joined the Nationalists?

Most of the people in my xom were for the Nationalists. And most of them have left their homes to come out here.

158. In your opinion, why do some people like the VC and others the Nationalists?

Those who work for the VC have had their relatives in the VC organization for eight or nine years. As for us, we are only workers. We can only live with that government which guarantees us freedom to work. We can't support the government that has brought us so many hardships. I made just enough to support my family but the VC used their sweet talk on me and they collected rice from my family.

159. What kinds of young men joined the VC?

They belonged to the poor class and that was why they joined the VC. But I really don't know why they joined the VC. Each person is different and his mind isn't the same as mine.

160. What kind joined the Nationalists?

They belonged to all classes. Some were rich, some poor or very poor.

161. Did those who joined the Front always do so of their own free will?

Yes. None of them was forced. Rich or poor, the people in my xom have all come out here.

162. What recruiting propaganda did the Front use?

I don't know how the Front recruited these young men. I don't know what appealed to them either. I can't understand why they chose the VC instead of the Nationalist side. With the Nationalists they could have hot food to eat and good clothes but they chose the other side. This is beyond my understanding.

163. Did the VC ever force the men to join them?

Of course the VC forced these men to join them. But they used politics and appealed to their sense of patriotism, such as they should stand up to liberate the South and so on.

164. When did the VC begin to draft people?

Two or three months after they had taken over the village, they began to organize an anti-guerrilla group.

165. What is anti-guerrilla group? What did these people do?

Those people were to protect the village or hamlet and to be on the lookout for the Nationalist troops. When the troops later came, they were to sound the alarm and snipe at them.

166. Did they draft women too?

The women became hamlet civil affairs cadres. They were to work on other women in the hamlet and to organize meetings and so on.

167. How did the villagers feel about the young men joining the VC?

The VC organized the young girls who went around and induced the young men to join the Front to liberate and protect the country. Afterwards, the VC went around and made a collection. Each family should give something as gifts to these young men. Some gave 10, others 5, piasters. These young men got a big send-off. What could their parents do? If their sons wanted to join the VC, they went. But some of them have returned to the village.

168. Why did they return to the village?

They didn't say. The VC arrested and took them away for re-education. But they kept returning to their village. Life in the VC must have been hard for them.

169. How did the VC treat families with sons in the Nationalist forces?

They watched these families very closely and accused them of working for the enemy. When there were rumors of Nationalist forces coming to the village, the VC rounded up the members of these families first and took them to the woods.

170. How many guerrillas were in your village?

I don't know. I wasn't a VC and they wouldn't let me know about their organization.

171. Did the Front ever promise to take away land from any villagers and give it to others?

The VC took all the communal land and distributed it to all the people in the village. Everyone, including the new born baby, received his share.

172. Was there anyone who didn't receive his?

Families who owned more than two or three mau of land weren't given communal land. The VC explained that these families had enough land to work on. The communal land should be given to those who didn't have land of their own.

173. Did your family receive any land from the VC?

My family had six members and the VC gave us three sao of land.

174. Did your family receive any land under the Nationalists?

Yes. Under the Nationalists, each member of my family was given one sao of communal land and so we had six sao.

175. Does that mean that your family had nine sao of land to work on?

No. When the VC came to the village, they confiscated all the communal land and redistributed it again.

176. How much land did your family receive this time?

Three sao. They only redistributed the communal land. They haven't done anything about private land yet.

177. How did the people feel about that?

They weren't happy at all.

178. Why?

I would rather have no land and be free than have one sao and be restricted.

179. You felt that way because the VC took the land away from your family and gave it to others. How did those who hadn't had any land feel about the redistribution of communal land?

They weren't happy.

180. Why?

Some people liked the VC, others didn't.

181. Was the redistribution done fairly?

Yes. Everyone, including the new born babies to the very old people, received his share.

182. Did the people who received land from the VC have to pay taxes or rent to them?

There was no tax or rent, but the VC devised many ways to get the money from the people. They made the people buy war bonds. They got the people to the meeting and said that they expected them to buy war bonds. My family was told to put up 500 piasters and was promised that in five years we would receive our money back. Who knows when they would give it back to us?

183. Do you still have the receipt with you?

No, I threw it away when I came out here.

184. Why didn't you keep it with you?

What for? I took it that that was the last time I saw my money. They would never give it back to me.

185. What did you think would happen to the land if the Nationalists returned to the hamlet?

I am sure if the Nationalists returned to the village, they would redistribute the land again.

186. Why do you think the Nationalists should redistribute the land again?

The VC gave some 5 sao, others 3 or 2 sao.

187. Didn't you tell me that the distribution was fair?

The VC took the land from those who had left the village to come out here and distributed it to others.

188. Did your family receive any of that land?

Not at all. I was a suspect in their eyes. They only gave the land to their sympathizers.

189. Were you happy with the three sao of land the VC gave you?

No. They told me to work on that land and I did. Do you think I could feed my family with three sao of land?

190. How did the VC treat the landowners?

They used politics with these families. They used sweet talk but at the same time they extorted money from them. Say, for example, your family has five mau of land. The VC hold a meeting and invite all the villagers to come. They ask you to volunteer to make a donation. You offer them 300 kg of rice. They shake their heads saying that with the income from 5 mau of land, your family can afford a bigger offer. And so you have to increase your offer till it meets the amount they have set in advance for you. This they call voluntary donation. They use it with every family in the village.

191. What taxes did you have to pay to the Front when it first controlled your hamlet?

Each year my family had to pay them 270 kg of rice. These were paid in two installments. On the first installment, we paid 120 kg and on the second, 150 kg.

192. Did the VC state what percentage of your income was to be taken in taxes?

I protested that we had so little land to work on and yet we had to pay such a huge amount of taxes. The VC replied that since I was able to work as a hired laborer for others and my income from that source was big, I had to pay 270 kg of rice year. How do you expect me to like these VC?

193. How much did your family pay them when they first came to the village?

In August they went around the village and collected just a few gia of rice from each family. But last year they decided that my family had to pay them 270 kg.

194. What did they say about the 1966 taxes?

They haven't said anything about that yet. As for me, I left my hamlet as soon as I finished the planting. I don't care what will happen to the crop. The VC can have it all.

195. What did the cadres say about the taxes?

They said the taxes would help to feed their troops who were fighting the enemy.

196. What did the villagers think about the taxes they had to pay to the VC?

The people were dissatisfied with the VC but they didn't dare say anything. The VC were very smart. They never told anyone how much he had to pay to them. Instead, they let you make the offer. If they decided that you had to pay them 170 kg, for example, your offer had to be exactly that amount or they wouldn't accept it. Everyone had to make the offer which they called voluntary donation. Some refused to pay their taxes.

197. What happened to them?

They couldn't get away from the VC's sweet talk. They talked these families into making a voluntary donation like everyone one else. If you refused with the excuse that your house had been destroyed, they would reply that other people's houses had been destroyed too and that the rice would be used to feed the troops who were fighting to protect their hamlets and villages. What could you answer to that? That was their politics.

198. Where did the villagers usually sell their produce?

They sold their produce to other villagers.

199. Did the VC buy food from the people?

Of course, they did.

200. Would they let the people bring their produce to the market to sell?

They wouldn't let the people leave the village.

201. How was the price of food in your village?

One chicken cost around 60 piasters, and rice was 15 piasters for one kilogram.

202. The food there was much cheaper than it is here.

But I am free here and I feel happy. Also here I can hope to find work to do and so have money to buy food to eat. Back in the village, we were unable to work. What good was that when we didn't have the money?

203. If the VC had restrictions on selling produce, did this have any effect on the villagers' production of food?

Yes, the people lost their motivation to produce food.

204. How did you know that?

Take my own case for example. I raised pigs to make profits. I had a big one which could have been sold for 3600 piasters had I been able to bring it to the market. The VC came and we weren't allowed to go to the market. I had to sell the pig. The VC bought it for 1600 piasters. I felt very dejected. It was a big loss. And from then on I stopped raising pigs and chickens.

205. Did the VC set up any organizations in your hamlet?

These were their internal affairs and they kept it a secret from the people.

206. Didn't they organize The Farmers', The Young Men's and Young Women's Associations?

They organized the Young Women's Liberation Association and made the members put aside a handful of rice for each meal. At the end of the month, the VC went around to collect the rice. They also organized the Young Men's Association whose members had to pay 2 piasters each a month.

207. Did they organize the Farmers' Association also?

They did, but only their sympathizers were allowed to become members. No one in my xom has joined it yet.

208. Were the people who joined this Association ever given any special privileges?

The outsiders were allowed to work as hired laborers for the members of this association only when they couldn't find others with memberships to work for them.

209. Where did the VC cadres in your hamlet come from?

They were from the hamlet.

210. How long have they been with the Front?

They were the ones who have brothers or sisters regrouped in the North or were Party members.

211. What sort of persons were they?

To tell the truth, the VC civil affairs cadre was a very nice person although he was a VC. But the other cadre behaved badly towards the people. He threatened to beat the people up.

212. What was the most important cadre position in your hamlet?

I don't know.

213. Did your hamlet or village have a Party Chapter?

I don't understand what you are talking about.

214. What did the you and the people think about the way the Front cadres acted in your hamlet?

Some of them were all right, some behaved badly. They used sweet talk with the people. They were smart.

215. Were they fair and honest?

They were, but take for example if my family had to pay 300 kg of rice as taxes, a cadre's family had to pay only 150 or 200 kg. They had to pay less than the people.

216. How did you know that?

It was easy to find out. These cadres were farmers too. Everybody knew how much he made a year and everybody knew how much each family had to pay. They made the offer of 100 kg and were accepted and we had to increase ours to 150 or 200 kg. Who didn't hear it?

217. Did the villagers receive any help from the VC cadres?

What did they have to give us? When we had to go on transportation missions, we were assured that help would be given to our families while we were away. They might have done that on the first day but they couldn't continue to assist us for the entire length of our absence.

218. Did you ever see or hear about any conflicts between the cadres?

Of course they quarreled with each other.

219. What did they quarrel about?

They fought over the people. One accepted the offer, another rejected it, or one said this was right, another said it was wrong.

220. Has there been any change in the attitudes of the villagers towards the VC cadres?

No, their attitude remained the same. The people never liked the VC. Of course, those who worked for them must have liked them.

221. Did the VC ever kill any villagers?

No.

222. Were you or the villagers ever made to perform work without pay?

Yes.

223. How often did you have to work for them?

I went two or three times on transportation missions for them.

224. How long did each mission last?

About 20 days.

225. What did you do?

Transport rice to the mountain to feed them.

226. How many villagers went each time?

About 100 people each time.

227. How many came from your hamlet?

About 30.

228. Who in the village had to go on transportation missions?

The VC reserved the young men for longer missions which lasted for two or three months. People like me were told to transport rice to the mountain and each of our missions lasted about 20 days. The women went on transportation missions at night. They took turns to go. For example, one night this group of women go, the next night some other women will have to go.

229. How did the villagers feel about having to go on transportation missions?

The people hated these missions because they had to endure so many hardships. They complained about them. There were times when the laborers fought with the accompanying cadres.

230. Where did you get the rice and carry it to?

We just followed the cadres who led us from one trail to another in the mountain. There were many of us coming from different villages. We were accompanied by the cadres.

231. How much rice did you carry each time?

About 20 kg.

232. How far was it from the place you got the rice to the storage place?

It took us three nights of marching.

233. Did you march during the day?

We rested during the day and marched at night. We just followed the cadres and didn't know where we were going. The trails were in the woods and it was dark.

234. Were you ever attacked by airplanes during these missions?

I don't know about the other groups but my own group was never attacked by airplanes.

235. Did many people get sick during these missions?

Of course. The sick were allowed to stay behind.

236. Was your hamlet a Combat Hamlet?

Not yet.

237. What control did the VC have over the people entering and leaving the village?

During a meeting the VC informed the villagers that the hamlets should become Combat Hamlets. The villagers would be expected to dig combat trenches and to fence the hamlets in. When I left the village, the VC hadn't done anything to my hamlet yet. To prevent the people from leaving the village, they posted guards at each end. Anyone seen leaving the village was stopped and arrested.

238. In your opinion, why didn't the VC let the people come out here?

In order to win the war, they have to have the people's support. But the people can't live with them because life in the village has become unbearable. If the VC let the people come out to the Nationalist-controlled areas, what would they do in the village by themselves? What good would the land do them without the people in it? But sooner or later the people will leave the village if the VC remain in it.

239. In your village, what had you heard about conditions of life in the Front forces?

I heard nothing about that.

240. Did you know what happened to the VC crippled soldiers?

Every now and then the wounded soldiers were carried through the village. Sometimes there were six or seven, other times two or three.

241. Where were they carried to?

To the Pass.

242. What is the name of that Pass?

It is located at My Thuan Village.

243. What happened to them afterwards?

I don't know where they took them afterwards. We weren't told about that.

244. Did you know how many villagers from your village or hamlet serving in the Front forces had been killed or wounded?

Two young men from my own hamlet had been killed.

245. Where were they killed?

In [redacted] Hamlet, they were in hiding there when the Nationalist forces arrived and shot them. It was a long time ago.

246. Were their families informed about their deaths?

To tell the truth, those families were notified so that they could come and carry the bodies home and bury them.

247. Did these families receive any assistance from the VC after their sons were killed?

Nothing.

248. Did you think/Soldier's chances of surviving were better in the Front or in the GVN forces?

I don't know. I can't answer that.

249. Did you meet Northern troops?

No. I stayed home most of the time.

250. Did you hear that there were Northern troops in the South?

Yes.

251. Who told you about that?

The cadres must have told the people and I heard it from the villagers. They said many regroupees have returned from the North.

252. Did the cadres tell you that there were Northern troops in the South.

No.

253. Had the Front's activities in your village changed in any way in the last year or so?

When they first took over the village they were very strong. They liberated one hamlet after another. Now, the Nationalist and Korean forces are looking for them to fight. They aren't as strong as they were before.

254. Have you heard about defeats suffered by Front units?

The VC never told us about their defeats. They kept secret the number of their casualties in each battle. If a family inquires where their son is, the VC lie to them by saying that he is on a mission, but in fact he is dead.

255. Did the VC ever set up a school in your village?

No.

256. Did they set up/an information center in your village?

Their propaganda was seen all over the place and that was all.

257. Did they set up a first-aid station in the village?

They set up a medical station in the mountain .

258. Could the villagers go there for medical treatment?

No. When the sick went there for medicine, they were told to go home.

259. Could the sick get permission to come out here for treatment?

They gave permission to their sympathizers to come out here for treatment if they were hurt by bombs or artillery. If you were on their list of suspects, they wouldn't let you go. They would tell you to get permission from this or that person. The truth is they didn't want to let you go.

260. How far was it from the village to their medical-aid station in the mountain?

About 2 km. They wouldn't let the villagers go near their station. The laborers carried their wounded to the mountain and left them there. The VC themselves carried the wounded to their medical station.

261. While you were in the village, what had you heard about the present Saigon Government?

Nothing. If the VC said anything about the Government, I didn't hear it. The people didn't say anything.

262. Do you know the names of any of its leaders?

I have heard of some names but I don't remember them now.

263. Have you heard of the name Nguyen Cao Ky?

Yes. Now that you have said it, I remember having heard of that name before.

264. What are the aims of the Nationalist Government?

The Nationalist Government is trying to liberate the people from the communists and to bring about food and clothing to the people.

265. Do you think the Nationalist Government is weak or strong?

It must be strong.

266. Why do you think so?

It has many troops and weapons.

267. If it is strong, why hasn't it been able to defeat the VC?

The VC are like birds, they don't stay in one place but move around. If they had stayed in the same place, the Nationalist troops would have defeated them.

268. Do you think the Nationalist Government is compassionate or cruel?

The Nationalist Government is compassionate.

269. Why do you think so?

The refugees have left everything to come out here. They live in misery and the Government gives them rice, clothes, gas, and so on.

270. Do you think the Government is just or corrupt?

Our Government is just.

271. Why do you think so?

The Government treats the rich the same as the poor. The Government is just.

272. If it is just, why do you have to walk while its officials go around in shiny cars?

Because the Government stays in town and so it needs cars to go around. The people live in the countryside, we can walk. We are poor now because we have left everything to come out here.

273. Do you think the Government is wise or confused?

The Government is wise. It can't be confused.

274. Do you think the Government is dedicated or lazy?

It is dedicated. It can't be lazy.

275. When you were in the village, did you think the Government was compassionate towards the people?

Of course. The Government wanted the people to come out to its side but we couldn't make the escape.

276. How did you get information in your village on what was happening in Saigon?

We knew nothing of what had happened. No one dared communicate the news to anyone for fear they would be accused of working for the enemy.

277. Did the VC report the coup d'etat to the people?

Yes. This bit of information they let us know. Then they would say that the Government in Saigon was so weak that no one could stay in power for long.

278. Did anyone in your village own a radio?

None.

279. Were there newspapers in the village?

None.

280. Did the VC ever send entertainment groups to entertain the villagers?

At first, every two or three months some entertainment group would come to put up some show for the villagers. But they have discontinued that because the people didn't dare to come out of their houses at night. They were too frightened.

281. What have you heard about life in the North?

They said that Mr. Ho was very sad about the situation in the South: the people lived in misery, their houses were destroyed burned down and many people got killed. They said the people in the North were very happy but I don't know if that is true or not. They lived in big buildings and so on.

282. What have you heard about life in China?

They only said good things about their side but I didn't believe them.

283. Did you ever hear about the Chieu Hoi program?

Yes.

284. How did you know about it?

I learned about it from the leaflets.

285. What is the Chieu Hoi program?

Anyone who has strayed from the right path by joining the VC should return to the Government and he will be forgiven.

286. How often did you see these leaflets?

Many times.

287. What do you think of the program?

The Government wants to stop the killing on both sides. Anyone who values his life should return to the Government. He would receive assistance from the Government. The Government wouldn't abandon him. He shouldn't have any fears.

288. Did any VC chanh ever return to your village?

None.

289. Has any VC in your village rallied?

No.

290. How often was your village attacked by the Nationalists and its allies troops?

Last year the Civil Guards raided my village twice. I don't remember the date of the first raid, but the second occurred in October. They brought in tanks the second time. The Korean troops raided the village only once. It was in April. I don't know if they have come there again since I left.

291. How did you know that the Korean troops were in your village?

I heard them talk and saw them. Their language was different and they looked different too. Also, the VC always informed the villagers in advance of any raid. The Korean troops didn't come in with tanks but before they moved into the village, they saturated it with shells. They were assisted by airplanes too. My hamlet was bombed often because it was near the mountain and it was suspected that many VC hid in there.

292. Did the Korean troops cause much damage to the villagers?

To tell the truth, compared with the Civil Guards, the Korean troops fired less. The people were frightened and hid in their trenches. The Korean troops didn't burn down the people's houses but the Civil Guards set fire to any houses they suspected of belonging to the VC. To tell the truth, some of the Civil Guards were good, some weren't. The Korean troops haven't set fire to any homes in my village.

293. Were any civilians killed during these raids?

On the first raid six young men were killed. They were sleeping in the school when the Nationalist forces came, thought they were VC, and killed them.

294. Were they VC?

No, they weren't.

295. How old were they?

Around 27, 28, or 30.

296. Didn't the VC make them join the Front?

No.

297. Why did you think your village was attacked?

The VC took over that village. The Government had to liberate it and set the people free.

298. How did the people feel towards the Korean troops?

The people welcomed them. They wanted the Korean troops to drive the VC away. When the Korean troops were there, the VC were nowhere to be found, and when the Korean troops were gone, the VC appeared again.

299. Did the Korean troops cause troubles to the people?

They haven't done anything to displease the people.

300. Did the people want the Korean troops or the Civil Guards to stay in their village?

To tell the truth some elements in the Civil Guards displeased the people. They stole chickens and burned down people's houses. As for the Korean troops, they haven't done anything to displease the villagers.

301. How many people got wounded during these operations?

No one.

302. Was anyone hurt by artillery or air attacks?

Sometime in March, at night, the women moved out of their village. The men had left earlier. They went to My Long where the Korean troops were stationed. There were many women and children. The Korean troops thought they were VC and machine gunned them.

303. How many were killed then?

Quite a few. About 20 or 30 women, including children, were killed. My uncle's daughter-in-law was killed too.

304. How did the people feel about that incident?

It was nighttime, the Korean troops thought these women and children were VC.

305. Why didn't they move out during the day?

They didn't dare. They sneaked out at night.

306. How did your cousin feel about his wife's death?

To tell the truth he didn't know what to say. That was his bad luck.

307. Were any VC killed during these attacks?

Some of them must have been killed, but they would never tell the people of their casualties. Last year they were staying in some house and the Nationalist Government learned about that. An airplane was sent to drop bombs right over that house. Some VC must have been killed then but they never acknowledged that. The VC aren't like the Nationalists.

308. Where did the VC cadres go when the Nationalist forces conducted the operations in your village?

They ran to the mountain. They didn't dare fight against the Nationalist forces or the Korean troops.

309. How did the people feel when their houses were destroyed?

Our properties and houses were destroyed but few civilians were killed. We couldn't endure the miseries much longer and so the people in my xom decided to come out here.

310. Before the attacks, was your village given any warning?

No. When we heard the gunfire, we ran into hiding.

311. Should the people be warned in advance of the oncoming attacks?

It would be good of the Government to warn the people in advance, but that would benefit the VC too. They would run away.

312. How did the people whose houses had been destroyed by bombs or artillery feel towards the Nationalist Government?

The Government is compassionate towards the people, but the VC mingled with the people to give trouble to the Government. The Government was forced to fight back and that caused damage to the people. The Government didn't want to do that but it was forced on it. The Korean troops are foreigners and so they don't know who are VC and who aren't. They think all Vietnamese they meet in their raids are VC. They haul them all to the district, and the village officials have to isolate the VC from the innocent villagers.

313. Have you heard about or seen the use of chemicals to destroy vegetation or crops?

The Government sprays crops and trees of any VC-controlled hamlet.

314. Was your hamlet or village sprayed.

Not yet.

315. Have you seen any sprayed area?

I saw some sprayed areas in Phu My District when I was on a transportation mission there. All the trees and crops were killed.

316. Did the crops and trees belong to the people or the VC?

That area was completely controlled by the VC. The people have all left the place and so the Government sprayed it.

317. How big was the sprayed area?

Quite big.

318. What kind of crop did the VC grow there?

Rice.

319. Who did the work for them?

They got the young men who they had recruited into their army to do the ploughing and the women to do the planting. I didn't see any civilians around. The entire area was ruined.

320. Do you know where the area is located?

In Phu My District but I don't know the exact location.

321. In your opinion, is the spraying bad or good for the Government?

Good. The spraying will kill the VC's sources of food. They will not have anything to eat and they will .. starve.

322. Won't the people starve too?

If they are foolish enough to remain with the VC, they will get killed. That is all. The VC will prevent them from leaving the area, but if they are steadfast, they can go sooner or later.

323. Before you came here, had you seen any Americans in Vietnam?

No.

324. In your opinion, what do the Americans want in Vietnam?

They came here to liberate and to fight against the VC. The American Government wants to unify the country and to bring food and clothing to the people. The people will be happy.

325. Why do you think the Americans want to help Vietnam?

To tell the truth, Vietnam doesn't have ammunition to fight against the VC.

326. What are the differences between the French and the Americans?

They are different. They both have blond hair, blue eyes and long noses, but they are different.

327. In what way?

To tell the truth, the French are whiter and the Americans darker.

328. What did the French want in Vietnam and what do the Americans want in Vietnam?

The French wanted to rule the Vietnamese people. The Americans want to rule Vietnam but there is a difference. With the French we had no freedom and democracy. With the Americans we can enjoy freedom and democracy.

329. Have you seen or heard about American gifts to the villagers?

Rice, food, clothes, gas, and so on.

330. Did you receive anything from them?

I am a newcomer here and so I haven't received anything. Those who have been here a long time have received 1 kg of rice.

331. That 1 kg of rice is from the Nationalist Government...

That is right, it is from the Nationalist Government.

332. Have you or the people here received anything from the Americans?

Rice. That rice comes from the Americans.

333. How do you know it came from the Americans?

Because the rice looks different.

334. Did the people here receive any assistance from other sources?

The Korean troops gave us some rice recently. They are coming for the rice bags.

335. How often do the people here receive help from the Government?

I am now here, I don't know.

336. Have you heard about the air bombardment of North Vietnam?

No.

337. What are the reasons that made you leave your village and come here?

Life in the village became unbearable: my house had been destroyed, I couldn't work to support my family, I was frightened of bombs and bullets. We were shelled day and night. The shelling became more intense a few months ago. That is why I had to leave the village to come out here with the Nationalist Government to live, to work and to enjoy freedom.

338. Which do you think was the most important reason?

Shelling and bombing occurred day and night.

339. Who did you think did the shelling and bombing: Americans or the Nationalist Government?

The shells and bombs were dropped from above and we all hid in the trenches. We don't know who did the shelling or bombing.

340. Did you blame the Government or the Americans for bombing your hamlet?

If they didn't do that, they wouldn't be able to kill the communists.

341. How did you feel having your house destroyed?

I didn't mind. The VC were among the people and so if the Government didn't destroy the people's houses, it wouldn't be able to destroy the VC. The people didn't mind if their houses were destroyed.

342. You mean the people didn't complain at all?

In effect they said like this: Why don't the Nationalist troops come to the village and look for the VC to fight? Why does the Government drop bombs and shells to destroy the people's houses? They only said this, but didn't complain.

343. Did you hear broadcasts from planes or read leaflets asking you to leave the village?

I heard the broadcasts from the airplanes but they weren't clear. It went something like this: "The people should leave..." But the broadcasts weren't clear.

344. Did you see leaflets?

The leaflets said that anyone who picked up one of these leaflets could present himself to any Nationalist official and be sure of a warm welcome.

345. What reasons made you not want to leave your village?

I had nothing left in the village. I had no property, no home. I wanted to come out here badly.

346. Why didn't you come out earlier?

I had wanted to come out earlier but my wife said if we left then we wouldn't have anything to eat when we got to the Nationalist-controlled areas. She wanted to wait until the harvest was over. But when the Koreans conducted their operation at [redacted] I made my escape with my wife and children. We left everything behind. We were about to harvest the crops but I didn't care anymore.

347. Before you left your village, were you told what the Nationalist Government would do for you and other refugees?

The VC told us that those who had come out to the Nationalist side had no houses to live in. They had no place to shelter them when it rained. The VC said that to frighten the people. When I came out here, the people told me that the Government gave them houses and other aid.

348. What preparations for leaving did you and your family make?

We didn't make any preparations at all. I had intended to sell some of the rice I had but we didn't have time. We left with nothing at all.

349. Would you describe your trip here?

The Korean troops arrived at My Thuan at about 12 noon. At 1 PM I took my wife and children and left. Other families came along too. There were about 32 or 33 persons in all. When we arrived at My Long we were met by the Korean troops. They took us for civilians because we had children with us. If I were alone, they would have taken me for a VC. The Korean troops piled us all in their trucks and took us here.

350. Why did you choose this place to come?

Other people from my village are living here. I am hoping the Government will give me some cement so I can built a house to live in, and I will look around for something to do to support the family.

351. Did you expect to leave your hamlet for a long or a short time?

It depends on the Government. If the VC remain in the village, we won't return. If the Government can liberate the village and return us there, we will go back. We depend on the Government.

352. How long do you think you will be here now?

When the Government tells me to return, I will return. If not, I will stay here. The VC are there now, I don't want to go back.

353. How many families have left your hamlet?

Only four families are left in my xom. One of these families has only one old woman left. Her daughters and daughters-in-law are all here now. She stays behind because she doesn't want to leave her property. She said that her daughters were all married and she was old, she wouldn't be able to do anything to support herself. She isn't rich but has enough to eat. As for the other three families, they are somewhat linked with the VC.

354. Did any families leave your hamlet or village for other Front-controlled areas?

I heard that some families in my village have left for the mountain.

355. What kind of people were they?

I don't know. They went with the VC.

356. Did many families in your village went to the mountain?

Just a few. Life with the VC is miserable, who wants to be with them?

357. At what time did most of the refugees leave?

Some left when the VC first came to the village, others a little later. I don't know when some families moved out. They left secretly, one by one. But most of them left when the Korean troops conducted their operation in the village.

358. Which were the first to leave?

The local officials were the ones to leave first, then their families, the families of middle class, the poor.

359. Have any people who left your village to come here now gone back?

None. They are happy here; why should they go back? Also, they may fall into the hands of the VC and be punished.

360. What would happen to you if you went back now?

They would kill me for sure.

361. Has anyone asked you to go back?

No.

362. What has the Government done for you?

The Korean troops gave this camp 40 bags of rice which were distributed equally to everyone here. Each of us received one can and a half.

363. What has the Government done for you?

I haven't received anything at all. No rice, no money.

364. Where are you living now?

In the same house with my sister.

365. Do the refugees here receive anything from the Government?

No.

366. How do you earn your living now?

I will look for something to do. I will do anything.

367. Are you working now?

No.

368. How do the refugees in this camp earn their living?

Some gather firewood for sale.

369. How do you feel about having received no assistance from the Government?

Sooner or later the Government will come to my aid. The Government will keep its promises.

370. Is there a first-aid station here?

Yes. Our children receive adequate medical treatment here. I heard that each family here has received two bags of cement. As for rice, I don't know how much they have received.

371. Are you satisfied with your present situation?

I am. I am not afraid of getting killed, I am free and can sleep peacefully, my children can play with others.

372. Now that you don't have work to do, are you worried about that?

Why should I be worried about that? I am free here and also the Government won't let us starve to death.

373. Is there a school in the camp?

(There is a private school here. Each child is expected to pay 30 piasters a month. It is too expensive and so I have to keep my children at home. There is no public school.)
(Note: This information is given by the bystanders)

374. How is the leadership of this camp organized?

I don't know. I am a newcomer here. (Interviewer's note: The camp has a Camp Representative, an Assistant Camp Representative, a secretary, a security agent and three hamlet cadres. The camp has two squads of militia. This information was given by the bystanders.)

375. How often do you see them?

Daily. They are not here today because of the holiday.

376. Are there any leaders here from your own village?

Yes. You know each month the Government sells each family one kg of rice at the official price. (The official price for 1 kg of rice is 9 piasters, the market price is 36 piasters.) How can you expect my family to live on 1 kg of rice a month. We don't have money to buy rice on the market and so have been eating rice mixed with manioc and potato. If you can persuade the Government to sell us at least three or four kg of rice a month, we will be very grateful to you. Also we would like to work for the Americans.

376 a. (What would be your salary if you work for the Americans?)

We would get 70 or 80 piasters a day. Many of us have put in the request but our requests were turned down. Why? We don't know. (This information came from the bystanders.)

377. How many people have found work to do?

Not many. Only 20 people have been granted permission to work for the Americans. We first have to get permission from the district office.

378. How many refugees are in this camp?

I don't know. (There are over 4000 refugees in this camp.- This information was given by the bystanders.)

379. Did you build your own homes to live in?

(The Government gave us cement and we built our own homes.) (Interviewer's note: Any information in parentheses was given during the interview by the bystanders)

380. Do you feel safe here from military attacks?

Very safe. There are Korean troops on each side and also we have the militia here and they stand guard all the time.

381. If the Front wins the war, what do you think life in Vietnam will be like?

They can't possibly win the war.

382. Suppose they win the war, what will happen?

I will follow the Nationalist Government. If the VC take over this area, I will move to another.

383. Suppose they take over Saigon too, what will happen then?

The whole population will be in their power. I won't be the only one to have to suffer from them. If they want to kill me, there is nothing I can do about that. If the VC win the war, the people will be very miserable. We will have to work hard to feed them.

384. If the Government wins the war, what do you think life in Vietnam will be like?

Life here will be easy and the people will be happy. They won't have to worry about food and clothing. They will have freedom. If they want to go some place, they can take the bus.

385. In your opinion, which side has the people's support?

The Government has the people's support.

386. Why do you think so?

I saw that many villagers have left their homes and villages to come out here.

387. Would you have left your village if the Government hadn't bombed your hamlet?

Of course. I worked hard and the VC came and took things away. I would have left my hamlet with or without bombs.

388. Which side do you think is winning now?

I think the Government will win.

389. Why do you think so?

Just a few days ago I went to an exhibition of VC weapons captured by the Korean troops in [redacted]. I am sure the Government will win.

390. If you had thought that the VC would win the war, would you have come out here?

You say the VC win the war. That means they will take over the entire country. Where do you think I can move out to?

391. How long do you think the war will last?

I don't know. This depends on the Government. I am just a simple farmer, I can't understand.

392. If you could ask three things of any Vietnamese Government, what would they be?

First, I would ask the Government to let me work for the Americans so that I can support my family.

393. What is your second wish?

Second, I would ask the Government to sell each of us three or four kg of rice a month. One kg a month is too little.

394. What is your third wish?

My third wish? I don't know what to ask the Government for. I can't think of anything.

395. Would you like to ask for a car?

A car? What for? I just want two things: to be allowed to work for the Americans and to buy more rice. I don't want to ask anything else. If I ask for another thing, it may be too many.

396. What kind of life do you hope your son will have?

I will send him to the army when he comes of age. He can learn any profession: car driver or mechanic.

397. Did he go to school?

We were very poor and I couldn't send him to school. He had to stay home to help me with the work.

398. What would you like him to become?

He is illiterate and I don't know what he can do.

399. Would you like to send him to school?

Yes. I will try my best to send him to school.

400. What do you think would be the best life you can imagine for yourself?

I have spent most my life in the countryside and I don't know what is the best or the most beautiful.

401. What do you think will make you happy?

I want to have enough money to buy food to eat. I don't wish to live in a high building or go around in cars.

402. How would you describe the worst life you can imagine for yourself living back in your village?

I might have been killed already by shells or bombs if I had remained in the village. That was how hard my life was in the village.

403. Here is a picture of a ladder. The bottom rung is numbered ten, and the top rung is numbered one. Now, let's say that the top rung represents the best life you can imagine, and the botton rung represents the worst life you can imagine. Where on this ladder would you say that your life was before the front came to your village?

To tell the truth, before the VC came to my village, my life was in between. I wasn't too happy or too miserable. I was on the fifth or six rung.

404. Where were you after the VC came to your village?

I went down to the bottom here — the tenth rung.

405. Where are you now?

I couldn't bring any money with me. My life is still very hard-up. But here I am happier because I am free. So I would say I am on rung nine.

406. Where will you be in 1970 for example?

I don't have a job right now. I don't know what tomorrow will be like. How can I say what 'five years from now' will be like?

407. Could you make a guess?

I can't. I suppose the future must be better but it will take time. I may be able to come back to rung five or six.

408. Suppose you were allowed to work for the Americans, where would you be?

I would be on rung two. I will work and my wife will work too.

409. Do you want to return to your hamlet?

Not until the Nationalist Government has driven out the VC. Then the Government will send us back and I will return. Now I don't want to go back.

410. If the Government resettles you in another place will you go?

Of course.(We will go any place where there is security and land for us to farm.)

411. Would you or the other refugees like to receive training?

I am too old to learn anything new. I will send my son. I am a farmer. I may like to learn mechanics but I don't have money.

412. Who do you blame for causing you to leave your village?

No one. We came out here on our own. The Government wants to destroy the VC and so it has to drop bombs and shell the village. It happened that the bombs and shells fell on the people's houses and destroyed them. I came out here so that the place will be empty and the Government will have a free hand to destroy the VC.

413. Who did the refugees here blame for causing them to leave their homes?

No one. They just don't think or talk about their former homes and properties any longer. They have completely forgotten about them.

414. Have you heard any news from your village since you came here?

No. All I want is to find a job for me and my wife so we can both work. That way we can hope to feed the entire family. If I make 100 piasters a day, I won't be able to feed the family. I will need about 200 piasters a day if my family is to live happily.

415. Have you been given identification cards?

No. We have asked for them but were told that we should wait until after the election to get them.

416. Are you going to vote next month?

No, we have no identification cards and they won't give us the voter's cards.

417. Do you want to vote?

Of course. I went to ask for my voter's card but was told that since I didn't have my identification card with me, I wasn't allowed to vote.

418. How many people in this camp aren't allowed to vote because they haven't received their identification cards?

I don't know about the entire camp, but I know that all the people who came out with me haven't got their identification cards and they aren't allowed to vote.

419. Do they all want to vote?

Yes, but we aren't allowed to.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

The subject was a little hard of hearing. Many questions had to be repeated three or four times before he understood them. He was a little nervous at the beginning but seemed more relaxed afterwards. He was cooperative. His intelligence was below average.

The interview was conducted in the camp headquarters. It was often interrupted by an eager audience who surrounded the interviewer and the subject at all times. In fact the audience was so eager to participate in the interview that many volunteered answers without any asking, or suggested answers, or contradicted the subject.

(Impressions of the camp)

It is a nice and clean camp. Each house covers an area of $25m^2$ — 5m long and 5m wide. They are thatched roofs with cement-walled houses. The houses are in straight rows and all look the same.

According to another refugee there are over 6000 people living in the camp. They all came from the same village. They haven't received much help from the Government, except for two bags of cement and each person is allowed to buy 1 kg of rice at the official rate a month. Once in a while the Korean troops who are stationed near there give them some rice. Some refugees have found work such as gathering firewood for sale. A few dozen will start working for the Americans. There are children everywhere and they do nothing all day because there is no school for them. The people seem resigned to their fate. We took a walk around the camp and saw smiling faces all over.

MASTER COPY

No. AGR 66

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

1. Name of interviewer: [redacted]
2. Name of subject: [redacted]
3. Time and date of interview :
   From 12:30 to 4:30 PM on August [redacted] 1966
   From _____ to _____ on _____ 196___
   From _____ to _____ on _____ 196___
   Total time 3 hours
   Interview based on : tape (X) hand written notes ( )
4. Place of interview :
   [redacted] Village, Phu Cat District, Binh Dinh Province
5. Sex of subject : Male (X) Female ( )
6. Age of subject : 43
7. Ethnic background : Vietnamese
8. Place of birth :
   hamlet [redacted]
   village _____
   district Phu Cat
   province Binh Dinh
9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :
   hamlet Same
   village "
   district "
   province "
10. (a) Length of residence in last location : Since birth
    (b) Who controlled the place of residence :
    GVN ( ) VC (X) Contested ( )
    (c) Since when controlled or contested ? June 64

11. Number of brothers ( ) and sisters (I)

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : _____

13. Marital status : Married

14. Number of children : 6

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age : I

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject( ) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject (X) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject(I) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion : Buddhist

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : Farming

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation Middle Class - Poor class
(b) Landowner ? Owned one pair of buffalos How much land _____

20. Education :
illiterate ( )
literate (I) Write and read
schooling completed : _____

21. Any relatives in VC : _____

22. Any relatives in GVN : 2 cousins

23. Any relatives (How many? Who?) Killed by :
(a) French
(b) ~~X~~ No
(c) VC

24. When became a refugee : August [redacted] 1966

25. Where took refuge first [redacted] Village. Hau Cat District

26. Present residence Same

AGR

INTERVIEW

67

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THE RAND CORPORATION

INTERVIEWS CONCERNING THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE No. AGR-67
(AGR II)

Date of Interview : September [redacted] 1966

Subject's Category : Refugee, August [redacted] 1966

Area of Residence : [redacted] Hamlet, [redacted] Village
Phu My District, Binh Dinh Province

This interview is for the information of US and Vietnamese official agencies and personnel on a need-to-know basis. Permission to distribute or show this interview to non-official persons requires the prior approval of The RAND Corporation and the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs.

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1. How old is your younger brother?

He is 27 this year.

2. Is he married?

Yes. He is married and has two children.

3. Where is his family?

His wife and children are still in the village. The VC wouldn't permit them to move out. The VC confiscated all our papers. We came here without any identification cards at all.

4. When was your younger brother arrested?

It happened a long time ago -- four or five months ago.

5. Why did the VC arrest him?

He was on his way to come out here. The VC found out about it and arrested him.

6. How many people were arrested with your brother?

Quite a few people were arrested that time, but I don't know the exact number. My brother's wife and children couldn't leave the village now because they didn't have any papers and also because they were afraid they might not be able to find any work to do. As for me, I just left everything behind: my home, my property and my fishnet. I couldn't bring anything out here with me. We came here empty-handed.

7. Where did the VC take your brother?

They kept him in [redacted]

8. Do you think your brother is still alive?

He is still alive. The VC wanted to re-educate him and others. They asked them why they didn't want to live in the liberated areas, why did they want to move to the Nationalist controlled areas? My brother has been attending this re-education for five months now.

9. What are his wife and children doing now?

They can't do much to support themselves because fishing is a man's work.

10. How big was your village?

It had [redacted] hamlets.

11. How far was it from one hamlet to the next?

Some hamlets were close together, some very far from the next -- about [redacted] km from the next.

12. How many families lived in your hamlet?

There were about 450 families.

13. What was the percentage of Catholics in your hamlet?

About half of the inhabitants in the hamlet were Catholics. Many of them have moved out here -- over half of the hamlet is unoccupied.

14. Why didn't the other families come out here too?

They all wanted to move out here but the VC wouldn't let them go. The people were frightened because many of them had been killed. Quite a few people were killed.

15. Why were they killed?

The nationalists were convinced that my village was a VC area and so many bombs were dropped there and many people were killed.

16. Did the Catholics move out here too?

Of course. I don't know how many of them have come out here because some stayed in Area [redacted] others at the [redacted] area. Some of the refugees have relatives here and they are lucky because they can move in with them. I have no relatives here and have no place to stay. This rain will make our lives extremely hard. Worst, we don't have any papers at all.

17. How did most of the people in your village earn their living?

They went to the sea -- fishing. They had no other profession. If they couldn't go to the sea, they would die of starvation.

18. Were most of them well off or poor?

During the years when the nationalists were in control of my village, the people could work leisurely and had enough to eat. You could see tiled roof houses here and there. But after the VC took over the village, the Nationalists forbade the villagers to come to the sea to fish. We didn't have work anymore. Since this January -- January 1966, we haven't been allowed to fish day or night. We didn't have anything to do. We had been earning our living solely by fishing. There was nothing we could do to support our families. We wanted to make the escape to come out here, but the VC confiscated all our identification cards. Other people lost theirs in the fire.

19. When did they confiscate your identification cards?

As soon as they took over the village.

20. Did they tell you what they would do with them?

They said they just wanted to borrow our identification cards to find out how many people were in the village, but they never gave them back to us afterwards.

21. Did any villagers refuse to turn their identification cards over to the VC?

Many refused to turn their identification cards over to them because when they went out to the sea to fish, they had to show their cards to the Nationalists when they asked for them. When the VC found that out, they forced these people to give them the cards. Many people were so frightened of the VC, they turned their cards over when they first asked for them. You see how bad it all was. You can't live in the VC-controlled areas because sooner or later you will die. We all know that but were unable to make our escape earlier.

22. Were many people well-off in your village?

Quite a few. But they have lost everything now. Some couldn't find clothes to wear, others have lost all their family members. My aunt's family lost four or five members: herself, her children and daughter-in-law.

23. Why?

They were killed in the bombing. The airplanes bombed her hamlet. That occurred in February 1965.

24. Why was her hamlet bombed?

It was a VC-controlled area.

25. How often was your village bombed?

Very often. At first the bombing occurred every two or five or six months, and it has become more intense these last few months. The bombing occurred every two or three or five days. Many people got killed. They became frightened and wanted to escape to the Nationalist-controlled areas. All of them wanted to move out here but the VC stopped them. If all the villagers come out here, the VC will lose the war. And so being smart, they prevented the people from leaving their areas by confiscating their identification cards. The people were afraid to leave without their cards.

26. Do you still have yours.

No.

27. How did you get out here?

I didn't have my card but I was lucky to find my village cadres who gave me a temporary identification card so I could move around and look for work to do.

28. Where did you find your village cadres?

They are working in Phu Ly District. The VC took my wife's card also.

29. Are your wife and children here with you?

Yes, they are all here with me.

30. How many people came out here with you?

Quite a few. My sampan alone contained seven or eight families

31. How did you make the escape?

There was firing from the patrol boats and strafing from the airplanes on the night of the [redacted] The VC were frightened and ran into hiding. Taking advantage of the opportunity, we packed all our clothes and piled into my sampan and went out here. [illegible] the VC couldn't stop us.

32. Weren't you afraid the nationalist boats might think you were VC and [illegible] your sampan.

We set sail [illegible] The VC weren't in the sea. Had we crossed the river farther up, we would have been met by the VC.

33. How long did the trip take?

It took us three days. We didn't bring anything with us at all, just some clothes to wear.

34. Were there any Buddhists in your sampan?

No, they were all Catholics. But when we were about to arrive at [redacted] my sampan sunk and I lost my fish net and everything else.

35. Did anyone get drowned?

No. This was thanks to the high number of people in the sampan. Everyone was saved.

36. How many people in your village have been killed by bombs since the VC took over your village?

About 40 or 50, including women and children.

37. Did any VC get killed at all?

They were killed also.

38. How many of them were killed?

When the bombing surprised them, some of them got killed -- five or seven one time, two or three another time.

39. How did the bombing surprise these VC?

The bombing occurred when they were in the village. They had no trenches to protect themselves while the people hid in their own.

40. When did that happen?

That happened [illegible]. They came to the village often and if the bombs hit them, they were killed for sure.

41. Did the families who houses had been burned down or their members killed, make any accusations? What did your aunt's family say?

My uncle has only two children left. One of them was arrested by the VC. He was on his way to come out here too, but the VC found out about that and arrested, blindfolded and took him to the mountain. The VC wouldn't let him see where they were taking him for fear/his release he might report to the Nationalists [illegible] the VC hideouts, and the Nationalists would send in airplanes to bomb their places. My uncle has come out here too.

42. Did these families complain?

Yes, they complained. You see, when the Nationalists were there, there was peace, the people were happy and comfortable. It was because of the VC's presence that many people were killed. The people were very dissatisfied. It is true that under the Nationalists there was no killing and the people lived happily.

43. Why did the people accuse the VC? They didn't drop bombs on your village. [illegible] the Nationalist [illegible] that dropped bombs on your village [illegible] Did why families blame the Nationalists?

Of course, some families blamed the Nationalists for the bombing. [illegible] why [illegible] the Nationalists look for the VC to destroy. It was a shame they had to destroy the people's houses instead. The people were unhappy on that account. This was the people's point of view, but the government thought differently. If the people didn't support the Communists, how could the VC remain alive? And so the government dropped bombs on areas where the VC were stationed. The people got frustrated and they all came out here. As far as I see, all these people have come here. Of course they were unhappy with the Nationalists also because they regretted losing their properties and homes. They can't get over the fact that their homes have been destroyed.

44. Who did the people think did the bombing -- Americans or Nationalists?

They accused the Nationalists of the bombing. They didn't say anything about the Americans.

45. How did the people in your village feel towards the Americans?

Some disliked the Americans. Those were the ones who were in the middle and didn't want to come out here. But at the same time, many Vietnamese wanted to come here but weren't allowed to.

46. What did the VC cadres say about the government?

They said the front was fighting for the just cause and the government was bad. The people who live in the VC-controlled areas couldn't know for sure which government is good and which one is bad.

47. Did the villagers believe what the VC cadres told them?

They didn't. At first, the people believed them, but the VC oppressed and looked down on the people afterwards. They were also very domineering in many respects. The people became unhappy and frustrated.

48. Why did the people believe what the VC cadres told them at first?

Because the people had never seen them before and also because they said they had returned from the North. They were like foreigners coming to my village. The people became curious and they listened to what they had to tell them. They respected the VC and once you respect them you believe what they tell you. And so the people believed them when they first came to the village, but as time went by, they became a familiar sight and also many of their sayings became so arbitrary. The people began to doubt them. They became dissatisfied with the VC and left the village.

49. What did the VC say that you call arbitrary?

They said they were fighting to bring food and clothing for the people. Also, they said that their Communist Government was assisted by the Socialist bloc while the Nationalist Government had no one to help it except the Americans. They urged the people to trust them.

50. What did the people think of the Nationalist Government?

To tell the truth, the refugees feel very dejected. They feel they are being looked down on by the residents in the Nationalist-controlled areas. The people here have homes to live in while the refugees are poor and have no places to stay. We haven't received any help at all. We live in the open at the mercy of the wind and the rain. We have many small children but have nothing to support them.

51. What did the VC cadres tell the people to make them believe what they said?

The regroupees who had been away for ten or over ten years came to the village. The people were curious about them and so they listened to what these regroupees said and believed them. They told the people that the people of the North were building this and that and that their Government received assistance from the Socialist countries. They said the Nationalist side received assistance from the Americans only. They added that the Americans were only rich but were not good fighters. They urged the people to trust them for they would win for sure. And so the people believed them at first because the VC were a novelty to them. But later those VC oppressed the people to the extent that they told the people to put aside a handful of rice each meal and to mix manioc or potato with rice to eat. They said they needed rice to feed their troops. The people felt they were being oppressed and couldn't enjoy freedom.

52. When the people trusted the VC, what did they think the VC could do for them?

To tell the truth, the people believed the VC only when they first appeared in the village. Later, they became very doubtful of them.

53. At first, what did the people think the VC could do for them?

The VC told the people that they should carry out their orders to the best of their abilities and the VC would help them afterwards. This wasn't true because they didn't help us at all, instead they expected us to feed them.

54. What did the VC do to the people to make them think that they were being oppressed by the VC?

When they first came to the village, they treated the villagers as brothers and sisters. Later, they looked down on us and treated us as children. They were very proud of their positions as cadres. They said they were regroupees and had attended schools in many foreign countries. They showed their arrogance while dealing with the villagers. Sometimes the cadres wouldn't even answer the people when they asked them something. The people found them overbearing and dictatorial.

55. Did they do anything to displease the people?

Of course. When the neighbors quarreled with each other, they ordered them to be tied up. What kind of treatment was that? They said they were democratic but when the people quarreled among themselves, they tied them up.

56. Did they say why they tied those villagers up?

They said that was to stop them from quarreling. But the people weren't stupid. They said among themselves that the VC could bring these villagers to trial but to tie them up was to insult them. The VC know how to talk, but the people couldn't be duped any longer. They have been living with them for over a year or two and so they understood the VC quite well.

57. When did the people become dissatisfied with the VC?

During the first five or six months after they came to the village, the people were taken in by their propaganda. Later, they made the people feed them and the people began to feel dissatisfied with the VC. Take my family for example. We were poor and had nothing, but they forced us to pay this and that tax, to contribute to this and to that. We cooked four cans of rice for each meal for the entire family and they ordered that for each meal we should put aside one or two handfuls of rice in a container to feed their troops. If they found out that such and such family ate rice without the mixing, they would come and confiscate that pan of cooked rice. They would demand to know why that family didn't eat rice mixed with manioc or potato. They urged the people to eat more manioc or potato in place of rice. You see, we couldn't even eat our own food freely. How could the people continue to believe in them?

58. Were there any conflicts between members of different religions?

Not at all. We were only concerned about our own work.

59. Did anything happen after the fall of Mr. Diem?

No. There was no fighting among the villagers because of Mr. Diem.

60. Were there any villagers of different ethnic background from you?

No. We were all from the same village. There were no foreigners.

61. Before the VC came to your village, was there a school in your village?

Yes, there were three schools built by the Nationalists. Under the Nationalists the children who attended these schools didn't have to pay anything, but under the VC each child had to pay one or two cans of rice a month.

62. Did you send your children to school?

I had to. If any family kept their children at home, the VC would come and find out. And so no matter what you do, if you live in their controlled areas, you will have something to do with them. Even if you are a pro-Nationalist, you can't possibly go against their orders. You have to compromise with them. I told the members of my family that so long as we lived here with the VC we had to compromise. We might not be able to live for long here and we should try to get out. Knowing that the people were waiting for a chance to escape, the VC confiscated all our identification cards so that we wouldn't be able go any other place but would have to remain in the village to work.

63. When you were in your village, did you often discuss things with your friends?

Of course, we only talked about routine things.

64. Could you say anything you wanted?

In your live in a VC-controlled area, you can only talk about the VC. you can't talk about the Nationalist side. That isn't permitted.

65. What did you talk about?

When the VC were there we talked about such things as what could we do to bring about peace and unification of the country sooner so that the people could return to their normal way of life like before. To that the VC would reply that "The best way is for you to carry out our orders promptly. What else can you think of?"

66. Could you live freely under the Nationalists?

Of course. We could say what we wanted and work when we pleased. We could say our prayers aloud or go to church. But under the VC, we could only eat three meals a day and go to bed. We weren't allowed to do any other things. If we did, we would displease the VC. And if you displease the VC when you live in their area, you can be sure that your entire life will be spent in the mountain. If the VC dislike anyone, they accuse him of being an enemy spy. If they suspect anyone of being pro-Nationalist, they accuse him of spying for the enemy. They said anyone who worked for the Nationalist Government worked for the enemy. According to them, these people were bad elements. They classified people into classes: good, middle of the roaders, waivering, and so on.

67. What is the waivering class?

Those who didn't want to do anything for them. They just ate and then stayed idle. The VC classified everyone in the village into classes.

68. What class were you a member of?

The members of my class were called "the unstables".

69. Why were you called the unstables?

The VC said because we lived in their areas but our minds and hearts were with the other side.

70. How many people were classified in your class?

Quite a few. Friends sitting and talking together were lumped in the same class.

71. Which people in your village were the most important?

The regroupees enjoyed the most respect from the people.

The local VC didn't enjoy any respect at all. They were those who had joined the Communists when the Nationalists were still in control of the village. They went into hiding then but came back later to work for the Communists. These VC didn't enjoy much respect from the people.

72. Why didn't the villagers respect these local VC?

Because they were the local people. The villagers didn't trust them and looked down on them.

73. Why did the villagers respect the regroupees?

They respected the regroupees because the regroupees had been away for nine or ten years and they know how to talk. Also the people were frightened of them.

74. Why?

If the VC were displeased with anyone, they would take him away for re-education. No one liked to go to the mountain because life there was very hard. And so no one dared displease the VC.

75. Which people in your village were well liked by the people?

The people didn't like the VC. I am sure of that. There might be some people in the village who liked the VC but they were all members of the VCs' families.

76. Which people in your village were the best informed?

On which side? I think the best informed people have all left for the Nationalist-controlled areas. They were local officials but even in the villages where the VC came. The best informed are the most progressive elements have all left for the Government areas.

77. When did people leave the villages?

When the VC first came to the villages. Only the very poor remain with them. Why the very poor? Because these very poor people believe what the VC told them. The VC declared that they would bring privileges to the poor class. Only those with some education could understand the lies behind the VC promises. The uneducated people couldn't understand that, they would believe everything the VC told them. They would go here and there, do this and that for the VC. They just didn't understand.

78. Were many uneducated people in your village?

There were quite a few of them in the village. But many have left the village also. Quite a few villagers have deserted their homes. Take my hamlet for example, there were 450 families and over half of this number have come out here.

79. Which classes did the people who still remained in your village belong to?

They belonged to all classes: middle, poor and very poor.

80. Did any rich people remain in your village?

No. We classified people into four classes: Rich landowners, middle landowners, the poor and the very poor. All the members of the rich class have gone. Few members of the middle class are still in the village. Some members of the poor and very poor classes have come out here too. When they arrived in the Nationalist-controlled areas, they dispersed here and there. That is why I can't tell you exactly how many refugees from my village belong to this or that class. I only stick with the members of my family.

81. How was life in your village before 1954?

It was good in the village, there was no fighting at all. We were happy. The Viet-Minh would come to the village now and then for some rest. The people didn't mind because the Viet-Minh didn't bother them. The people continued to do their fishing as usual. We didn't have two or three Governments. It wasn't as confusing as it is now. It is so confusing now.

82. Was your village bombed during the Resistance?

Not at all.

83. Did life in your village improve after 1954?

After the Nationalists took over, the people were extremely happy. They continued to go fishing but they became more prosperous. Some built tiled-roof houses, others stored more. But now, they have lost everything.

84. How did the local officials behav

These officials were from th and recommended by the prios

85. How did the Buddhists feel about

They didn't mind, they were They agreed with what we told by the priest while the Budd didn't voice their disagreem

86. How did the local officials beha

They were good except for th Their talks were too blunt and On the whole, the officials have any complaints against

87. Did the province or district chi

The people met them when th for papers or on business.

88. Did the people receive any help

The people received rice, c ter Credit office. This

89. Did you borrow money from the A

No. The Catholics had a c could borrow money from th

90. Have you ever had an election i

We have participated in th National Assembly. I don' third election held in my

91. Would you describe how it was c

Before the election was h conducted by the district

92. What did you study during these study sessions?

We were told which candidate was good and deserved our votes. When the election day came we all went to vote for the candidates the cadres had recommended to us. You see the people didn't know which candidate was good and had to rely on the recommendations of the district or province. But all study stopped the night before the election day and the voters were supposed to remember the name of the candidate they were to vote for. Everything was in order, there was no confusion at all.

93. What did you know about the Diem Government?

I heard nothing about his government. We rarely received outside news in my hamlet. Every now and then the cadres would come and tell us that the government was doing all it could to help the people or they told us about the situation in Vietnam. But we weren't very interested in the news and we didn't try to find out what had happened.

94. Did you hear about the fall of Mr. Diem's Government?

Yes, about a month or so after his fall.

95. Who told you about that?

The village cadres. They said that Mr. Ngo Dinh Diem was a dictator, his family ruled the country and he killed many people and so on. We were told many other things. We didn't know anything because my hamlet was far away.

96. What did you and the other villagers think about the fall of that government?

We didn't know what to think about that. The government sat in Saigon and we were very far from it. We thought to ourselves that Mr. Diem must have done something wrong which proved that he wasn't able to lead the country, and so another person took his place. The priest cautioned us to be careful and that we shouldn't do anything unless he told us to do so. When the VC kept coming back to the village, the priest came out here.

97. What did the VC say about Mr. Diem?

They said many bad things about him. They said many things but I don't remember. As for the people, they just listened to them and kept their counsel. Neither the Buddhists nor the Catholics said anything because they didn't know much to say anyway.

98. Before the VC took over your village, were there any Nationalist forces in your hamlet or village?

Yes. There was one company of Civil Guards and one platoon of SDC. The ARVN were stationed in Binh Duong about [redacted] km from my village. The VC only came at night.

99. Were these Civil Guards and SDC from the village?

The Civil Guards were strangers but the SDC were from the village.

100. How did they behave towards the people?

When the VC came to the village they withdrew to the district. Their treatment of the villagers was all right. They didn't oppress the people or do anything to displease the people at all. They might have done so if my village had been a VC-controlled area, but my village then was a Nationalist-controlled place. And so the Civil Guards and the SDC were there to protect and keep order in the village.

101. When did the VC begin to come to your village?

Sometime at the end of 1962 and the beginning of 1963. They would come in groups of two or three persons.

102. What did they do?

What could they do much? They came in at night and secretly. They contacted a few of their people in the village and asked for rice and money. When the Nationalists learned about that, they went in to arrest the villagers who secretly worked for the VC, but those villagers left their homes and went to the mountain.

103. Did you see these VC coming to your village at night?

Of course. When they first came to the village, the people were very frightened and remained behind their closed doors. But we did peek and saw them walking around. Two or three of them would come each time and they were armed too but I don't know what type of weapons they used.

104. Where were the Civil Guards and the SDC then?

They were in their post. The VC didn't go to where the Civil Guards or SDC were stationed.

105. Was your village a Strategic Hamlet?

Yes.

106. When was it built?

In 1961. The entire village was fenced in.

107. How much labor and money did you have to contribute to it?

Each family had to spend 700 piasters to buy trees. Besides that each family had to spend so many days to dig communication trenches, to put a fence around the hamlet and to plant spikes.

108. Did the people receive any help from the government in the building of the Strategic Hamlet?

Nothing at all. After we finished fencing in our hamlets, we were told to fence the entire village also. Each family had to contribute 200 piasters and three or four days' work in the fencing of the village. We didn't mind the money very much but we had to spend much time doing the work ourselves. We built the Strategic Hamlet by ourselves. The government didn't help us at all.

109. Did the villagers complain about that?

Yes, they said the Strategic Hamlet cost them too much and they had to work hard. The people are always like that, they complain when life becomes hard.

110. What did you like about the Strategic Hamlet?

We were free then. Only we had to come and go at an appointed time. I don't think life in the Strategic Hamlet is hard at all.

111. What did you dislike about it?

One thing inconvenienced us: that was we had to come in at the appointed time in the afternoon. If the guard happened to be a friend of mine, he would let the gate open for me and I could remain outside late in the evening. But if the guard was unfriendly, then he would close the gate at the appointed time and anyone who happened to come in late would find the gate closed and had to spend the night outside of the Strategic Hamlet.

112. How did you feel about having to spend so much money and time to build it?

All the other villagers had to do the same. If they could afford the cost and the labor, I supposed I could too.

113. Would you like to live in a Strategic Hamlet now?

Of course, even if I had to do the work again. But to tell the truth, I don't have any money now because I am a refugee, so I can't shoulder the cost.

114. Before the VC came to your village, how did you feel about your life and future?

I thought my future would be very happy. We were free then and I could enjoy what I had worked for.

115. What did you think about the chances of your children having a better life?

I tried my best to send my children to school so they could have a good education. I thought to myself that my children could use that education to better themselves, and they wouldn't have to earn their living by fishing. They could find some other work to do. Fishing is a hard job. I valued education very much and so my son who is 11 years old is in the third grade (3 years of schooling). After the VC came, the school continued to function for a while and then had to stop. Now that we are refugees, I don't know what to do. My sister who is childless has promised to adopt my oldest child and send him to school.

116. When did you first hear of the VC?

I heard about them even before the Geneva Agreements were born. They lived in their area and so we had to listen to them.

117. You said before that in 1962-1963 the VC came to your village and contacted their people there. Did you and the villagers know who these people were?

Of course we knew who they were. The entire village knew.

118. Why didn't you report this to the government?

How could we do that? The Nationalists were stationed very far. When we were in the Strategic Hamlet, the VC remained outside and we in our own houses. One time the people knew the VC were coming and they reported to the Nationalists. When the VC arrived, they were met by the Nationalists who fired at them and killed some -- three or four of them were killed. Afterwards, the Civil Guards and the SDC began to withdraw.

119. Why?

I don't know. The people asked them to remain in the village to protect its safety but they withdrew anyway. They must have received military orders to withdraw or something. We simple citizen couldn't understand the military reasons behind this withdrawal. But some villagers went on to the district to report that such and such person worked for the VC and the district had a list of villagers who sympathized with the VC.

120. What happened to those who reported the VC's activities to the district?

They were secret agents of the Nationalists. We didn't know who they were. They disguised as peddlers to go to the district to make their reports.

121. What did the VC sympathizers do to earn their living?

They were all farmers. Some of them were poor but most of them were well-to-do people.

122. In your opinion, why did these people work for the VC?

They could benefit from their position. Take for example when the other people contributed 5000 piasters to the VC, these people passed on to the VC only two or three thousands. The rest they kept for their personal use. That was why they were well-to-do people.

123. How did you know that?

How? These people didn't do a thing and so where could they get the money to spend? I know for sure where they got it from.

124. Did the VC know about that?

How could they? They only came in every now and then. How could they know the truth?

125. Did the people report that to the VC?

How? The people knew that these local VC took money out of the people's contributions for their own use because they did nothing, and yet they had money to spend.

126. When the VC first came to your village, what did the GVN officials do?

They left the village to come out here. That was in 1963. The VC frightened them away and they went to the district. Thanks to them when the villagers came out here this time, they could go to these officials for their temporary identification cards.

127. Were there battles in or near your village at that time between the VC and the GVN?

Yes. When the VC came -- nine of them in all -- the Civil Guards fired at them, killing three. The other six VC ran to the mountain. One Civil Guard was wounded. No villager was wounded or killed. The VC were good runners, they could elude the Civil Guards' fire. They were better runners than the Nationalists because they went bare foot and wore nothing but shorts. The Nationalists wore boots and heavy clothes. The Nationalists raided my village four or five times. The first time they brought in armored cars. The villagers were so frightened they all went to the sea. The Nationalists went after them and hauled them all up to the district -- over 100 of them in all. When they found out that these were innocent villagers, they released them. The people learned from that experience, and so from then on they remained in their own homes when the Nationalists conducted raids in their village. The soldiers stayed in the people's houses, cooked their meals and then moved out the next day. That was all.

128. How did the Nationalist soldiers behave toward the people?

They were very good to the people. They didn't do anything to displease the people. They treated the people as if they were their brothers. The people cooked for the soldiers. They wanted the soldiers to remain in their village to protect them.

They asked the battalion commander to let his soldiers be stationed in their village so that the people could resume their jobs again. But, the battalion commander replied that he hadn't received any order to that effect, and so he had to take his soldiers to another place.

129. Have the American troops come to your village?

Not yet.

130. Have the Korean troops come to your village?

Not yet. The raids were conducted by the Nationalists.

131. Did they burn down the people's houses?

No.

132. How many guerrillas were in your village?

Just a few. After I came out here, I heard that the village guerrilla leader was killed during the raid conducted by the Korean troops. I knew him well. He always carried with him a radio transceiver. When the Korean troops came, the other guerrillas went into hiding. That village guerrilla leader ran to hide but he was too late. There are still six guerrillas alive.

133. Where did the guerrillas run to?

To the mountain, but I don't really know their hideouts. The cadres also didn't stay in the village but at some place near by. They didn't come to the village until night. They would come and study courses for the villagers. Every now and then they would stay for half a month or three weeks or one whole month in the village and then they left again. They didn't want to stay in the village because of fear of GVN raid. My village was like an island surrounded by enemy there was nothing else. The VC cadres were afraid that if they were surprised by the Nationalists soldiers, they wouldn't have any place to run to or hiding. The local cadres looked down on the people, but the cadres who came down from the mountain treated the people very nicely.

134. How many local cadres were in your village?

There were four of them in each hamlet. That made twelve in all in my village.

135. What did they do?

They were secretaries or something. To tell the truth I didn't like the VC and that was the reason I didn't pay attention to what was going on.

136. Did the Front troops often come to your village?

We saw them crossing the big route every now and then and they were all from the North.

137. How did you know they were from the North?

We heard them talking and their accent gave them away. The villagers called them "The military duty soldiers." They said these soldiers came from the North. And the soldiers themselves said the same thing. They said "We are military duty soldiers. We come here because it is our duty to liberate the South." And so the villagers used the term "military duty soldiers" to designate the Northern troops. Most of them were around 17, 18 or 20.

138. How did they behave toward the villagers?

We saw them coming and going, but they didn't bother us.

139. How did the villagers feel towards these Northerners?

They felt sorry for them because they came from so far away and they looked so young. They told the villagers that their cause was just and what they were fighting for was worth their effort.

140. When the VC first came to your village and the people liked to listen to them, what did the people like to listen to the most then?

They told the villagers that in the North construction of buildings and factories was going on at a great pace. The people in the North were happy. They urged the people in the South to try to do the same, and in order to catch up with the North they should work three times as hard. They promised that when the war was over each villager would receive a tiled-roof house. As for me I liked to listen to their talks because they had been absent for ten or twelve years and they described to us beautiful things they had seen. But I didn't believe their promises. Theirs were only talks.

141. Do you know who the Front leaders are?

We were told that the leader of the Front was Lawyer Nguyen Huu Tho. He was the chairman.

142. Did they say what he did?

No.

143. Did they mention any other names?

No.

144. What did they say about Mr. Ho Chi Minh?

They said he worked hard for the revolution. This was one of their devices to get people to work harder.

145. How often did the VC hold meetings in your village or hamlet?

There was no fixed schedule. Sometimes every one or two days, sometimes every one or two months, the people were invited to attend the meetings.

146. Did the people like to go to these meetings?

When the VC first came to the village, the people liked to listen to them, and many attended these meetings. Later, the people got so weary of these meetings, they made up excuses to stay away. When they first came to the village, the VC used a gasoline lamp to light up the meeting area. Now, the VC don't dare do that any longer for fear of airplanes, and the meeting place was dark and the people didn't like them.

147. Didn't they force the people to come to the meetings?

If the people refused to go, what could they do?

148. What did they say at these meetings?

They talk about their victories. They said they were winning and the Americans losing. They only said good things about themselves.

149. What did they say about your village?

They told the villagers that if they wanted to move to the Nationalist-controlled areas, they should do it secretly because if they were caught they would be accused of spying for the enemy. Also the refugees had no food to eat, no houses to shelter them, everything was expensive and one kg of rice cost over 100 piasters. They said these things to frighten the villagers from going, but the VC couldn't stop them. When they wanted to move out, they moved out. Also to keep the people under their control, the VC confiscated all their identification cards, knowing that without them the people would be afraid to move around. But, that also couldn't stop the people from coming out here.

150. What did they say about the Nationalist Government?

They said the Nationalist Government was the Americans' lackey and such.

151. What did they say about the Americans?

They said the Americans were rich but they didn't have fighting spirit, while the VC were poor but their morale was high, and they had won many battles. The villagers asked them "You have few troops and few weapons, how can you say you are winning?" They said that the Americans were rich and had plenty of modern weapons, but the VC won because of their high morale and fighting spirit. That was their answer. We didn't know what else to ask them again to reply to them.

152. What did they say about China?

We only heard the Regroupees mention China. The local VC didn't say anything. The Regroupees said that China would help the front to the end to liberate the South. They said many other things.

153. Did they say anything about China sending troops to the South?

They said China would send troops to the South to fight against the Americans and their lackeys. They claimed that they had downed two or three dozen airplanes. We didn't know if their claims were true or not, but our hamlet continued to be bombed often.

154. What did they say about Russia?

They said Russia gave help to the Front too. Then they said something about Russia had embraced revisionism, that those who followed that doctrine were bad, not warm to the front, that only those in the Socialist countries who haven't taken to revisionism were good. We only listened to their speeches, but we weren't well educated and so couldn't grasp well what they were saying. Besides, I didn't go to these meetings often. As a matter of fact I wasn't to a meeting like that of last year. If they insisted that I go, I sent my wife or one of my children to go in my place. You didn't have to go, you could send any member of your family to go in your place.

155. Did the villagers believe what the VC told them?

Some did, some didn't. How could the people believe them? They said they were winning, but the village kept getting bombed and the villagers killed.

156. What kind of villagers believed the VC, and what kind of villagers didn't?

It is very hard to know the people's minds and hearts. When the VC said this, the people replied "yes" and when the VC said that, the answer was "yes" too. Who dared to stand up and challenge their statements? So you can't really know who really believed in the VC and who didn't.

157. Did you ever discuss with the other villagers who you could trust about what the VC said?

Yes. Every now and then a few of us -- three or four -- would get together for an informal chat. We would tell each other that the VC's claims of victory were all made up. Take for example, we didn't know how the VC fight or the Nationalist soldiers behave in the battles, but the fact is the Nationalist side had airplanes in the sky, warships on the sea, artillery, armored cars and amphibious vehicles while the VC were hiding here and there. How could the VC win against all this strength? And so we did discuss the VC sometimes. But this was done when we were sure that the VC weren't within earshot. This was informal discussion among friends who could trust each other.

158. Weren't you afraid one of them might turn against you and report your discussions to the VC?

We were close friends. I wouldn't talk to them on these matters if I didn't trust them completely.

159. Have there been changes in what the Front people said in these meetings?

To tell the truth, I haven't been to their meetings for quite a while. The reason was I disliked them very much. You see I had a quarrel with my neighbor and the VC came and confiscated my equipment. They told me they wanted to borrow it. It was just a quarrel between neighbors but the VC accused me of disturbing the peace. They dealt me a bad turn. Since then I became disgusted with them and refused to come to their meetings at all, and when they asked me to do something for them, I found other excuses to stay home. I couldn't go against them single handedly and so when they called on me to do this or that, I told them "Fine, you go first and I will come later." When they left, I left the house too.

160. Did you hear what the people said about what the VC had been saying lately?

At first the villagers took the VC's presence in stride. Although they didn't discuss what the VC had said during the meetings, they still talked to each other about their work and business. With the bombings and shellings, their houses burned down or destroyed and their properties ruined, the people went about without saying anything to each other. If a family wanted to move out here, they did so quietly without telling anyone. The people just didn't talk much about what they wanted to do or were about to do.

161. Did the Front ever take any villagers away for re-education?

The inter-family group chiefs, the xom chiefs and the suspects were sent away for re-education.

162. Where did they take these people?

To the mountains for the most part. A friend of mine has been staying in the mountains for almost a year -- eight months to be exact -- and his release isn't in sight yet.

163. What did he do?

He was the security agent under the Nationalists. Someone informed the VC on him and he was taken away. I think he will die in the mountains. No one knows when he will be released.

164. What did the VC make these people do during those two months?

The VC took these people to the high mountains where there was a stream and let these people stay there. They made them do work such as weeding, planting, gathering firewood and so on. Only one VC remained to watch these villagers. For two months the VC didn't call on these people once. They didn't teach them anything at all. At the end of two months they called these people together and asked "Do you understand the Front policy now? You have been working for the enemy against the people. The revolution is lenient towards your cases and so from now on you should show that you deserve this leniency. From now on you have to work hard and set a good example for others." Then they made each one write up a self-accusation statement, "My name is such and such. I promise from now on I will be the first to carry out any orders from above." or something like that. The VC read these statements over and if they were pleased with my statement, for example, I would be released. If not, I would have to rewrite it until the VC accepted it to their satisfaction. From then on the VC expected you to be the first to pay taxes and the first to carry out the orders.

165. Were you sent to re-education also?

They took me away for seven days only.

166. Why?

They were trying to recruit me to work for them and so they let me go home. They expected I would become a VC cadre. They came to my home and talked to me about this and that. But my wife said no, she wouldn't let me work for the VC.

167. What did the people say about the re-education?

They said the morning for the government was the worst spell of all.

168. How did the people feel about the re-education?

The people were very frightened. Many of them came back with bad cases of sickness.

169. How many young men over 18 were in your hamlet?

About 20.

170. How many joined the Front?

About five or six.

171. Why did they join the VC?

They were forced to join.

172. What did they do in the VC?

I don't know. I only saw the VC take them away.

173. Why did the VC force only five or six young men to join them? What happened to the rest?

They were only sons and so were exempted. Their fathers told the VC that they would go in the place of their sons. The other young men had to go because they belonged to big families.

174. How many joined the Nationalist army?

Some, but I don't know how many.

175. Do you know of anyone who volunteered to join the Front?

I didn't see any join the Front of their free will. They were all forced to join. I don't know about the other hamlets. I can only tell you about my own. I suppose there were people in other hamlets who volunteered to join the VC and those who had to join because they couldn't get away from the VC soon enough.

176. In your opinion, why did some of those young men volunteer to join the VC?

The VC organized the women to proselyte the young men. These young girls incited or ridiculed those young men into joining. Those young men saw the girls join the VC and to show off they joined too.

177. When did the Front institute the military duty system in your village?

The VC told the villagers that before they used the term "responsibility" but from now on they would use the term "duty".

The people asked them to clarify the terms for their understanding and they replied that "Before it was 'the responsibility,' now it is the 'duty' to liberate the South. When it was the responsibility of the people to liberate the South, we only accepted volunteers. Now it is the duty of everyone to save the country and everyone has to do his share."

178. When did the VC apply the term "duty" to your village?

In some areas the term "duty" was applied sooner and in some areas later. The VC began to apply it to my village beginning last year, but most of these young men have returned to the village.

179. Why?

They came down with malaria and were very sick. These were fishermen and the VC took them to the mountains. How could you expect them to adapt to the changes?

180. How many of them have returned to the village?

Five or six joined the VC but two or three have returned. I would say about half have returned.

181. Did these returnees say anything about their lives with the VC?

They said they couldn't endure the hardships. They said many VC came down with sickness and some even died from it. They said many came down with malaria and died because of lack of medicine. One woman whose son died of malaria got so infuriated with the VC she went around cursing them.

182. How did the VC treat families with members in the Nationalists?

They watched them very badly and watched them closely. If they wanted to go any place, they had to have permission from the VC. But that is over now because these families have all left the village.

183. Did the VC take away land from the rich and give to the poor in your village?

No. We were all fishermen and didn't have any land. The VC hadn't said anything about land distribution or such.

184. Did they promise to give fishermen sampans and equipment for their profession?

Yes they said that. They told us that when the country was liberated, the government would provide the fishermen with sampans and so on to work for a living. That was what they said.

185. What taxes did you have to pay to the Front when you were in your village?

We had to pay what they called the troop support tax and a commercial tax.

186. What was commercial tax (thue cong thuong)?

We had to pay tax on the fish we caught. When we brought the fish out for sale, the VC came and levied a tax on that. This they called the commercial tax. The amount of troop support tax each family had to pay depended on the economic status of that particular family. The rich have to pay more than the poor. The amount of commercial tax also depended on the amount of fish caught in a particular day.

187. How much did your family have to pay for troop support?

My family had to pay 500 piasters a year. We made the payment for only one year -- the first year when they were there.

188. How much did you have to pay for commercial tax?

This depended on the amount of fish we caught.

189. How did the VC know how much fish you had caught?

We had to weigh to find out how much fish we had caught each day.

190. How much did you pay for each kg of fish?

For every 50 kg of fish we had to pay the VC 80 piasters. This, according to the VC, was the standard amount. But they also said that they taxed 50 cents for each kg of fish.

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* Ed note: One-half piaster.

191. Did the VC say anything about the amount of taxes for this year?

Yes, they said that they would double the amount of taxes for this year. They explained that last year there were less troops but there would be more troops this year and they needed more money. The VC know how to talk to the people and get what they wanted. They told the people that they should pay taxes to help build up the country. Those who didn't have money told them they couldn't pay taxes and the VC couldn't do anything about that. But as soon as they heard that this or that family had sold fish and thus had some money, they would come and make that family pay either half or a part of the tax amount.

192. Suppose you couldn't go to the sea this year, you wouldn't be able to pay taxes to the VC, isn't that right?

That is right, the VC couldn't make us pay if we were unable to work. It is different with the farmers, the VC could see with their own eyes what the farmers had.

193. What did the villagers say about the taxes?

The villagers complained about the taxes very much. They said we didn't make enough to eat and yet we had to pay taxes. But the VC replied that if the people wanted the country to be unified, they should make contributions. The people answered back saying that they weren't able to go to work and so they had no money to pay to the VC. That was true. How could you pay them if you didn't have money? Anyone who had money and refused to pay up was sent away for re-education.

194. Besides taxes, did they take up collections among the villagers?

That happened very rarely. When they brought their wounded to the village -- some lost a hand, others a leg and so on in some battle -- the local cadres were instructed to take up a collection among the villagers. They would go around the village and ask for a contribution from each family. One family would give 5 piasters, another 10. That was all.

195. How many times did that happen in your village?

Each time they brought in five or six crippled, one family would give 5 piasters, another 10.

196. How did the villagers feel about that?

They felt sorry for those men. One had lost both legs, another both arms. They were all Northerners. There went to South more. The villagers felt sorry for them because they were also young.

197. Where did the villagers usually sell their produce, their fish?

We could sell fish at the market.

198. Was the market under VC or GVN control?

The Nationalists controlled the market. Sometimes the VC let us go to the market freely; other times they restricted our movements. The same fish, if we could sell it at the market would bring us 50 piastres, but when they forbade us to leave the village, we had to sell it to other villagers and we would get only 5 piastres. You see the damage.

199. Did they say why they didn't want the villagers to take their fish to the market?

They explained that the troops were making preparations for some attack and they didn't want the people to get caught in between. We could only sell our fish to the Nationalists because the VC didn't buy it. They only ate rice with salt. I didn't see them ever eating fish with rice.

200. What did the people do with their fish when they couldn't sell it at the market?

They had to keep the fish in salt or boil it and wait for the VC to lift ban so that they could go to the market again.

201. What about rice?

We sold fish at the market and bought our rice there.

202. What happened to the villagers when the VC wouldn't let them bring their fish to the market?

Then we went to the farmers and bought rice from them for temporary use. When the ban continued for a long time, the entire village went hungry.

203. How often did the villagers go hungry?

A few times.

204. Did the VC cadres help the villagers?

Not at all. They never gave any help to the villagers. When the villagers had money, they came around and talked about "brotherhood" and such. But, when the villagers lacked rice to eat, they were nowhere to be found.

205. If the Front had restrictions on selling produce, did this have any effect on the villagers' production of food?

When the VC forbade the villagers to go to the market, the people remained at home and didn't go out fishing. Where could they sell the fish they had caught?

206. Did the VC ever buy fish from the villagers?

Every now and then a very little amount. They didn't have money to pay. Fish wasn't cheap and we would charge them the same price we charged others in the market.

207. Did the Front set up any organizations in your village?

The VC preached unity. They didn't distinguish between the Buddhists and the Catholics but treated everyone the same.

208. Did they organize Farmers', Young Men's Associations and so on?

For the fishermen the VC organized the Fisherman's Association, but few people joined their organizations. I belonged to the Fisherman's Association because I lived near the sea.

209. Were the people who joined this association ever given any special privileges?

We received no privileges at all. But when I and my neighbor went to set fishing, for example, if we quarreled over which had the right to take this or that fish, we could bring the matter to the VC and abide by their judgment if we were members of the Fisherman's Association. If the VC said both were right, they would divide the fish in two equal parts and each of us would take one part. If they said my neighbor was right, then he would have the fish.

If we weren't members, the VC wouldn't care to pass judgment. That was the reason I joined the association. The VC didn't help us at all. They only created more troubles for us instead. Outwardly, the VC said they made no distinction between people of different religious beliefs or political affiliations, but the VC hated the Catholics the most. The Catholics were their enemy.

210. How did you know that?

How? The VC had a list of names of all the Catholics and a list of names of all the Buddhists. If they weren't to discriminate against the Catholics why should they need the lists of names? From that I could guess that the VC hated the Catholics the most. Also, I found that when a Catholic quarreled with his neighbors, the VC showed their partiality in favor of the other villagers at the expense of the Catholic.

211. Would you give me an example?

For example, I was right but the VC said my neighbor was right and I was wrong. This is one example. When our priest left the village, he told us that the Catholics shouldn't compromise themselves. They shouldn't work for the Communists because Communists and Catholics were two enemies of long standing. We had been warned by our priest and so we knew why the VC treated us differently.

212. Where did the VC cadres in your village come from?

They were from the village except for two or three who came from some other villages.

213. How were they? How did they treat the villagers?

Outwardly, the VC claimed that they were fair and just, but I found that were all lies. They showed their partiality in favor of those who worked for them at the expense of those who were against them. I didn't see any fairness at all.

214. Who was the most important cadre position in your village?

There were two most important cadres in the village, and they were both village cadres. One was the chairman of the autonomous committee and the other one was in charge of sending people [illegible] for re-education. He had something to do with security.

215. What did the villagers think of them?

Some villagers liked them, some didn't. Some praised these cadres, some complained about them. People weren't of one mind. Some said this, some that.

216. Which courses or groups had the most influence on Front administration and policies in your hamlet or village?

The man in charge of sending people away for re-education. He was also in charge of the village security and so when he told people to do this or that, the people had to obey him. If not, he would arrest anyone who went against his orders.

217. Did your hamlet or village have a Party Chapter?

The Party? No, I never heard them mention their Party to the villagers. They kept it a secret.

218. Were there women cadres in your village?

Yes, they were in the administrative staff of the Women's Association. They were those whose husbands had gone North to regroup.

219. How did the villagers feel towards them?

I don't know, but personally I was disgusted. These women went around telling people this and that but they didn't know how to talk.

220. Did you see or hear about any conflicts between the cadres?

Of course, the cadres were like the villagers. They quarreled with each other.

221. What was the nature of their quarrels?

Their quarrels centered mainly on Party membership and non-Party membership, but the VC always kept their quarrels a secret from the people. For example, five men were working together. Three had Party membership while the other two didn't. If there were any important orders coming down from above, the Party members were informed about them but the non-Party members weren't. This created conflicts among the VC. The non-Party members were jealous of the Party members because the latter received more privileges.

222. How did you know about that?

They quarreled and then they fought against each other. One was jealous of another, that was all.

223. What did the villagers think about the cadres' quarreling with each other?

They didn't say anything. It was another fight. To tell the truth the VC didn't tell us why they were fighting against each other. But I could guess the nature of their conflicts. Sometimes during the meeting the Party members were called together and some important orders were communicated to them while the non-Party members weren't told anything. I think the VC are very dictatorial.

224. You told me before that when the VC first came to your village, the villagers liked them, but they changed their attitudes towards the VC afterwards. What caused the change?

When the VC first came to the village, they proclaimed that they would help the people and would bring about this and that. The people saw none of their promises become real. Instead they found that the VC's presence brought more devastation to their village and so they changed their attitudes toward the VC.

225. Did the Front ever kill any villagers?

They killed three villagers.

226. Why were they killed?

One was my cousin -- my uncle's son -- he was a member of the Village Youth Organization. The second had something to do with the Village Youth Organization too and the third was a village security agent.

227. When were they killed?

They were killed in 1962. At that time, the Nationalists were still in control of the village, the Strategic Hamlet was there. Everything was there and yet five VC could slip into the village. They knocked at their victims' doors. The people didn't know the VC were there. When they opened the door, the VC came in and pulled their victims out.

228. Did they say why they killed these three men?

They said because these men were against them.

229. What did the people think about these killings?

When the people heard that the VC were about to execute these three men, 60 or 70 villagers came and begged the VC to be lenient. They pleaded with the VC over and over. One VC wearing a mask -- his whole face was covered except for his nose and his eyes -- shouted at the villagers and told them to disperse or they would kill them all. They shot all three of them. As for my cousin, they shot him and then buried him. That night my family went to find his body. It was easy to uncover it because it was buried in the sand. My family cried and cried over my cousin for a long time.

230. Where were the Nationalist soldiers then?

When the Nationalist soldiers came, the VC had already left for the mountain. The next time the VC came back, the Nationalist soldiers were informed in time and they killed three of them. It was in revenge for the three men killed by these VC. Their families felt much better after that. They even captured their weapons.

231. Were you or other villagers ever made to perform work without pay?

Other villagers had to go on transportation missions but I never did. These missions occurred only every now and then, and each time a group of villagers had to go. It wasn't my turn yet.

232. What did they do during these transportation missions?

They were taken to the woods or mountains and stayed there, and when the VC needed, they would to carry the wounded.

233. To where?

They were to carry the wounded from one village to the next, and another group of laborers was to carry them to the next village and so on.

234. How many people in your village have gone on these transportation missions?

Quite a few but my turn hasn't come yet. My village was quite crowded. Each person had to go only once. They went in groups of five or three persons each time.

235. When would your turn be?

I went once for three days. We carried the wounded from [redacted] Village.

236. How many did you carry that time?

There were 15 that time.

237. Did they say where they got wounded?

They were wounded when they crossed [redacted] which is located in Thu Ky District.

238. How many were critically wounded?

They were all critically wounded. None of them had received any treatment. It was raining and the odor that came off their wounds was really horrible. These wounded soldiers had received no medicine at all.

239. What did the wounded say?

They told the laborers this: "Please bear with us. We came here because it was our duty to liberate the South. Please bear with us." They were all Northerners and young.

240. Where were they going to from [redacted]

I don't know. Another group of laborers was there to take them to another place.

241. Did the VC make the villagers dig up the roads and so on?

They made the villagers living in villages near the main roads do the digging. We lived near the sea and far away from the road and so we were exempted.

242. Was your hamlet a Combat Hamlet?

First they destroyed the Strategic Hamlet and then ordered the villagers to fence the hamlet again. But everything now is destroyed. Most of us have come out here and there was no one to take care of the hamlet.

243. In your village, what had you heard about conditions of life in the Front forces?

I didn't hear anything about that. They might have said something about that but I didn't hear them.

244. Have any crippled Front soldiers returned to your village?

They have, but didn't come to my hamlet. They stayed at the village. My hamlet was very far away from the village. These crippled soldiers came and stayed at the village, and the local VC were instructed to take up a collection among the villagers.

245. How long did these crippled soldiers remain in your village?

I don't know. The local cadres came to each family and told us that some crippled soldiers were at the village and asked each of us to contribute some money for their personal use.

246. Did you ever meet these crippled soldiers?

I met them but never talked to them.

247. How did the people feel towards these collections?

The people felt sorry for them. When the VC took up a collection for these crippled soldiers, the villagers were willing to give what they could but they would refuse if the collection was done for some other purpose.

248. Did you think a soldier's chances of surviving were better in the VC or the Nationalist forces?

They were more chances of getting killed in the VC.

249. Why did you think so?

The nationalists have warships, tanks and artillery. If the VC don't have good hideouts, they will all get killed. I don't know where all the Southern soldiers have gone. They must have all been killed because I only saw the Northerners. Many of them are here. I didn't see any Southerners at all.

250. What did you think about the Northerners being here?

I didn't know what to think. When we met them they told us that they came here because it was their duty to liberate the South.

251. Which side did you think was better armed and stronger?

The Nationalists have modern weapons. Why do you ask such a question? Everybody knows that, I don't have to tell you.

252. Had the Front's activities in your village changed in any way in the last year or so? Had it become more active?

They were always the same. Also, I wasn't with them and so I don't know much.

253. Did the VC hold more meetings this year than last year?

There were more meetings last year than this year.

254. Did they make the villagers go on transportation missions more often this year?

Yes. More villagers were called upon to go on transportation missions this year. The VC made up a list of people who would have to go on missions, but most of them have come out hard. The VC will be short of laborers.

255. How many times have you gone on transportation missions this year?

None this year yet. Other people have but my turn hasn't come yet.

256. Have you ever heard about defects suffered by Front units?

Other villagers might have known something about that because they went here and there on business. As for me, I remained at home so I didn't hear anything.

According to the villagers, dozens of VC were killed on the highway when they were trapped by the Nationalist soldiers, but the VC still claimed that they won the battle, that none of them were killed and many Nationalist soldiers were killed. They always said good things about themselves.

257. Did the Front ever set up a school in your village?

They had one of the schools which were built by the Nationalists. The schools could open for a few months and then had to close down because of air attacks.

258. Did the VC cadres in your village teach the children?

The teachers came from other villages. The school started at 6:00 PM and was over at 10:00 PM. Each child had to bring a small lamp with him to school and they had to put out the fire when they heard the sound of airplanes.

259. Did adults ever go to school?

Only the children went to the school.

260. Was there a first-aid station in your village?

No. And we had it no one would have died of the plague last year. It occurred from April until June and about 50 or 60 villagers died from it. We had no medicine and had to resort to herb medicine.

261. Did the villagers ask for the VC's permission to bring the sick out here?

They wouldn't let anyone leave the village. Also, anyone who happened to come down with that sickness wouldn't be alive when he reached here. He would die within 12 hours from the first moment the symptoms began to appear.

262. Do you know the names of the Saigon Government?

Of course. Brigadier General Nguyen Cao Ky. When we were in the village, the VC wouldn't let us know anything. I heard this name after I came out here.

263. Did the VC have newspapers or bulletins for the villagers to read?

Nothing at all. It was as if the VC had taken a blanket and covered the other side completely and we could only see this side. They let us see one side only.

264. Which of these words do you now think best describe the Nationalist Government? Do you think the government is strong or weak?

It must be strong.

265. Why do you think so?

We are strong. Why? We have tanks, ammunition and so on. Strong I say. As for the VC, they are nowhere to be seen. They are hiding in the jungles or woods. How can you say that they are strong.

266. We are strong, why haven't we been able to defeat the VC yet?

We have defeated them.

267. If the government has defeated the VC, you should be in your village, not sitting here.

Of course we can defeat them. The VC are hiding here and there. We will defeat them in time. My hamlet is far out of the way and the government hasn't needed it yet or something. That is why it hasn't sent troops to pacify it for the people's sake. But I am sure we will be able to return to our village some day. Just a few days ago someone from the village came out here and told us that the Korean troops were stationed in our village now. I hope we will be able to return to our village soon.

268. What else were you told about the situation in your village?

Nothing else. The information I just told you came from the children who had sneaked into their village to gather their families' belongings. They told us that the Korean and the allied troops were all over. As for the VC, they were nowhere to be seen. I don't want to return now because the security isn't complete. I am afraid something might happen to me.

269. In your opinion, is the government compassionate or cruel?

It must be compassionate.

270. Why do you think so?

In peacetime, the government helped the poor, giving them jobs to earn their living. When the VC came, they forced people to make contributions. The Nationalist Government has given much help to the people while the Communist Government only oppressed the people for their own benefit.

271. In your opinion, is the government just or corrupt?

Personally I think that the government is just. I don't know about the high echelons, but I find that the low echelon cadres are good to the people, helping them along in the spirit of brotherhood.

272. You haven't received any assistance from the government, how do you feel about that?

The government has to take care of a great many people. I am not the only one in this situation. The government will come to our aid sooner or later. We are refugees.

273. In your opinion, is the government wise or confused?

The government must be wise. It has to be wise to lead the people. We are just simple citizens, how can we judge the government? The government is wise.

274. In your opinion, is the government dedicated or lazy?

The government is dedicated. I am not talking about the high echelon officials now. I am only talking about the officials at the village and hamlet levels. When we asked for papers, we were given them almost immediately. If the low echelons are like that, the high echelons must be the same.

275. How did you get information in your village on what was happening in Saigon?

They never let us know what was happening on the Nationalist side. We had no radios. The VC had a set but we had to listen to their station.

276. Did the villagers have any radio sets?

Four or five families had radios. They weren't allowed to listen to the Saigon station.

277. Did you ever see or hear entertainment such as Cai Luong or Vong Co?

Only once during the entire period the VC were there. They put on a show and that was all. I didn't like it. I liked to listen to Cai Luong.

278. What did you hear about life in China?

They said there was electricity everywhere, the people were very happy. They didn't have to go out to buy food, there were cars that brought food to the people's houses. I don't know if it is true or not.

279. Did you believe what the VC told you?

How could I? I didn't see them with my own eyes.

280. Did the people believe what the VC told them?

No, they didn't believe the VC either.

281. Did you ever hear about the Chieu Hoi program?

I didn't hear anything about it at all.

282. Didn't you receive leaflets?

Yes, I received some last month.

283. What was said in the leaflets?

The leaflets urged the people living in the VC-controlled areas to use these leaflets as their temporary passports so they could go to the Nationalist-controlled areas to earn a living. They were assured that the army and the government officials were ready to give them any assistance they needed.

284. Did you bring any leaflet with you when you came out here?

No.

285. Why?

Our sampan went down and so I lost everything.

286. What did the villagers do when there was an attack on your village?

The people were very frightened. Usually before our soldiers came into the village, there was a barrage of artillery and small guns. The people were very frightened, but when the soldiers actually came into the village, everything calmed down, and the people weren't frightened anymore. The village was full of trenches and caves. When there was an operation, all the villagers went down to their trenches. The VC went to theirs. When the Nationalist soldiers came in, they called all the villagers together and gave a speech. The villagers were told about the government's plan to build this or that or the Government was this or that. Then the villagers made the request that the soldiers remain in the village so that the people could work in peace. But the next morning, the soldiers left anyway. The villagers wished that the soldiers would be stationed among them. But they were frightened when they heard the soldiers were coming because it was a VC-controlled area, and the soldiers usually saturated the area with shells before they actually came in.

287. Were the people informed in advance of the oncoming raid?

Not at all.

288. Do you think the villagers should be warned in advance?

No. This is a military operation. The civilians shouldn't be told about that. The VC would learn about that too and they would run into hiding. The VC should be surprised if we want to catch them.

289. Have you seen or heard about the use of chemicals to destroy vegetation or crops?

I have heard about the spraying, but never saw its effects.

290. Who told you about the spraying?

The villagers. They had passed those sprayed areas, and according to them all the trees had turned red and everything else destroyed.

291. What areas were they talking about?

The VC-controlled areas. The trees were stripped of their leaves. I didn't go to these places.

292. What did the people say about the spraying?

They said the government sprayed these areas to destroy the trees, to deny the VC their hideouts and force them to look for other places to live.

293. What did they say about the destruction of crops by spraying?

They didn't mention crops destroyed by the spraying. They said the spraying was carried out in the woods or jungle areas where the VC were hiding.

294. Before you came here, had you seen any Americans in Vietnam?

Of course.

295. When

When we were on our way to come out here. We were met by a patrol boat and the Americans waved their hands signaling that we should approach. We were in the sea then. We told them that we were civilian refugees from the VC-controlled areas and asked them to tow our sampan along so we could get to our destination sooner. We were told to wait for awhile and the patrol boat would give us some help. There were five sampans being towed by the patrol boats but mine went down. We were rescued but all our possessions were lost together with the sampan. In the boat, each of us was given some food to eat because we hadn't had any food for quite awhile.

296. What do you think the Americans want in Vietnam?

They came here to help Vietnam.

297. Why do you think the Americans came here to help Vietnam?

If they are here not to help Vietnam, what are they here for? The Americans and the Vietnamese are like brothers, they are very close to other.

298. What did the VC say about the Americans?

They said the Americans were rich and they came here to take over Vietnam. They also added that the Americans were rich but had no fighting spirit. They run when they hear the sound of gunfire.

299. Did you believe what the VC said?

Only partly. The Americans are rich.

300. Have you seen or heard about other countries assisting the GVN and sending troops to South Vietnam?

I saw the Korean troops.

301. What did you see or hear about the Korean troops?

According to the villagers the Korean troops were very severe with the people living in the VC-controlled areas.

302. What did the villagers say about the American troops?

They didn't say anything about the American troops.

303. What did you think about their being in your country?

We need more troops so that we can defeat the Communists sooner.

304. Have you heard about the air bombardment of North Vietnam?

The VC said the North was being bombed but the army in the North had downed many airplanes. One day six airplanes attacked the North, three were shot down. Many people were hurt. I heard about the bombing on the North a long time ago. The VC said many things about it, mostly that many airplanes had been shot down.

305. What are the effects of the bombings on North Vietnam?

People get killed.

306. What are the effects on the Front in South Vietnam?

More will have to be sent to protect the North and that will mean less troops in the South.

307. In your opinion, why did the Government and the Americans bomb the North?

Because the North is against the South and so we have to attack it. What else?

308. What did the other villagers think about the bombing?

I didn't hear them say anything. The villagers don't often discuss things. Also, I was busy with my work and didn't have much time to go around gathering other people's opinions. Most of us were fishermen. We were more concerned about our own work than about the situation in the world or in the country. We were only worried about how to get more fish.

309. What do you think was the most important reason that made you leave your village and come here?

It was because of the VC's presence in my village that I have to leave my home and come out here. Had the VC not sneaked into my village, we would still have had the government and our homes would remain intact. We wouldn't have to come out here.

310. Why didn't you leave when the VC first came to your village? Why did you wait until now to come out here?

When the VC first came to my village, there was less shooting. We were able to continue our work. There were few troubles. We did our work and didn't mind the VC. But the Nationalists have lately forbidden us to go fishing and so we have to find some peaceful place to continue earning our living again. The people are the ones who have to bear most of the disadvantages caused by the war. If we didn't come out here, we might get killed.

311. And so you came out here because of the bombing and shelling, not because of the VC's presence in your village?

Because of the VC's presence in my village. A few years ago the VC weren't in my village and there was no bombing or shelling. We were happy then.

312. What did you think about the bombings of your village?

I thought to myself that the VC wouldn't have a place to live if all the people moved out here. Thus, the VC have tried all they can to hold on to the people. If the people don't heed the Government's appeal to leave their villages for other secure areas, they will get killed eventually. By and by all the people will come out here, except those who work for the VC. I think the bombings are justified. When all the people have come out here, the VC will be left by themselves.

313. Did you hear broadcasts from planes or read leaflets asking you to leave?

Had the leaflets been dropped before, many of us would have come out here earlier, and few villagers would have been killed. The leaflets were dropped the month before and the month after we came out here. I heard that they were dropped all over the farming areas but you hardly saw them in the fishing areas.

314. Did you hear broadcasts?

No. I only saw leaflets.

315. If you hadn't seen leaflets, would you have come out here?

Of course. I was somewhat frightened because we didn't have any papers with us. We made our escape by sea and it took us three days to get to Phu My District. Then we stayed there for two days waiting for our temporary identification cards. Then we made for Qui Nhon. There were many refugees in Phu My. They were all from the VC-controlled areas. We couldn't stay in Phu My because we were fishermen and couldn't earn a living there. If we were farmers or knew how to farm, we might have stayed in Phu My.

316. Did you receive any assistance from the Government during the ten days you stayed in Phu My?

Our names weren't on the list of refugees because we were newcomers. Also we came to Phu My just to get our temporary identification cards.

317. Did the refugees in the camp in Phu My receive anything from the Government?

They must have received assistance from the government on a daily or monthly basis. I am not sure what they have received because I didn't ask them.

318. What did the refugees in that camp say about the assistance they receive from the government?

I didn't live in that camp and I don't know.

319. What did the officials in that camp say?

They said the government gave food and medicine to the people.

320. While you were in Phu My, did you hear of anyone who had come to the refugee camp and then returned to his village?

No. Once anyone has come out here, he isn't likely to return to his village.

321. Are you sorry now that you have left your village?

Not at all. I came out here to find peace and to be able to carry living again. I am not sorry at all.

322. If it hadn't been for the bombings and shellings, would you have come out here?

It is hard to say. While we were in our village, the bombings were so intense we were unable to work. We came out here to find peace so we could continue earning our living again.

323. Have you ever been a refugee before?

No. We meant to make our escape in January but the VC's surveillance was very close and we had to wait until this time to make for here.

324. Were you looking for certain opportunities for leaving?

Yes. We had to wait until there was bombing to make our escape. The VC all ran into hiding. Many villagers took that opportunity to come out here. There had been bombings before, but they weren't as intense as the one that occurred the day we left the village. That day the bombings occurred two or three or four times. Every few hours the airplanes appeared in the sky and the village was bombed again. The VC couldn't stay in the village. They had to run to the mountain and so we took that chance to come out here.

325. How many villagers came out here with you?

There were ten families in all. Some families had ten members, others six and so on. They couldn't bring much with them except their fish nets, some rice and that was all.

326. Before you actually left your village, had you and the other refugees discussed the possibility of escaping together?

We did but kept our discussion very secret. We didn't dare get many people to join us for fear that the VC might learn of our intention and keep strict watch over us. That would be very bad indeed. We could only discuss our intention with our trusted friends.

327. What did the other refugees say about leaving their village?

They weren't sorry or anything. They didn't say anything. They only wished to find a peaceful place where they could begin working again to earn their living. They didn't miss their village.

328. Before you left your hamlet, what did you heard about present conditions in GVN areas?

In order to stop the villagers from leaving their village, the VC lied to them by telling them that the people in the GVN-controlled areas lived in misery, that food was extremely dear -- 120 piasters for one kg of rice -- that they wouldn't be able to earn their living there. But the people didn't heed the VC's warnings.

329. Did you hear what the government would do for the refugees?

The VC didn't say anything about that, but I heard that any civilians from the VC-controlled areas who came out here received assistance from the government.

330. Where did you learn that?

I read it in the leaflets.

331. What preparations for leaving did you and your family make?

We didn't make any preparations at all. When it was time to go, we left.

332. Why didn't you sell your house or possessions so you might have some money when you came out here?

I had no house left to sell. It was destroyed. Also, I had to keep my intention of coming out here a secret. If I started selling my belongings, the VC might guess that I wanted to come out here and they would try to keep me back. And so I brought what I could with me and the rest I left in the village.

333. Did you expect to leave your hamlet for a long or short time?

I will stay here until the government has pacified my village and the soldiers will be stationed there. The government will probably send us back then. I will go back, but not now. I will stay here to work until time to go back. I don't know how long I will stay here.

334. Did any families in your village leave your village for other VC-controlled areas?

No.

335. [illegible] people first start leaving your village?

I don't know exactly because when a family left they did it secretly. There was no mass evacuation but one or two families left together now and then. The Nationalist officials were the ones who left the village first and their families followed them afterwards. Then came the other families in the village.

336. At what time did most of the refugees leave?

Most of them left between January and September of this year. The people who lived in the hamlets that bordered the main road could make their escape much more easily because they just pretended they wanted to go to the markets, and, once they were out of the village, never came back in again. The VC in our village kept very close watch on us and that was the reason why we couldn't come out here earlier. Some families made their escape by leaving the children in the village while the husband pretended to go fishing in the sea and the wife went to the market. Then they made for our here. Afterwards the children followed some peddlers and came out here with their parents. As for my family, I couldn't let my children and wife look after themselves because they have never been out of the village. And so if we went out here, we had to go together.

337. Have any people, who left your village to come here, now gone back?

No. Even if we could go back now, none of us would dare go. The children could sneak into the village and if the VC saw them they wouldn't do anything to them because they are too young.

338. How did you send the children back to your village?

They were taken to Phu My and there might find someone from the village or hamlet who had come out here to sell fish. Those children could go back with him.

339. You mean there are still people from your village who are permitted to sell fish in the market?

Yes.

340. Why don't they come out here?

I don't know. I can't understand their minds. I can only tell you what I saw but can't answer for the other people's consciences.

341. Who in the village was permitted to come to the market to sell fish?

They were the ones who have been living by that type of job. Also they paid taxes to the VC and that was why they received permission to go.

342. Has anyone urged you to return to your village since you came here?

No.

343. What have you received from the government since you came out here?

I have received nothing at all.

344. How do you feel about that?

If we came out here in great numbers, there would be a refugee camp to receive us. Since we came here in small groups, we may have to wait much longer to receive any help from the government. I really don't know much about this. The government will come to our aid sooner or later. If not, there is nothing we can do about that. If the government helps us, we will be very grateful.

345. Meanwhile what are you going to do to support your family?

If someone wants to hire me, I am willing to work.

346. Where are you living now?

We are living on the beach. Some family let us share their home but I will have to find work quick so I can build a small shack to shelter my family.

347. Have you been given identification cards?

No, but I have a temporary one from my village. We won't be able to vote this time because we have no identification cards. Also, the village officials have told us that we came out here too late to have our names on the voters' list. This list had been sent to the province. I told myself that if we didn't have the voter's card we wouldn't be able to go fishing.

348. Would you like to receive training?

I will accept anything the government gives us.

349. Do you feel safe here from military attacks?

Yes. I saw many troops around. The VC won't be able to attack this place.

350. When you leave here, where would you like to go?

I don't know. I just got here.

351. Here is a picture of a ladder. The bottom rung is numbered ten and the top rung is numbered one. Now, let's say that the top rung represents the best life you can imagine and the bottom rung represents the worst life you can imagine. Where on this ladder would you say that your life was before the VC came to your village?

I was on the rung which represents good times and bad times. Sometimes life was easy and other times it was hard. I was on rung five or six.

352. Where were you after the VC came to your village?

I was extremely miserable -- I was on rung ten.

353. Where are you now?

I am still very miserable -- rung ten.

354. Where will be you next year?

Life will be better next year, but I can't tell you where I will be because I have no work at the present time. If I have work to do, I can make a guess, but as it is, my life is still pretty confused.

355. Would you describe the best life you can imagine for yourself?

As a fisherman, I think if we can go to the sea fishing again, we will be happy. Fishing is not an easy job. If anyone wants to lead an easy life, let him not become a fisherman. I have been a fisherman all my life, I don't know any other profession so I can't tell you much. I suppose that to have enough money will make your life easy.

356. Would you describe the worst life you can imagine yourself living back in your village?

Having not enough money to eat. Sometimes you eat rice, sometimes you have to eat soup. That is a very hard life. The worst life I can imagine is not having enough food to eat and medicine to take when I am sick. Also, I am not free to engage in my work.

When I went to the sea fishing, the Nationalists stopped me and demanded to know why I stayed in the VC-controlled areas and accused me of being a VC sympathizer. When I returned to my village, the VC criticized me for not working for them. Even the pro-Nationalists were accused of being VC by the Nationalists if they stayed in the VC-controlled areas. Meanwhile the VC did everything possible to render our lives more miserable.

357. What kind of life do you hope your son will have?

When I have a job and am able to support my family, I will send my children to school. Once they get an education, they can better their lives. I can't say what they will make of themselves, but I hope their future is brighter than mine.

358. If you could ask three things of any Vietnamese Government, what would they be?

I don't know what to ask the government for.

359. What do you want most or think you need most?

I want to ask for a job to earn a living. Second, I wish the government would provide me with some equipment so I can go out fishing again, and third, I wish to have a house to shelter my wife and children against the rain.

360. What kind of government do you think would be most likely to give you those three things?

Only a Nationalist Government would be able to give me those things. A Communist Government would never be able to do anything for the people. When the VC first came to the village, they promised us that they would bring food and clothing to the people. It is nowhere to be found.

361. When do you think the war will be over?

I don't know. According to the VC, the war will last a long time. That was all they said. They only talked about long-time resistance.

362. Which side do you think is winning now?

We are winning.

363. Why do you think we are winning?

We have airplanes and artillery. The VC won't be able to win.

364. What did the other villagers think?

I think they must have thought that the government would win, otherwise they wouldn't have come out here.

365. Would you have come out here if you believed that the VC would win?

I would never believe that the VC would win. Even if I believed that they would win, I would come out here anyway because it was so hard to earn a living back in my village.

366. Which side has the people's support?

I don't know about other areas but most of the people in my hamlet are for the Nationalists because they have come out here. They came out here to find food to eat and clothes to wear, and so, they must support the Nationalists. Few people believed in the VC.

367. How do you think the Nationalists could gain more support from people like yourself and others you know?

I think it is easy to do. Let the government forbid the people in the VC-controlled areas to earn their living and they will all come out here. Many haven't come out here because they can still live off their land. I think the government can justify itself because the VC are among the people. Also, if the government lets the people work as usual, they will be able to help the VC financially.

368. If the Front wins the war, what do you think life in Vietnam will be like?

The VC won't be able to win, ever.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

The subject was relaxed during most of the interview. He seemed a little bored at the end.
The subject's intelligence was average. He was cooperative and seemed sincere.
He gave no sign whether or not he believed the interviewer when she introduced herself as a student on sociology interested in the social conditions of the rural areas.
The interview was conducted in a hotel room which was quiet and seemed less formal.

No. AGR -67

QUESTIONNAIRE II
For Refugees

1. Name of interviewer [redacted]
2. Name of subject [redacted]
3. Time and date of interview :
   From 3:00 PM to 6:00 PM on Sept. [redacted] 1966
   From 9:00 AM to 10:00 AM on Sept. [redacted] 1966
   From _____ to _____ on _____ 196__
   Total time 4 hours
   Interview based on : tape (X) hand written notes ( )
4. Place of interview :
   Qui Nhon
5. Sex of subject : Male (X) Female ( )
6. Age of subject : 36
7. Ethnic background : Vietnamese
8. Place of birth :
   hamlet [redacted]
   village [redacted]
   district Phu My
   province Binh Dinh
9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :
   hamlet [redacted]
   village [redacted]
   district Phu My
   province Binh Dinh
10. (a) Length of residence in last location : since birth
    (b) Who controlled the place of residence:
    GVN ( ) VC (X) Contested ( )
    (c) Since when controlled or contested ? January 1964

11. Number of brothers (2) and sisters ( )

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : 2

13. Marital status : Married

14. Number of children : 5 including one who died recently

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age : _____

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject( ) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject (X) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject(X) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion : Catholic

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : Fisherman

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation Labor class
(b) Landowner ? _____ How much land _____

20. Education :
illiterate ( )
literate ( )
schooling completed : 4 years of schooling

21. Any relatives in VC : one younger brother arrested by VC

22. Any relatives in GVN : none

23. Any relatives (how many? when?) killed by :
(a) French none
(b) GVN none
(c) VC none

24. When became a refugee : August [redacted] 1966

25. Where took refuge first Qui Nhon area II

26. Present residence same

AGR

INTERVIEW

68

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THE RAND CORPORATION

INTERVIEWS CONCERNING THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR-68
(AGR II)

Date of Interview : September [redacted] 1966

Subject's Category : Refugee, August [redacted] 1966

Area of Residence : [redacted] Hamlet, [redacted] Village, Phu Ly District, Binh Dinh Province.

This interview is for the information of US and Vietnamese official agencies and personnel on a need-to-know basis. Permission to distribute or show this interview to non-official persons requires the prior approval of The RAND Corporation and the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs.

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1. When did you become a refugee?

On August [redacted] 1966. We came here by boat.

2. How many people came here with you?

There were my wife, my five-year old daughter and a Buddhist family of five members.

3. How did you get that family to come along with you?

We were neighbors, and the father was my co-worker. We were both hamlet officials under the Nationalists. When the VC took over the village they did everything possible to render our lives miserable. We were kept under house arrest and restricted in our movements. When the Nationalist troops invaded our village, we took advantage of the situation and asked to be taken here by boat.

4. Why didn't the other villagers come out here with you?

I know that many people from my hamlet left their homes at that time also, but they were brought here by tanks or flown in helicopters. As for the two of us, the VC had taken us to the mountain to hide us from the Nationalist troops, but we managed to escape from their clutch and ran back to our village. We were classified by the VC as "Te" -- a name given by the VC to all those who work for the "enemy". We hid in our homes when the Nationalist troops arrived, and then we asked to be brought out here together with our families.

5. Who was taken to the mountain with you?

The mountain was where the VC cadres hid when the Nationalist troops came to the village.

6. How many villagers were taken to the mountain with you?

The inter-family group leaders, the xom and hamlet chiefs and so on. The VC took away all those who had collaborated with the Nationalists for fear they might leave the village.

7. Were they able to make the escape and come out here?

The VC threatened to kill anyone of us if he was seen collaborating with the Nationalists again. When the Nationalist troops came, we were all herded to the mountain. Some of us hid in this cave, some in that. And so I don't know if the others could make their escape or not. I was a hamlet chief when the Nationalists were still in my village. My position called for me to investigate this or that story...

8. What type of stories did you investigate while you were a hamlet chief?

I investigated and watched over those who had been members of the Resistance and was always on the alert for those who seemed to lean to the VC side. When the VC took over the village, they classified the villagers into classes: A, B and so on. They took revenge on us. I was a hamlet chief working for the Nationalists and that was why in 1960 or 1961, the VC were on the lookout to kill me. I went into hiding in Phu My for two years. Then I received word that the VC would show leniency towards all those who would show repentance over their past deeds. They could come back to their villages and continue to work as usual. Truthfully speaking, I didn't believe the VC promises at all, but there were my wife and daughter, my house and property. And also, I had to work to support my family. We had spent all our savings and were broke. The VC sent word to me that I should come home, they promised they wouldn't cause me any trouble or kill me, instead I would be given assistance. I went back to my village but not to my home. I remained hidden in the village headquarters which hadn't been destroyed by the VC. Then I sent word to my wife to sell everything we had. Unfortunately, the VC then started to demolish the village headquarters and so I was stuck inside. They found me and took me to the mountain where I stayed as a prisoner for one whole year. Then I was released and permitted to return to the village, but they still kept me under house arrest and restricted my movements. That was in 1965. I wasn't permitted to leave the boundaries of my hamlet. I couldn't take a walk in the village. I was allowed to be seen only within the boundaries of my hamlet. When I first returned from the mountain, I was told that I should get permission each time I wanted to go to the field. I couldn't enjoy any freedom. The VC were great deceivers. They imposed heavier taxes on my family because according to them, I had collaborated with the enemy. I was a "te" and I owed a blood debt to the people. People like me had to keep their heads low and play dumb. We kept silent when they talked and never answered them. Never did we utter a word of complaint. We waited for the opportunity to make our escape. The best chance we could have was when the Nationalist troops conducted an operation in our village. We could follow their footsteps when they left. There had been many raids before the last one, but none of them was as big and strong as the last one. There were troops landing from the warships and supported by cannons and mortars, some moved into the village in tanks and armored cars. The raid was conducted simultaneously in the mountain and at sea. That was the best chance for me to take to bring my family to this area of freedom. My heart and mind have always been

with the Nationalist government. I pleaded with the Vietnamese Lieutenant to ask the two Americans to take us out here in their boat. The lieutenant replied that that boat was secret and no one was allowed to enter it. I told him that I had escaped the VC and wished to bring my family to the area of freedom. If the lieutenant refused to take my family and my neighbor's family with him, then let the Nationalist soldiers kill us all. I would rather die by the hands of the Nationalists than by the VC, that would be a shame. I pleaded and pleaded and the lieutenant talked to the two Americans who agreed to take us in the boat. We then left the village and a little while later we were transferred to another smaller boat that brought us to Qui Nhon. When we arrived at Qui Nhon, we all went to the Police Station and showed them our papers. The policeman took down our names and birthplace and so on.

9. Who conducted that operation?

I saw the Nationalist soldiers, the American troops and the Montagnards.

10. How many people were killed in that operation? How much damage was caused to the villagers?

The day the operation occurred the VC took us to the mountain where I remained hidden in a cave. At night I went back to the village and asked my wife "Who got killed today?" She replied that a hamlet first-aid-liaison girl and a guerrilla were killed by cannon. She also said that many cows got killed by stray bullets too. No innocent civilian got hurt that day except, as I told you just now, those two VC and a great many cows.

11. How many hamlets were in your village?

My village was composed of those hamlets: [redacted]

12. How many people lived in your hamlet?

There were about 190 families in my hamlet.

13. What did the people in your hamlet do to earn their living?

Farming.

14. Were many of them poor?

Two thirds of the people in my village grew enough to eat on their land. The rest had to support themselves by gathering firewood in the woods nearby or working as transport laborers for others in order to make ends meet.

15. How rich was the richest man in your village?

The richest man in my village had about five to seven "mau" of land. Those who didn't have land or very little earned their living as peddlers or firewood gatherers and then sold their firewood to the people in the villages nearby. Others worked as bicycle drivers to take people from one place to another.

16. How many people in your hamlet or village were Catholics?

Quite a few of them were Catholics -- about 20% of the population.

17. Were there ever conflicts between members of different religions?

There were never any conflicts between the Catholics and people of other religions at all.

18. Were there any incidents in your village after the fall of Mr. Diem?

No. After the fall of Mr. Diem we came to ask for advice from the priest and the deacon in charge of all the Catholics in the village. We asked "Mr. Diem was a Catholic and a President, he was killed, what should we do?" The meeting took place at my house. I answered "Catholicism is a religion to worship God. Catholicism isn't Mr. Diem. Mr. Diem happened to be the President but there are many Catholics who hold very low positions in the Government. This religion is a God-inspired religion and the deity the Catholics worship is God the Creator who has created the world and died to save it. This is a God-created religion and the Catholics aren't going to deny their religion just because Mr. Diem is dead." That was my answer.

19. Before the VC came to your village, was there a school in your village?

Yes. There were a five-classrooms school and a small school for each hamlet. When the VC took over the village, they destroyed the village headquarters, schools and church. They also forbade all the Catholics to visit the church which they called "the forbidden area." They left no school standing. The children have been staying home ever since.

20. Before the VC came to your village, which people in your village were the most respected?

As far as I could understand, I found that the Nationalists stuck together. They liked each other and the cadres were all for the people, but I can't tell you who in my village enjoyed the most respect from the people.

21. Which people in your village were the most informed?

Informed on which side?

22. On either side?

[redacted] who was the village representative, and Mr. [redacted] They are both working at the district now.

23. How was life in your village before 1954?

We lived in misery.

24. Why? Was there any fighting in your village?

There was no fighting but our lives were very hard because we had to make contributions to them (Viet Minh). The villagers' economic situation was very black and it wasn't until after the Nationalists took over that we could breathe a little. During the years of 1950 and 1951 the people in my village were poor and made poorer by the Viet Minh who forced us to work as laborers and go on transportation missions for them. Thanks to the cease-fire the people could breathe a little. Also, the government began to give assistance to the people. The villagers became better-off materially speaking. They were able to buy decent clothes for themselves. They could raise their heads with others. Families who hadn't had any cows started looking around for a good sale to acquire one or two, or farmers who had been landless became landowners. During the eight or nine years the Nationalists were in control of the village, the villagers had good food to eat and nice clothes to wear.

25. What happened to the villagers when the VC took over your village?

Since the VC took over the village, the people have been living in very deplorable conditions. They forced the people to pay taxes, to work as laborers for them, to do this and to do that, all kinds of things. But their treatment of those who had worked for the Nationalists was extremely harsh. These people had to work constantly for the VC.

The VC always preached about unity but the truth was they considered those who had collaborated with the Nationalists as mice and themselves as cats. The cats could eat the mice whenever they pleased. We walked a tightrope not daring to say anything or breathe. Those who kept their mouths shut were watched constantly, those who didn't were arrested and sent away. There was no way out.

26. Were the village officials under the Nationalists elected by the people or appointed?

They were appointed from above. These officials had shown their worthiness, their loyalty to the Nationalists and that was why they were picked to become officials.

27. Have you ever had an election in your village?

All the officials in my village were appointed and so there has never been any election on the village level in my village. But, there were the presidential elections which the people in my village participated in. Before the election was held, there were study sessions conducted for the benefit of the villagers who had to work hard all day and night and know nothing about the talents and virtues of the candidates. We were told of the worthiness of this and that candidate for the National Assembly or for the Presidency.

28. In your opinion, which would be better -- elected or appointed officials?

This is my personal opinion: it is fine to let the people choose their representatives through free elections. There are some pitfalls however. If the candidate or candidates are pro-Nationalists, talented, dedicated and virtuous, then it is all for the better, and I have nothing to say against free elections. But, suppose the candidate or candidates aren't pro-Nationalists, their allegiances are with the other side for example. The people don't know that and might vote for them. Each vote is a brick used to build up the future of the country. To misuse it is a great mistake.

29. Do you know anything about the Diem Government?

According to the people's rumors, Ngo Dinh Diem and Ngo Dinh Nhu shared the power and ruled the country.

30. What did you think about the fall of that government?

It is my opinion that Mr. Diem was overthrown because of his family's dictatorial behavior towards the people and his partiality towards the generals and high ranking officers or something. I think the generals who engineered the coup must have had some reasons to do so. But, as far as I heard from other people, the blame was on Mme Nhu. She was known all over here and abroad. She was a great profiteer and speculator. She held all the strings.

31. What did the villagers say?

Before the fall of that government, the villagers didn't say much, but after the coup the villagers began to point to this and that saying that belonged to Mme Nhu and that belonged to Mme Nhu, the bicycle factory belonged to Mme Nhu and so on.

32. Were there any nationalist military forces near your hamlet or village?

Before the VC came to my village, there was one platoon of the SDC. They were to protect the village officials. And every now and then the Civil Guards would come in, such as when the VC came to my village from the mountain to arrest or assassinate this or that inter-family group chief or this or that hamlet chief. When the Civil Guards were in the village in great number, the VC were nowhere to be found, but after the soldiers had all left, the VC came back again to kill this or that person.

33. How did the SDC and the Civil Guards behave towards the people?

The SDC and the Civil Guards treated the people harshly. They though they had guns in their hands and so could say anything they wanted. They were arrogant and abusive towards the people. They gambled, got themselves drunk and patronized ill-reputed houses. They didn't care about their duties. They lacked the spirit of camaraderie and fought against each other. They didn't take good care of their weapons or discharge their duties the way they should, but spent their time gambling, getting drunk and so on. They were arrogant.

34. What did the villagers say?

They really disliked these SDC and Civil Guards but didn't dare say anything. The real nationalists felt very ashamed irritated. Some did talk these soldiers into changing their behavior but their effort came to nothing.

35. Did the SDC and Civil Guards' behavior ever change?

I don't know if they have ever changed their behavior because when the VC began to destroy the village headquarters and school, the SDC withdrew to the district. But the troops that came to my village on recent operations were no better. They stole chickens and ducks and picked fruit from the people's orchards without permission from the villagers. When the villagers asked them why they picked their fruit, they replied "If we don't pick them, the VC will." Each time there was an operation the villagers lost some chickens to the soldiers.

36. Are they still behaving like that?

Of course. I saw them do that with my own eyes the day I left my village to come out here. I was a witness to their misbehavior but I didn't dare say anything. This is a chance to tell what I have seen.

37. How did the American troops behave?

They refreshed themselves with coconuts.

38. Did they ask the villagers or pay for these coconuts?

I saw two Americans -- I don't know their ranks -- with a Vietnamese Lieutenent. The coconuts were given to them and they took them. They didn't speak Vietnamese and so how could they say anything? The soldiers picked these coconuts and gave them to the lieutenant and the Americans who took them.

39. Were there many Americans troops participating in that operation?

I don't know about the other unit, but I saw only four Americans in the artillery detachment and a Vietnamese Lieutenent. There was also a squad of Montagnard soldiers. The rest were Vietnamese. The Special Forces were heliborne to the mountain. I heard that two or three other families from my hamlet left for the government controlled areas also, but I am not so sure about that because I haven't seen them. They came out here by tanks and could bring many of their possessions with them. We were "te" in the eyes of the VC and so we had to leave the village. When we left we couldn't bring anything out with us. On the ship each of us was given some fruit and some candies and that was all. When we arrived here (Ganh Rang refugee camp which is run by the Catholics) the welcoming committee fed us. I started to work today. I have nothing left.

40. Did the villagers say anything about the American troop behavior toward the people?

When the VC (Viet Minh) were among the people, the people lived in fear, misery and frustration. When the Americans came here they brought food and clothes for the people. The people were happy for nine or ten years. Then the Nationalists withdrew to the district and the VC took over the village again. The people are very miserable now. Only those who sympathize with the VC like the VC. The people as a whole are very disgusted with the deplorable conditions they are in, but none of them dare say anything.

41. What did the villagers say about the American troop behavior towards the people?

I didn't hear them say anything about that. The people only complained about the Vietnamese soldiers. They said these soldiers stole chickens, squash, papaya and coconuts or money from the people's pockets.

42. Was your hamlet a Strategic Hamlet?

Yes.

43. When was it built?

In 1961 or 1962.

44. How much labor and money did you have to contribute to it?

We were self-sufficient in my family. We went out cutting down trees and did the fencing. Families that couldn't go to the woods to cut down trees had to hire someone else to do that for them. This cost money.

45. How did the people feel about having to pay for the construction of the Strategic Hamlet?

I didn't hear many complaints concerning that. During the few years before the Strategic Hamlet was built, the people were extremely happy. And so if they had to contribute 1000 or 2000 piasters to buy trees to build the Strategic Hamlet, they didn't mind very much. Now that the VC have taken over the village, the people have to endure nine or ten times more miseries than before. The VC took over everything, materially speaking.

46. What did you dislike about the Strategic Hamlet?

There was nothing that I disliked about the Strategic Hamlet. I liked it very much. It was the government's plan to get

the people behind some sturdy and protective walls and to isolate the VC. I was a great believer in the good of the Strategic Hamlet and was one of its promoters.

47. Before the VC came to your village, how did you feel about your life and future?

When the Nationalists were still in my village, I had my hopes. I believed that some day I would be rich like others in the village. We didn't have to pay much taxes. If you had more land you paid more tax, if you had less, you paid less. The tax amount was small and the people had nothing to complain about that. The people couldn't believe that some day the changes would be so drastic and that was why they were very confused and frightened.

48. Did the people receive any assistance from the government?

When the Nationalists took over the village, the poor families received clothing material and rice.

49. When did the VC first come to your village?

They first came at the end of 1960 or sometime at the beginning of 1961.

50. Did they come to your village during the day or at night?

They only came at night.

51. At that time did you know the VC were in your village?

They came to [redacted] Hamlet first and arrested the hamlet chief but later released him. Then they came to [redacted] Hamlet which was my hamlet to arrest me. I was informed in advance of their coming and so I hid myself. From then on at night I either left the hamlet or slept in some other place. I was only a hamlet chief and that was why I didn't have any soldiers to protect me. I kept hiding at night for a while and then found I couldn't endure the tenseness of the situation much longer. The VC began to arrest the inter-family group chiefs and the xom chiefs. I became very frustrated and frightened and so I resigned and let someone younger take my place. Then I went to another village to hide myself.

52. Did the VC make propaganda when they first came to your village?

They didn't make propaganda, they only came to arrest or assassinate the Nationalist cadres. I don't know what they did besides.

53. Did you know what kind of people belonged to the VC in those days?

I only know about my hamlet. There were six or seven families who secretly worked for the VC even in those days. They had joined them during the Resistance and were arrested and put in jail by the Nationalists. When they were released the government gave them clothes and all kinds of help, but they turned around and consorted with the VC instead. These families sent supplies to the VC in the mountain. They have come out to the open in their siding with the VC.

54. When were they arrested?

They were arrested in 1957, 1961.

55. Didn't any villagers inform the Nationalist soldiers of the presence of the VC in their village?

Each hamlet had a hamlet chief who relied on the inter-family group chiefs and also the secret agent informers for the information as to the situation of the area. The village also had its own secret agent informers for what were going on in the village.

56. How could the VC infiltrate into your village when there were so many secret informers roaming around the village?

The reason was there was only one platoon of SDC and they were charged with the protection of the village officials. If they knew the VC were in the village, they couldn't do much about that. At night these SDC went patrolling from one hamlet to another, but the VC didn't go to the hamlet where the SDC were setting an ambush. They went to another hamlet instead. But, when there was a skirmish, some VC got killed.

57. When you were in the VC prison, what did the VC do to you?

I just stayed with them. They made us gather firewood for sale, and the revenue was put in the common fund, or we ploughed the field which was located near the mountain for them. That was all.

58. Did they put you through any study course?

They had propaganda among us. They said that before the French rule [illegible] the Americans come over here with the same intention. They wanted to rule over the country. They called the Americans dictators and imperialists.

that was their line of propaganda. We were also expected to work for them as laborers but we were treated as prisoners in their eyes. When we were released we came under the village VC's surveillance and they kept strict watch over us. To erase in our minds any vestige of pro-Nationalist feelings, the VC staged mock trials for the public benefit and at our expense. We were led in front of the people and accused of all sorts of crimes. These trials were organized to intimidate the victims: slogans were hung all around, an altar complete with their flag and burning incense was erected, a chairman and assistants sat around a table. The VC then got the people who had never worked for the Nationalists and those who worked for them to come to the trials. When they were all in their places, we were led out and ordered to sit on the floor. The VC then led the hollering "Down with the lackeys!" and the people replied "Down with the lackeys!". This went on for a while then stopped. Now came the trial proper. Some villagers would stand up and demand that this and that person be tried. The VC ordered that poor man to stand up and keep his head down, they pointed their fingers at him, hit him in the face, pointed their guns at him, cursed him. Then each person present had to make up a criminal story, attribute a crime to the accused to show that he really hated the accused and the people of his kind -- the lackeys. The VC put the husbands in jail and made the wives attend study courses in the village. My wife had to attend two study courses which lasted about two months. They did this to my wife because she was of the same mind as I. My wife came from a well-to-do family and she had a very easy life. As for me, my father was the village chief. These facts combined made us very undesirable in the VC eyes. These trials occurred in the beginning of 1965. I was arrested and taken to the prison where I stayed for two months, then the VC took me back to the village to stand trial daily for two weeks. After these two weeks, they took me back to prison. During these two weeks, daily the villagers had to attend the trials and we were tried daily too.

59. How did the villagers feel about these trials?

The VC liked these trials. This is understandable because these trials served their purpose. As for the villagers who were neither for this nor that side, they disliked these trials but there was nothing they could do about that. The village was under VC control, the power was in their hands. When the VC ordered each villager to make up a criminal story at the expense of the accused, some villagers balked. They said that they had nothing against these officials because the latter never oppressed them or took bribes. They added

[illegible] had no complaints against us because when we were in the office, we only carried out the orders from above and received our salaries accordingly. They said that these accused had to work for the government they lived under. Now that the VC brought in another government which promised the people food and happiness, the people would keep that in mind. As for the former officials they didn't do anything to deserve the people's wrath. They demanded to know why the VC wanted them make up false accusations against those former officials. The VC realized that if the villagers didn't accuse us, that meant they still felt sorry for us. The VC then ordered everyone to think up some accusations against us so that "the lackeys will never be able to keep their heads up again."

60. Were there battles in or near your village at that time between Front and the nationalists?

No.

61. How often was your village or hamlet bombed?

One time when the Nationalists were conducting an operation in [redacted] hamlet, an L-19, the recon plane, circled over the area near the mountain. The plane flew very low, extremely low and the people were very frightened. They didn't understand what the airplane was going to do. Usually when they saw airplanes circling overhead, the people remained calm, but this time the plane flew extremely low and that worried people. There were a father and a son in the process of pumping the water into their field. Seeing the airplane they were taken with fright and ran. The airplane thought must have been VC because only VC were afraid and ran. And so, bombs were dropped from airplanes. It was the kind that burn down houses -- napalm -- and three houses were burned down and some people were wounded. No one was killed.

62. What did the people say about that? Did they blame the government

They didn't blame anyone. They realized that when the Nationalist troops were on an operation at [redacted] the recon airplane would circle over their area. They said let the airplane circle as long as it pleased and let the people be calm because only the VC run away. Civilians shouldn't run like that. If anyone was not connected with the VC, let him continue to work and let the VC cadres run into hiding. Anyone who ran was an illegal person. That was the people's verdict.

63. Who said so?

The people in the hamlet or village. That was/their discussions.

64. Who did the people think dropped the bombs?

The Americans.

65. How did the people feel towards the Americans?

Some realized where the source of all their miseries came from. Before the VC came to their village, they were happy and well fed. After the VC came here, people got killed, houses burned down and so on. These were the pro-Nationalists. Deep down in their hearts they knew all that but didn't dare say anything.

66. How did the neutral villagers feel towards the Americans?

They realized the same thing. It was the VC's presence in their village that has brought so much havoc to their lives. Before the VC came to their village, they didn't have to bear so much misery. The VC arrived among the people and when they saw the airplanes circling overhead they ran to the trenches. Seeing the VC run to their trenches, the airplanes dropped bombs. That was the truth.

67. Who did the families whose houses had been burned down blame?

They didn't say anything because they understood. Some villagers even challenged the VC by asking: "You say that when the country is lost, our houses will be destroyed. Now the country hasn't been lost yet. Yet, tell us why is it that our houses have been destroyed?" The people who posed this question had never worked for the Nationalists, they were for neither [illegible]. They asked the VC "What are you going to do? The country hasn't been lost yet, but we have lost our houses already." What could the VC say? They either kept quiet or replied "The enemy is being beaten in all the battlefields, their strength is very low. And so the more they lose, the more havoc they will create, the more devastation the people will have to bear. The enemy does that to confuse and deceive the people into believing that it is still strong and that it is winning."

68. In your opinion, why did some people in your hamlet work for the VC?

They were either the outstanding elements of the poor class who had received indoctrination years before or families who had members regrouped to the North. That was why they worked for the VC.

69. Were there any families who joined the VC when they came to your village?

There were a few but they no longer work for the VC now.

70. How many operationshave been conducted in your village?

Four, during last year and this year, but the last operation was the biggest. Quite a few houses were burned down and cattle were killed. According to the people's rumors, the destruction of the people's homes and so on was aimed at the VC. The government wanted to ruin the people's economy so that they might not have anything left to contribute to the VC. Also, because the VC were causing much trouble, the Nationalists had to retaliate.

71. Did the people distinguish between the Americans and the Nationalists?

No. To the people Americans and Nationalists are one. They have the same goal which is to defeat the Communists. The people realized that if the government let the people flourish and left the dense woods intact, the VC could rely on the people for their material support and the dense woods for their shelter. And so the government had to destroy the woods, ruin the people's economy and impoverish the people. Some have said secretly that if anyone could make his escape, let him do it so that he could enjoy freedom. When the government reestablishes its control over the village, the people will have houses to live in. Families who worked for the VC didn't dare move anyplace, they were afraid. As for the pro-Nationalist families, they will come out some sooner or later. They will leave their homes, their possessions, their rice, corn, fields and properties to come here knowing not what they will receive from the government. They wonder: will the government give them any help? Will there be a shelter to shelter them? Will there be food for them to eat? There are many questions and doubts in their minds because they don't know what future awaits them. They are worried but to remain behind in the village means death at any time because of the bombing and shelling. The people are really frightened.

72. Didn't the villagers wonder why the government didn't look for the VC to fight, why did it cause damage to the people instead?

The people have said this behind the VC's back, "If they are so smart, let them go to the battlefields and fight against the Nationalists. Why should they hide here and there and snipe at them (Nationalists)? Why did they have to mingle among the people?" I heard the people say that in some areas the people refused to let the VC borrow their cooking pans or stay in their homes.

73. Do you know where such incidents happened?

They happened in [redacted]. The VC troops never showed themselves to the people, they always came at night. Only a few guerrillas were in each hamlet during the day. The village had a village unit leader and 20 or 30 guerrillas. I think it is very easy for the Nationalist Government to capture them. Families that wanted to come out here didn't get the chance because the Nationalist troops didn't come there. It is easy to capture the VC cadres and guerrillas. When artillery began to shell, the VC also began packing and moved to other areas because they knew a raid was coming. During the day they set up their offices in the people's houses. They scattered here and there and didn't have a headquarters. They set up their offices in the homes of families who worked for them and not otherwise. They were very careful in selecting places to set up their offices.

74. You said it was easy to capture the VC cadres and guerrillas. What do you propose the government should do to capture them?

It is very easy. When the district conducts a raid, the troops should be sent in to seal off the two ends of the area. The VC will be driven to remain in the middle. Airplanes should be sent in to strafe the bushes the VC may use for their hideouts. If we seal off the two ends and have helicopters hovering over the area while the warships stand outside in case the VC take to the sea, they won't be able to withdraw and we will be able to capture them all.

75. Did the people blame the government for causing damage to their homes?

The people realized that the government was trying to ruin the people's economy which was the VC's main source of support. It was because the VC lived among the people that the government had to destroy the people's economy so that the people might not be able to support the VC any longer.

76. Do you still have your identification card?

The VC confiscated mine and my wife's card. They confiscated the identification cards of all those who had worked for the government or those whom they suspected of being pro-Government. They called these people "enemy's spies" They wouldn't trust them. But they let those who sympathize with them to go to the market without any fuss. These were people they trusted and whom they called "legal persons." The VC let these people go to the government

controlled area to gather information for them. There was another class of people whom the VC disliked intensely. They were the neutrals. They leaned neither to the VC side nor to the government side. These people didn't support the VC actively. They were those who had benefited greatly while the government was still in control of the village. Many of them had buffaloes and tiled-roof houses.

77. How did the cadres behave towards the people?

They were very nice to those who sympathized with them. They treated the middle-of-the-roaders very nicely too in order to win them over to their side. But they never looked straight at those who had worked for the government. They acted as if these persons didn't exist.

78. How did the people feel toward the VC cadres?

They treated the people nicely in order to draw the people's sorrow out. The people realized that and they couldn't be fooled by the VC.

79. How often did the VC troops come to your village?

If they came at all, they came to other hamlets in my village. I never saw them in my hamlet because ours was an open area: the mountain was high, the area was sparsely populated and there were few bushes.

80. How did they treat the people?

I don't know. I didn't hear the people say anything about that.

81. How did the guerrillas behave towards the people?

There were no complaints against them except that they didn't like any family having dogs in the house. They said that having dogs in the house was like having the enemy. Dogs disrupted their work and barked if they set up ambushes or went around reconnoitering the situation. The barking of the dogs would give away their position and shells would rain on the village causing damage to the people and disrupting their work. Those who sympathized with the VC didn't complain at all, but the people in general were extremely unhappy because their lives have been rendered very hard and [illegible]

82. What are the aims of the VC?

The VC are the Communists. Viet means they are Vietnamese and Cong means they are Communists.

83. What are their aims? What are the aims of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam?

They are brigands. They set up an illegal government and with the support from the North, cause troubles to the South.

84. What did the VC tell you about their aims?

They said that after fighting for eight years against the French, they had a conference was held. At this conference, it was decided that two years there would be a general election to unify the country. But Ngo Dinh Diem betrayed the people by [illegible] elections to maintain. They vowed that they would do anything possible to unify the country.

85. Do you know who are the leaders of the Front?

I didn't pay attention when they talked and so I don't remember the names.

86. Have you heard of the name Nguyen Huu Tho?

Yes, lawyer Nguyen Huu Tho. I didn't like the VC and so I didn't try to remember what they told me.

87. What did they say about lawyer Nguyen Huu Tho?

They said Mr. Nguyen Huu Tho was the chairman of the Liberation Front of the South. That was what they said.

88. What did they say about Ho Chi Minh?

They said Ho Chi Minh was the leader. That was all.

89. How often did the VC hold meetings in your village?

I only saw hamlet cadres hold meetings with the villagers. I didn't see higher echelon cadres or VC troops appear at these meetings. The hamlet cadres were ordered to lead the people.

90. How often did they hold meetings?

There was no fixed schedule -- every five or ten or fifteen days.

91. What time did the meeting take place?

Around 7 or 8 P.M.

92. Did [illegible] attend these meetings?

Last year and the year before last, the people were afraid of the VC and so they went to these meetings, but nowadays [illegible] convinced that the VC couldn't defeat the Nationalists. Their hamlets, their villagers not killed, their houses burned down, and so few people attended these meetings. The VC had to call on the people over and over but few people responded to their call. In some hamlets, the people were forced to leave their wills to go to these meetings, in others, they simply refused to go altogether except just a few -- five or six people. The people were very disgusted and pessimistic.

93. Last year and the year before last the people attended those meetings because they believed that the VC would win, didn't they?

Partly because they believed the VC would win, partly because they were afraid of the VC. They saw how the VC had killed the Nationalist cadres. Some of them were killed while others just disappeared. The people figured if they turned a deaf ear to the VC's call to attend their meetings, the VC might accuse them of being Nationalist cadres. And so every time there was an operation (Nationalist), the people fought each other to come out here. The more operations, the better for the people, the more chances the middle of the roaders and the Nationalist cadres will have to make their escape out here. Those who worked for the VC didn't dare to come out here. They would have to remain in there and bear all the poundings. If they came out here, they would have to face the village cadres (Revolutionary Staying at the districts. They would be reported to the authorities. Only the Nationalist cadres and the outstanding elements of the village came out here. The VC sympathizers didn't dare to show their faces.

94. What did the VC say at the meetings?

They [illegible] this or that attack. They said that two or three hundred Americans were killed at each attack and one or two hundred airplanes were shot down each time. These were [illegible] lies, nothing but lies. They said that the Nationalists and the Americans were being defeated all over the place. They described the American troops as wearing buns and betel chewing people. These were all lies. I have a little understanding and I could distinguish whom the truth lies. Take for example two men are fighting one is strong and the other one weak. The strong can beat up the weak and inflict a greater damage on the weaker partner. But the weaker one can

...don't inflict some losses on his strong opponent. The VC must have suffered some casualties from the hands of the Nationalists no matter how strong they are. It is unbelievable that the Nationalists are always defeated while the VC win all the battles. Anyone who has a little understanding can't take the VC words at face value.

95. Did the people believe what the VC say?

They didn't. That is for sure.

96. Did they show anyone to show that they didn't believe what the VC say?

They didn't say anything. Only people like me, those who had served for the Nationalists or were suspected by the VC of being pro-Nationalist, would whisper to each other our disbelief in the VC's statements. Take the battle that occurred before I came out here. The VC died like ants. Many of them got killed and got when they got the people together they said: "What a shame the people in this village didn't join the other villagers to haul in the war spoils. We attacked the Nationalists and killed many of them. The people in other villages carried much of the booty home with them." I suppose these villagers carried the dead bodies away instead. Many wounded people looked horrible -- some lost their legs, others their arms or both. I didn't see these with my own eyes because people like me were being kept like pigs in their pig-pens. We learned of this through those who went to the market and saw what happened or through the middle of the roaders. These people weren't for the Nationalists and so the VC arrested them. Actually, these middle of the roaders weren't for the VC either. And so, the VC got them to go on transportation missions. And they, after coming from a mission, usually told each other of what they had done in the voices. My coming with the Nationalists gave me more understanding and I could distinguish where the truth lies. As soon as the VC said something, I knew right away, they weren't telling the truth. I wasn't altogether stupid.

97. What did the VC say about the Americans?

They said that the Americans have escalated their bombing over the North. According to their radio, the total number of airplanes which have been shot down since 1961 was 1500. They mentioned this or that attack. They talked so much. They never told us how many airplanes they had shot down in this or that attack, they only gave us the total amount from 1961. They never mentioned the new battles.

Take the recent battle between the VC troops and the Korean troops for example. There was one VC battalion against one company of Korean troops. The VC were badly mauled and the Korean troops were able to capture many weapons which were being shown at the exhibition for the people to see. I went to this exhibition myself. And yet the VC said they won the battle. They also said that many people who had gone to the "enemy" were pleading to be permitted to return to their own villages because they had nothing to eat and that their lives were very hard. They said these people had no place to stay and they had sent in applications for permission to return to their villages, but "will the revolution and the people permit them to return?". They said these people had nothing to eat, no place to stay. They were hungry and miserable because their number was too great and there were no ricefields in town.

98. Did you believe what the VC said?

I had intended to come out here a long time ago but I had no chance to make good my escape. The Nationalists conducted a few operations in my village last year, but they didn't come to my hamlet and also these operations weren't as big as the last one. The VC were afraid the pro-Nationalists would come out here. The VC treated them so badly and they in turn hated the VC and so they would do everything possible to come out here. Also the well-to-do people who had been used to an easy life were unable to adjust to the hardships under the VC. They too would come out here. Many well-to-do families became empty-handed, but they didn't care about their houses and properties. What they cared was how to remain alive so that they could go to where there was freedom to work unhampered and not have to go on transportation missions for the VC. The people were very disgusted with the VC. If the government let the people stay in their villages, they would work and produce rice which would go to the VC. The people understood that and there were rumors among them that the bombings and shellings were done with the purpose of ruining the economy. They also realized if they remained in their village, they would be nothing but the VC's slaves working to feed them.

99. Does that mean that only the poor families now remained in your village?

Some pro-Nationalists are still in the village. There is no lack of them. Not all of them have come out here. These are the short-sighted people. They heard the VC propaganda and were frightened. They thought to themselves that if they remained in their village even though they would have

to pay taxes to the VC out of the rice they produced, there would still be some left for themselves to eat. They were doubtful of the Government's promises of assistance. Would the Government feed them? Where would they find work to do? Where would they stay? They half wanted to come out of fear and yet they were frightened. They were really miserable.

100. What did the VC say about the conditions of living in the North?

They said that our people in the North lived happily. The villagers didn't believe them though. They whispered to each other, "They (VC) forbid people to use foreign goods but they themselves are that. Take a look at their shoes, their radios." They taxed everything the villagers brought back to the village for resale to other villagers. One chicken was taxed 20 piasters. They said the people in the North lived in freedom while the people in the South lived under oppression as in slavery.

101. What did they say about the conditions of living in China?

They said China gave assistance to them.

102. What did they receive from China?

They didn't say.

103. Did they mention the presence of the Chinese troops in the South?

No.

104. Did they mention Russia?

Not at all, they only mentioned China. Some villagers made this comment "The Nationalists have the Americans and Ho Chi Minh has Russia and China. China is an overpopulated country. The people there always lack food to eat. Their number is great. If the VC win we might be ruled by the Chinese, that is the difference? Also, since the Chinese lack food and have such a great number of people to feed, they may want to take over Vietnam and then send their people here. It would be a calamity to have the Chinese rule the country again. They ruled the country years ago and for such a long time, the people were miserable." And so they concluded that if the Chinese came, their lives would be much worse.

105. How many young men over 16 were left in your hamlet?

Just a few -- five or ten.

106. How many of them have joined the VC?

One of them joined the VC, the rest joined the Nationalists. Afterwards, the VC deceived the children into volunteering to join them. They told children about 13 or 14 years old that they wanted them to volunteer. They assured these children that they wouldn't for real and they wouldn't have to go anyplace. They could remain in their village. But as soon as the children volunteered, the VC made them stay and wouldn't let them go home.

107. How were children were deceived by the VC?

They deceived the little children who didn't know anything. The people were very disgusted. The VC wouldn't even let these children go home to get their clothes but sent them away immediately. They wouldn't let the parents see their own children.

108. How many young men in your hamlet joined the Nationalists?

Two of my nephews and a few others but I don't remember their names.

109. Were those who joined the VC or the guerrillas forced against their will to do so?

Some were forced and a few volunteered. The volunteers were the VC sympathizers. The others were forced to join. They were neutral and might be pro-Nationalist people. I don't know how the VC got them to join. They must have talked to them. Actually their parents were against their joining. They said that those who joined the VC would eventually get killed. Only two men in my hamlet have joined the VC. The VC didn't force them to join and yet their joining was made against their will. The VC made propaganda, incited and lured them and since these two were young, they understood nothing. The truth was no physical force was imposed on them but they were pushed to join the VC through persuasion and encouragement.

110. When did the VC begin to draft people in your hamlet or village?

I don't know.

111. How did the VC treat families who had sons in the Nationalist army?

They didn't treat them nicely at all. The distinction between "the enemy and us" was very clear. They urged these families to get their husbands or sons back. They made lives hard for these families but they had to obey the VC's orders.

112. Did the VC take land from the rich and distribute it to the poor?

Yes. They took the land and properties of those who had gone to the government controlled areas and distributed it to the poor families. Only the poor families who sympathized with them received land and ricefields. Many poor families worked for the government before, but the VC gave them nothing. These families, although poor, were considered as undesirable by the VC. Take my family for example. After I came out here, the VC took all my land, beds, chairs, desks, pots and pans and distributed them to their poor families, the Nationalist poor families received nothing.

113. How many poor families in your hamlet received land from the VC?

I don't know exactly how many people received land from the VC. I can tell you about a few of them. I can only tell you what I know.

114. How much land did each of these families receive?

When I was still in the hamlet, each of these poor people received about one "sao" of land because then just a few families had gone out here. Now that another batch of people have left their land behind, those who remain in the village will certainly receive more land. Lots of land was left behind together with buffalos, cows, chairs, beds, tables and so on. Families that came here on trucks could bring some of their possessions along. As for my family and another family, we were unable to take anything at all. I was too busy gathering my wife and children around so we could make the escape together. So busy was I that I didn't even have time to take with us the money which we had saved and hid in a corner. We came out here empty handed. We had nothing when we arrived here. It is very sad.

115. Were these poor families satisfied with the land they received from the VC?

Why shouldn't they be happy? They didn't have land before, now they have it. The land is good, they could plant rice three times a year. What else could they hope for? But I found that some of them have begun to feel uneasy. They have had the land for two or three years but now they feel uneasy.

116. Why should they [illegible]?

They were frightened. Before, few villagers left the village, but now most people in the hamlet have gone. All the [illegible] and the pro-Nationalists have gone. The hamlet is [illegible] populated. Also there are the bombings, the shellings and the raids conducted by the Nationalist troops. Meanwhile the VC cadres go into hiding [illegible] in the woods. The guerrillas whose lives hide in their secret caves. The people who were frightened of the bombing and shelling moved out to the government controlled areas. Those who received land from the VC are worried. They can't come out here for fear of the local authorities who would arrest them. They are afraid to stay behind because sooner or later we will be killed. I could read their minds. Once the government re-establishes its control over the village, the other villagers will return and they will demand an inquiry and compensation from those who received income from their lands during their absence.

117. How many [illegible] are still in your hamlet?

Some are still living there but I don't know the exact number.

118. Why did they remain in the village?

They remained in the village because of many reasons. First the Nationalist troops conducted operations and arrested all those when they suspected of working for the VC. At the district most of them were released when the local cadres recognized them as innocent civilians. These people figured out that if they remained in the village, the government wouldn't do them any harm. Second, the government didn't explain to the people what they could expect when they came out here. These people were frightened. They thought if they moved out of their village, they wouldn't have anything to eat or any place to stay. They were taken in by the VC propaganda. They were short-sighted people. Third, the Nationalist troops in their operations promised the villagers that they would return in two or three months to re-establish their control over the village. The villagers believed that and they remained behind waiting for the troops to return.

119. What taxes did you have to pay to the VC?

We paid troops' support tax in rice.

120. How much did you have to pay?

- When I was in hiding, my wife and children worked enough to support themselves. When I came back, I did the same thing. I left much of the land unfarmed because I figured if I worked hard I would have to pay heavier taxes to the VC. Why should I work to feed them? And so I just produced enough to support us. Each year I paid them 100 kg of rice. That was the lowest amount any family had to pay. Some paid up to 700 or 800 kg, others to 2000 or 3000 kg. I figured it wasn't worth working hard to feed the VC.

121. What was the tax ratio in your village?

- The more rice you produced, the more the VC expected you to pay them in taxes. They took the number of family members into account also.

122. What other taxes did your family have to pay besides troops' support?

- We had to buy bonds but I didn't have money. I told them that I was old and, I didn't have money and so, I refused to buy any.

123. How many bonds did each family have to buy?

- That depends, but each family was expected to buy at least 200 piasters worth of war bonds. They expected me to buy some too, but I told them I was too old to work harder and that I didn't have any money at all. If they wanted to kill me, there was nothing I could do about that, but I refused to buy any bonds on the excuse that I was old and had no money to spare.

124. Did they often go around and ask for contributions from the people?

- They kept their wounded someplace and they went around asking people to contribute something to these wounded. Anything was all right. Some families gave 5, others 10 piasters, some gave eggs, others beans.

125. How often did they ask for contributions from the villagers?

- Only when there was fighting around the area. The VC also asked people to put rice in the container at each meal. Take my family for example, we needed two cans of rice per meal. The VC told us to put aside one handful of rice per meal, and at the end of every five days they came and collect it.

126. Were the taxes higher this year than last year?

The first tax installment, which was due last March, was the same as last year. As for the second installement, the VC haven't said anything about that.

127. Where did you and the villagers usually sell your produce such as vegetables, chickens, ducks and so on?

We raised chickens, and when they were big enough, we sold them to the local villagers who brought them to the market where the nationalist troops were stationed. This way the villagers could make some profit because they could sell them at higher prices at the markets. The VC started levying taxes on your produce about a month ago. They stopped the people going to the market and collected their taxes. They tax goods which the villagers bought at the markets and brought back to the village. They taxed goods which the villagers took to sell at the markets.

128. Did the VC let the villagers sell their produce at the markets freely?

Yes. At first there were restrictions but lately -- about a few months ago -- they let the people sell their produce at the market freely. The people could bring anything to the market. The VC said that we had to do business with the Nationalists. They also said that if they restricted trading between their areas and the Nationalist areas, the Nationalists would retaliate by [illegible] the people in their areas to buy goods from the Nationalist areas. And so the VC wouldn't be able to buy rice. They taxed the goods brought in from the [illegible] except [illegible]

129. Did the VC buy goods from the people?

They bought pigs and chickens every now and then.

130. Did they pay for the goods they bought?

They paid the highest prices. The villagers couldn't compete with them. If the VC wanted to buy something they would pay any price. I don't know where they got their money but they had plenty of it. The villagers were awed by their display of money. They wondered where the VC got so much money. They went around collecting five piasters here, ten piasters there and yet when they wanted to buy something they never spared their money. Last year they told the villagers that they didn't have money and urged them to sell their produce to the Nationalists. But this year they had plenty of it. I don't know where the money came from.

131. Are you going to vote this time?

No, I don't have the voter's cards.

132. Do you know how many people in this camp don't have voter's cards?

I don't know. I just arrived here. I don't dare to venture outside of this camp for fear I might be arrested for having no card at all. I am so miserable.

133. Do you intend to move to some other place?

I will stay here and look for work to do. I don't want to move again.

134. When do you think you will be able to go back to your village?

I don't know. Who knows when I will be able to return to my village and hamlet?

135. Here is the picture of a ladder. The bottom rung is numbered ten, and the top rung is numbered one. Now, let's say that the top rung represents the best life you can imagine, and the bottom rung represents the worst life you can imagine. Where on this ladder would you say that your life was before the front came to your village?

Before the VC came I was happy, I wasn't miserable.

136. What rung were you on?

I was on the happy one.

137. There are many grades of happiness. These rungs represent ten grades from very happy to happy and from miserable to very miserable. Which rung do you think could describe your life before the VC came?

Who doesn't want to be very happy? I was on the happy one.

138. Where were you after the VC came?

I was most miserable. The VC kept me under house arrest. I was like a prisoner because the VC wouldn't let me go anyplace.

139. If you could ask three things of any Vietnamese Government, what would they be?

Could I ask to be free and happy?

140. You could ask any three things which your heart most desires.

First, I ask the government to do everything possible to get rid of the VC. Second, rebuild the country. Third, reconstruct the rural areas as well as the towns so that the people could be free and happy and they could have food to eat, clothes to wear and be comfortable.

141. What do you want to ask for yourself?

Now that I am here, I am still very miserable. I hope the government will assist my family so that we can have food to eat and clothes to wear. Second, give me some work to do. Third, help me to build a house so I can shelter my family and where I can go back to after work. We are poor and I will have to work hard as a laborer to support my family. My wife is sick and my children are young.

142. When do you think the war will be over?

I don't know much about the situation.

143. Which side do you think will win?

In my own opinion, a few years before we were worried because we saw that the VC drove the SDC out of the village and took over this or that hamlet or village. But beginning with 1965 and also this year, 1966, the VC have mentioned the Korean troops. As far as I know the VC are being defeated. Why? During the Resistance the VC told us that there was war in Korea and there were Kim Il Sung and Syngman Rhee, and that Kim Il Sung would defeat Syngman Rhee -- Syngman Rhee being the Nationalist. That has been 20 years ago and Korea is still Nationalist. Now the Nationalist Koreans come to the help of the Nationalist Vietnamese. The VC can never win. If the Korean troops come to our help, that means the VC will be defeated. There is no doubt of that. I have my own belief. During the nine years of resistance the VC told us that Korea was under "smoke and fire". Korea now is in the hands of the Nationalists, and the Nationalist Koreans come to our help. This is my understanding.

144. What did the villagers think?

They believed that the government would win. If they had believed that the VC would win, they wouldn't have come out here, they wouldn't have dared.

145. Would you have come out here if you had believed that the VC would win?

Of course, in the end I would come out here whatever the outcome of the war.

146. Which side do you think is having the people's support?

As far as I can assess the situation I can say this: one fourth of the people are for the Communists, one fourth of them are neutral. Those latter are neither for the Communists nor for the government. They are those who worry only about their personal comfort and they want an easy life. And the rest of the people are for the government. The government commands the loyalty of half of the people. Many poor families although they didn't say so themselves prefer to have the government re-establish its control over the village.

147. Did the VC set up organisations in your village?

They set up a hamlet and village administrative machine and the Farmers' Association. Only the VC sympathizers and the neutral people were permitted to become members of the Farmers' Association. The VC considered them as receptive elements.

148. What other organizations did the VC set up in your village or hamlet?

None other.

149. Didn't the VC organize Young Men's and Women's Associations?

Of course, they had the Young Men's Association for the men and the Women's Association for the women, but the Farmers' Association was the core. They organized Young Men's and Women's Associations in order to collect the members' monthly dues. But only the outstanding elements in the village, the people whom the VC considered as their sympathizers could join the Farmers' Association.

150. How many people in your hamlet joined the Farmers' Association?

I only know that the members included old and young men. Women were included too. That is all I know about their Farmers' Association because it wasn't my business to find out.

151. What privileges did the members of the Farmers' Association receive?

They received land from the VC. The VC took the land from those who left for the GVN controlled areas and distributed it to the Farmers' Association members. The Hoa Hao families and the neutral families received land also. The VC gave land to the neutral families hoping that they would go over to their side.

152. What privileges did the members of the Young Men's and Women's Association receive?

These people lived in the VC areas and so they had to join the VC associations. Only the members of the Farmers' Association received land. The VC did this in order to build up their sympathizers.

153. Were the members better-off because of these associations?

They had been landless before, now had some land to work on. They may have felt happy because of that. Also when there was a meeting, these people were invited to sit on chairs facing the platform while people like me whom the VC called 'enemy's spies' were told/sit on the floor with our heads down.

154. Where did the local VC cadres in your village come from?

They were the local people. They were arrested by the Nationalists before and kept in prison for two or three years. The Nationalists fed them until they were fat and released them. Now they work for the VC and are cadres.

155. Did the villagers like the VC cadres?

No, except their sympathizers. The middle of the roaders didn't like them either. But no one dared say anything. They were used to do transportation missions carrying weapons and ammunition or supplies. The people were very weary of working for the VC.

156. Didn't the villagers like them when they first came to your village

Not at all. The people didn't like the VC even when they first came to the village because they realized that sooner or later their lives would be miserable. They were frightened because they knew that their hamlets and village would be devastated. They saw the GVN being driven out and the village officials in hiding, and they were disappointed.

157. I thought the villagers liked the VC because they treated them nicely while the GVN and Civil Guards stole their things and threatened them. What do you think about that?

It was true that there were complaints about the GVN and Civil Guards. They failed to apply politics in their daily transactions with the people, but the people are very wary of the VC now.

158. Did the VC arrest or kill anyone in your village?

They killed many people in the hamlets and village.

159. How many people were killed in your village or hamlet?

They killed two in my hamlet. One was a Buddhist. I don't know about the village but I am sure some must have been killed in each hamlet.

160. Why did they kill the two men in your hamlet?

They were Nationalist cadres. The VC came to the village as armed propaganda bands and their aims were to kill the Nationalist cadres and to intimidate the villagers. Many cadres were killed which brought about confusion in the minds of the people. A little while after, the village officials went into hiding and all the GVN and Nationalist forces withdrew to the district leaving the village open to the VC. The VC killed many Nationalist cadres in 1961, including inter-family group leaders. They just didn't wait and kill the hamlet chiefs.

161. What did the villagers say?

They were very frightened. No were these VC? They were arrested by the government, and one month after their release, they took the VC in and showed them where to look for their victims. Who else could know the ins and outs of the village and hamlets better than the local VC? These local VC and a few armed VC terrorized the villagers and killed off many Nationalist cadres.

162. Do you think these killings were justified?

Some of these officials embezzled public funds and made themselves rich. The VC capitalized on that. They told the people that these officials lived on the "sweat and tears" of the people and they deserved the death penalty. They said that to justify their killing in the eyes of the people. Looking back, the people realized that they had been fooled by the VC. The VC themselves were the

robbers. "They rob and cry for help at the same time." It was true that these officials embezzled public funds, but to tell the truth the amount involved was small. Only the VC and their sympathizers thought these killings were justified. The neutral villagers were frightened and inwardly they were against the VC terror. If the VC want to kill someone, they will find some excuse to kill him and to justify their action. If they want to bring anyone to an accusation and denunciation trial they will find some excuse to bring him there. The Nationalist cadres lived in fear, the neutral people lived uneasily too because they were under constant surveillance of the VC.

163. How often did the villagers in your village have to work for the VC?

Very often. Only the VC sympathizers, the guerrillas and neutral people were permitted to go on transportation missions for the VC. People like me whom they called "enemy's spies" had to remain in the village and work at other jobs such as digging up roads, sharpening spikes and making spike traps. We were considered undesirable elements and weren't allowed to join the transportation laborers.

164. How much time did you have to spend working for the VC each month?

Whenever they had something to do, they called on me and I had to work for them. I have a nephew who was arrested by the VC together with his friend. In the first Nationalist operation he ran to me and told me "What do you think uncle?". I got so mad at his foolishness and replied" I don't think of anything. Your mouth is like a gong, you go around blabbering and one day the VC will find out and they will arrest you." Sure enough the VC found out and took him and his friend away when they tried to escape out here. As for me and my friend, we went around with our mouths shut. We never mentioned that we wanted to escape. Instead, in order to win over the VC and to deceive them into thinking that we would not leave the village, we did everything to please them. When the VC called on us to work for them, we arrived first to appear at the assembling location. We did our jobs fast and with care. We set good examples for other laborers. At home we raised pigs and chickens, worked on our land and produced good crops. We dug trenches to hide in when there was an attack. We wanted to show the VC that we had no intention to leave the village, ever. We worked twice or three times as hard. That was the only way to deceive the VC. If we slackened in carrying out our duties, the VC would become

suspicious and they would watch our every move. They would wonder. Many people like us in My An and My Thu villages left for the government areas when the Nationalist troops came into their villages. My hamlet was located too far from the road and so whenever there were rumors of an oncoming operation, the VC drove us all to the mountain. We knew if we wanted to deceive them completely we should go to the mountain even without the VC telling us so. We did that a few times and the VC were deceived into thinking that we preferred to stay in the village. Instead of watching over us when we were in hiding, they let us go into hiding by ourselves. That was a great step because we could hide in this or that cave. At first the guerrillas went around and ordered us to go to the mountain when there were rumors of some encircling raid. Later we told the guerrillas that we were enlightened of the raids as they came, and that they didn't have to remind us to take ourselves to the mountain, we would do it ourselves. And so each time we heard rumors that the Nationalist troops were coming we packed up rice, salt and clothes and took to the mountain without the VC telling us so. The VC came to believe us. Also we carried out our work with great haste, worked twice or three times harder. The VC thought we would rather stay in our hamlet to work than to move out. It was very hard to escape if the VC were constantly behind you. They would watch your every move if they suspected something.

165. How did the villagers feel about going on transportation missions for the VC?

They hated these missions. I heard them say that each time they had to go they took for granted that it might be the last time they saw their village. They talked about the bombing and shelling they encountered on the way. Also they were very disturbed because they had to bring their own food along. They worked for the VC but the VC didn't feed them. Each laborer brought along their rice and salt, enough for the duration of the mission.

166. Was your hamlet a combat hamlet?

The VC dug communication trenches and planted spikes on both sides. They also told the people to dig foxholes along the road. They said these foxholes and trenches would protect the people when there was bombing or shelling. But the truth was the VC cadres themselves needed these foxholes and trenches for their protection. The villagers had their own bomb and their own trenches. They didn't need to go to the communication trenches for protection.

167. Did they mine the roads and so on?

Their defense measures were very artificial. I don't know about mines. Probably they had some. I don't know where their troops were but I only saw a few guerrillas in the village with a few weapons. Their ammunition was meager. They couldn't be compared with the Nationalists.

168. What control does the Front have over the people leaving the village?

They confiscated identification cards from those they suspected of harboring pro-Nationalist ideas. Many people wanted to come out here but they wouldn't do it because it was next to impossible to make the escape with the entire family in tow. If they couldn't have their families with them, they wouldn't go. They didn't want to come out here by themselves. They didn't want to leave their wives and children behind for fear the VC would cause them trouble. I know for a fact that many people wanted to come out here, especially the pro-Nationalist families. If the government would send in tanks to move them out, they would all come out. Ships and helicopters also are good. The people didn't want to remain in the village because they were frightened. They knew for sure that if they remained there, they could be killed eventually. The bombings and the shellings were quite intense. There were rumors among the villagers that the government knew the villagers were supporting the VC and that was why the government wanted to destroy their economy.

169. In your village, what did you hear about the conditions of life in the Front forces?

Very little. I only heard that each soldier received two cans of rice a day. They had nothing to eat with rice but salt or some dried meat if they were lucky.

170. Have you spoken with any villagers who returned from the Front forces?

There was that VC cadre's brother. He went away to join the VC army and a few months later he was back in the village.

171. Did he say anything?

What could he say? He didn't say very much but he said he couldn't stay in the VC because he couldn't stand the hardships. He said the food was tasteless and it was

nothing but rice and salt and salt and rice. Also he had to live in the jungle and hide in the mountain. He said it was very hard and he couldn't stand it.

172. Did any crippled front soldiers return to your village?

One man killed in [redacted] was brought to my village for burial.

173. Why was he brought to your village?

Because the Nationalist troops were stationed in [redacted]

174. Were their families informed of their death?

They wouldn't be informed until a year or two after. The VC said that a ceremony would be held in honor of anyone died for their cause, but that was propaganda. The VC couldn't hold these ceremonies for fear others would get frightened, and they would have a hard time recruiting people.

175. Did you meet any soldiers or cadres working with the Front who weren't Southerners?

I heard their accent, they were Northerners.

176. Did you talk to them?

I only saw them and heard them talking. I wasn't allowed to move around freely.

177. Did they often come to your hamlet or village?

They might have come to other hamlets. They didn't come to mine because mine was sparsely populated. One time they came to a hamlet in great numbers. As soon as they arrived they began their cooking. They stayed in the people's houses -- not people like me but their own people. When they arrived at the village, the local cadres took them in hand and showed them where to stay. They would never board in the homes of people like me.

178. What did these troops do there?

I don't know. The next morning around 8 AM the airplanes arrived and bombed the area. What a bombing! What a day! Four waves of bombings in one day alone. As soon as the airplanes left, they withdrew too.

179. Do you know how many casualties they suffered that time?

I don't know. They kept it a secret. In [redacted] and [redacted] as soon as the VC troops withdrew, the airplanes appeared and began to bomb the area. The people were very impressed. They said the government was smart because as soon as the VC troops concentrated in some place, the government learned about it. And so the people were very weary of the VC troops' presence. They didn't want to let them stay in their homes or use their cooking facilities. I heard a villager who lived in the village very close to [redacted] say that one time the VC troops came to his village. The next morning the villagers told the VC troops "We leave the village to your care and move away because we are too frightened." And so the villagers moved out leaving their homes to the VC troops. They could do whatever they wanted there. The people were [illegible]. About one hour after the VC troops left, the airplanes came and that area became a shambles.

180. Did any VC get killed that time?

I don't know if any of them got killed, but the people were quite impressed with the government. They said the government was smart. And so wherever the VC troops appeared the people were thrown into a fit. As soon as the VC troops arrived, the people moved away.

181. Did they let the people move away?

The people were frightened and anything could happen to them. They told the VC troops that "We don't know what will happen to us. So these were our homes and properties, you take care of them and we move away." And they moved away. The people were quite impressed with the government for knowing where the VC troops had concentrated.

182. Did the VC cadres say anything new before you came out here?

They didn't say anything new. They only said that the Nationalists were being defeated in the big battles and that was why they carried out their terror on a great scale. That was their line of propaganda. They said that the Nationalists lost this or that battle while their own troops suffered no casualties at all. That was sheer nonsense. Also they said that Korea was under "smoke and fire" but now the Koreans have gone Nationalist and given help to the government. Worse, the VC couldn't muster as many laborers to go on transportation missions for them as they did the year before because the routes

were constantly under fire and the Nationalist troops kept control over them. I heard that some day the government would re-establish its control over hamlets and villages. This was what I heard.

183. Have you ever heard about defeats suffered by front units?

The VC never told us such things.

184. Did you hear it from the other villagers?

Yes. Take the battle at [redacted] for example. The VC said they won, but the people who went on transportation missions that time to carry away the dead -- the neutral people -- said differently. That shows that the VC lied and lied to the people.

185. How did you learn about what happened outside of your village when you were in your village?

We learned what happened in the front at the meetings. The hamlet cadres distributed the information at the meetings. We had another source of information which was the neutral villagers. They told us what they saw and heard.

186. Did they let you listen to the radio?

I didn't have one but the VC had a set. They only turned on their station, never Saigon.

187. Did any villagers own a set?

The neutral group could own radio sets if they had money to buy them. But people like me weren't allowed to have any.

188. Did the VC distribute publications to the villagers?

No.

189. Did any entertainment group come to your village and put on a show for the benefit of the villagers?

Once in a great while they would invite the people to watch some dancing and that was all.

190. Did the villagers like it?

No. They didn't like to see people dancing around. They would rather listen to "vong co" and "hat boi" (classical music).

191. Did you hear of the Chieu Hoi program?

Yes. The government dropped leaflets which were meant to help the VC cadres to come out here more easily. They could serve as a passport for them in the meantime. Some villagers didn't know that and kept the leaflets themselves. When they met the Nationalist troops and were asked what type of function they did in the VC, these villagers protested that they were civilians. At the meetings the VC told us that the leaflets were meant for the VC cadres only and not for the villagers.

192. Did you keep these leaflets?

I read them and as soon as I finished I had to burn them.

193. What was said in these leaflets?

These leaflets carried information about the operations in Quang Ngai and Song Ve and other Nationalist victories. I also heard broadcasts, but the sound from airplanes was too noisy. People like me weren't supposed to listen to broadcasts or read leaflets. If we did at all, we did it secretly.

194. What did the villagers say about the Chieu Hoi program?

They said the government was trying to get the people to come out from the VC-controlled areas and the VC cadres to return to the government.

195. Did the villagers believe the lies they received from the Nationalists?

Of course. They said the US means were rich, the richest country in the world. With assistance from the Americans and the ARVN the VC could never hope to win.

196. Did you hear or learn about the use of chemicals to destroy vegetation or crops?

I heard from the salt traders and the laborers that the spraying was being carried out in the areas of Song Ve and Tra Bong to destroy crops and trees.

197. Did they say in these areas the crops belonged to the people or the VC?

Some of these crops belonged to the people.

198. Did some belong to the VC too?

I don't know where the VC have their production areas--must be somewhere in the mountain or so.

199. In your opinion, why did the government carry out these sprayings to destroy crops and trees?

The government destroys crops so that the people couldn't continue to supply the VC.

200. What did the people say about the spraying?

They didn't say anything. I suppose they have to move out of the area. The people didn't say a thing against this on that side. They probably think to themselves that it is more advisable for them to go some place else. If they stay in their own area, they may not be able to produce enough food to eat. Also they may get killed any time.

201. Do you think the government should continue the spraying to destroy the people's crops?

I think the government should continue to destroy the people's crops. My wish is this, that the government bring everyone who is against the Communists out here and those who are left behind are their own people. As it stands now, many anti-Communist people are still living in the VC-controlled areas because they have been taken in by the VC propaganda. They are frightened of what might happen if they came out here. What I propose is this, the government sends in troops to a hamlet or village and then calls on all the people to come out. Let the government send in helicopters or anything to bring them out. I see where the VC sympathizers wouldn't dare come out. They would rather stay in the village and get killed. Let the government continue to destroy the people's crops because that would help to decide the undecided, who are too attached to their crops to come out here.

202. What did the VC cadres say about the spraying?

They said the destruction of crops would make the people go hungry, and they wouldn't have anything to support the revolution with.

203. What did the people say about the Americans?

They didn't say anything about the Americans at all. They were very impressed with the United States. They said the

United States was the richest country in the world. Only the Americans have comfortable lives. Who didn't know how poorly the Russians and Chinese live? Communism means to put all of the people's possessions together and the Communists have no religion.

204. In your opinion, what do the Americans want in Vietnam?

Vietnam is the outpost in the struggle against the Communists. The Americans and the allies come to our help to keep Vietnam out of reach of the Communists. If the North takes over, Vietnam will be used as a springboard for the Communists to invade other countries.

205. Do you think American troops will move out of the country when the war is over?

I don't know.

206. Are you afraid the Americans may remain in Vietnam?

Why should I? People think we are not afraid of the Americans and the allies. Only the Communists are. It was thanks to the Americans and allies that we were able to move out here. I think I will be better-off if the Americans remain here.

207. Do you think the people want the Americans to stay here?

It was all the VC words. The people never mention the term "colonization", never. The term was originated by the VC. The people knew nothing and didn't care. When the French were here, the people were happy. The Americans have been here a few years and the people were happy before the VC came. If the Americans remain here the people will be much better-off. If anyone says this to the VC, he will certainly be accused of backwardness. The people realize that under the French the people were free to go about and to work. There was no such thing as "colonization." If the French mistreated people, that must have been people in higher classes. The people weren't mistreated and they were only concerned with having good food to eat and good clothes to wear. The people will go over to the side that can bring them comfort and happiness. The people don't care about power. Let others fight each other over it.

208. What did the people think about the presence of the Americans and the war?

They realized that the Americans were here because of the VC.

The VC were the cause of the war. During the eight or nine years before under Mr. Diem's regime, the people were happy. Now the VC came and their lives have been rendered so miserable. That much tells the people who are at fault.

220. What was the percentage of poor families in your hamlet?

That I don't know. There is a saying that no one is perfect so tell the truth some poor families are pro-Nationalists. I made this comment. What kind of cadres are they (VC cadres)? Look at their cadres (Nationalist cadres). They go around in jeeps and look like cadres. Meanwhile they (VC) go around in rubber sandals. They look deplorable. So all the poor people are Communists, some of them are pro-Nationalists. Poor people are pro-Communist because they have members of their families regrouped in the North. They have been educated by the other VC and they seem to be on the side of their regroupee members. But, there are poor people who aren't Communists. They mostly come from the rich families later made impoverished by some calamity or such. Those poor people are for the Nationalists and some of them are government officials. You can't say that all the poor people are pro-Communist.

210. In your opinion, what should the government do to get the people's support?

First, let the government send cadres to the hamlet and villages to explain to the people the difference between Communists and Nationalists so that the people will know which side will bring them food and clothes. Second, help the pro-Nationalist families who are still staying in the hamlets or villages. Bring security to the rural area as well as the towns.

211. Do you know who heads the government?

Mr. Ky and Mr. Thieu.

212. In your opinion, are the government officials just or corrupt?

To tell the truth, I don't know. But I can tell you this that I think they are quite smart. Beginning this year the VC have been unable to send the villagers on transportation missions because all the routes are blocked by the Nationalist troops.

213. What do you know of the Korean troops?

The people are very impressed with the Korean troops. One company of Korean troops defeated one whole battalion of VC troops. The VC described the Korean troops as wearing their hair in buns and chewing betel. They couldn't deceive even a child. We aren't stupid and don't believe them. Their sympathizers might have believed them. The natural people said "yes, yes" just to please the VC. As for people like me, we said nothing. But when we got home we laughed at the VC propaganda with our wives and children. We couldn't understand their propaganda and lies.

The subject seemed to enjoy the interview. He seemed sincere and was cooperative. His intelligence was average. The interview was conducted in the refugee camp's office which was a rather quiet place. There were very few interruptions during the entire interview. The interviewer introduced herself as a student of sociology, interested in knowing how the people in the rural areas, especially those in the Front-controlled-area, lived. The American who accompanied the interviewer was introduced as a professor of sociology. The subject seemed pleased with the introduction.

No. AGR 68

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

1. Name of interviewer [redacted]

2. Name of subject [redacted]

3. Time and date of interview :

From 9:00 AM to 12:00 on Sept [redacted] 1966

From _____ to _____ on _____ 196___

From _____ to _____ on _____ 196___

Total time 3 hours

Interview based on : tape (X) hand written notes ( )

4. Place of interview :

Chi Thon

5. Sex of subject : Male (X) Female ( )

6. Age of subject : 54

7. Ethnic background : Vietnamese

8. Place of birth :

hamlet [redacted]

village [redacted]

district Phu My

province Binh Dinh

9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :

hamlet [redacted]

village [redacted]

district Phu My

province Binh Dinh

10. (a) Length of residence in last location : Since birth

(b) Who controlled the place of residence:

GVN ( ) VC (X) Contested ( )

(c) Since when controlled or contested ? May 63

11. Number of brothers ( ) and sisters ( )

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : _____

13. Marital status : Married

14. Number of children : 2

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age : _____

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject (X) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject (X) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion : Catholic

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : Farming

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation : Middle class
(b) Landowner ? Yes How much land 1.5 mau

20. Education :
illiterate ( )
literate (X)
schooling completed : _____

21. Any relatives in VC : None

22. Any relatives in GVN : 4

23. Any relatives (how many? when?) killed by :
(a) French None
(b) GVN None
(c) VC One cousin

24. When became a refugee : August [redacted] 1966

25. Where took refuge first [redacted] Hamlet, Qui Nhon

26. Present residence [redacted] Hamlet, Qui Nhon

AGR

INTERVIEW

69

AGR 69

1. How long had you and your family been lived in your village before you took refuge?

I was from Quang Nam. I and a group of people from Quang Nam were brought to Hamlet [redacted] Village to resettle by the Goverment in since 1958. This village was a land development center.

2. How big was your village? How many people lived in your village?

My village had two hamlets; hamlet 1 and hamlet 2. There were 127 families in hamlet 1 and 140 in hamlet 2. All the villagers were from Quang Nam. The families in hamlet 1 were brought there by the Government in 1958, and those in hamlet 2 in 1959.

3. How did you and the people in your village do to earn your living?

I and all the other villagers earned our living by farming and growing potato.

4. How much land did you work on? How much was your yearly income? Did you have enough to eat?

When I first settled there, the Government gave me 5 sao of land. I worked on it for only two seasons. I had to abandon it because it was located in a low area and therefore often submerged under water. I took over the hilly land abandoned by the Montagnards. I worked on three sao only. There was only one season a year for this type of land. Each year I harvested around 200 thung of paddy. It was enough. I also grew potato. I had and only two seasons with potato. I was able to harvest the previous season, but not this one. The potato from the previous harvest was stored in our house, and burned by the Special Forces.

7. Did the other families have more land? Did most of them have enough to eat?

All the families in my village received land from the Government. Those who had wives and children were given one sao of land and a buffalo. Most of the families in my hamlet had enough to eat. A few of them didn't have enough, but they weren't destitute and often received rice from the Government.

6. How many members were in your family?

I am alone. I have no family or brother or sister. Therefore I received only 5 sao of land and no buffalo.

7. What is your religion?

I am a Protestant.

8. Were there many Protestants in your village?

There were 16 Protestants families in my hamlet. There were about 68 Protestant Buddhists families in hamlet1. The other families were either Catholics or ~~Buddhists~~, but the number of Buddhist families was ~~few~~ small

9. Were there any conflicts ~~xxx~~ between people of different religious affiliations?

Never.

10. Were there any Montagnards in your village?

All the people in the village were Vietnamese.

11. How much education did you have?

I know how to read but now very fluently. I can also write but my writing is very bad and it talkes me much time to do it.

12. Were there schools in your village?

My village had one school with three ~~xxxxxxxxx~~ classrooms, but since 1962 the teachers suddenly left the school. There was no one to teach at the school and ~~the school~~ it had to be closed down. Some time later, a man opened a private school to teach the children. In the morning he taught in this hamlet, in the afternoon, he taught in the other hamlet. Each child had to pay 10 piasters per month.

13. Were there any well-educated people in your village? Were there any illiterate people in your village?

There was no one with a good education in my village. Most of us know how to read and write. There were two or three illiterate people.

14. Did you have any intimate friends in your hamlet?

I knew all the people in my hamlet. I had known them since we were in Quang Nam but I didn't consider ~~them~~ any of them as my intimate friend.

15. Did you often talk to the people you knew? Did you discuss everthing with them?

I often talked to the people I knew in the hamlet but only about work and [illegible]

16. Who was the most important person in your village? Who was the most respected person in your village?

I only know that the most important person in my hamlet was the hamlet chief, but he often didn't enjoy the people's respect because he got drunk and said foolish things. As far as I know, no one in my hamlet enjoyed the people's respect.

17. Who was the most informed person in your hamlet about what happened in other areas?

The man who worked in the information office was the most informed person about what had happened in other areas. But he was arrested by the VC right after they took over the village in June 1965.

18. Were there anyone in your village who had worked for the Viet Viet Minh?

Some of them had joined the Militia under the Vietminh when they were still in Quang Nam.

19. Did they meet any difficulties since they left Quang Nam to resettle in the village?

They continued to earn their living as usual.

20. Before the VC took over your village, how did the Government officials in your village behave towards the villagers?

I don't know how these affair officials behaved towards the villagers. They were always nice to me. But I knew that there were many bad scandals and the villagers reported when the officials. Take for example the Government gave the villagers three breeding hogs the village chief took one, the village policeman took one and the leader of the Youth's group took the third one. When the people demanded some explanations, they promised to pay back the money, but haven't done that yet. There was another instance. The village council made the people pay taxed on their fish and pigs and then distributed the money among themselves. When the people asked for their money back, they promised to pay them back. But, it was when the VC were about to take over the village, they all left without paying back the money to the people.

officials
21. Were these affiliates/from your village?

They were all from the village.

22. Were they elected by the people or appointed by the Government?

Two officials were elected by the people. They were the village chief and the village policeman. The rest were appointed.

23. When and how was the election held?

The election was held in 1958. There were 12 candidates. All the people took part in the voting freely. Two men were elected and they have been keeping their positions ever since.

24. Were there any other elections besides that one?

No.

25. Do you know anything about Mr. Ngo Dinh Diem Government?

During Mr. Ngo Dinh Diem's Government there caused many dissatisfactions among the people when we were in Quang Nam as well as when we first settled here. When we were still in Quang Nam, my hamlet had a hamlet chief who was only 21 years old. I don't know why he arrested many people in the hamlet and beat them up so unmercifully. Six or seven of these people killed themselves after release/after they had been rung up and tortured for a few night. And the transferrence of people to this areas. It was injust and nonsensae. The hamlet chief made the decision as to/who had to move out.

26. Would you describe these injust and nonsense instances?

Take for example I was told to migrate. I didn't know why it had to be me. I complain that I was alone, no wife or children, no relatives, and I had about 7 sao of land and one or two sao of orchard. I was well-to-do and didn't need to look for jobs at the land development center. I asked to be left in the village, but the hamlet chief replied that if I didn't go I would have to attend a study course at the district for six months—I didn't know what I was supposed to study— and then returned to the village for six more months of studying. If after studying for six at the village level and I still didn't want to go, I had to return to my hamlet

and studied for six more months. If I had to study for so long, I wouldn't be able to work and to earn my living, and so I had to leave my land and orchard and ~~migrate~~ Many well-to-do families with tiled houses, ~~yet they~~ were told to ~~xx~~ migrate. Therefore many people in the village migrated. The Government rewarded the village 80,000 piasters. The village chief ~~received~~ took 25,000piasters ~~alone~~ for himself. He bought ~~x~~ cows to celebrate.

27. What dissatisfactions did the people have when they first got to the land development center?

When we first arrived at the land development center we were extremely miserable. No land distribution was done during the first two seasons. The Government used tractor to plough the land for the people and the people worked together. The area chief of the land development center treated us very badly. When we were working in the ~~fixx~~ fields if we stopped for a little rest ~~fxx~~ or for a cigarette~~x~~ he would beat us up. I don't know if Mr. Diem was a nice person or not, but his officials were all bad.

28. Did the people learn of Mr. Diem overthow?

Mr. Diem was overthrown on November 1, 1963 and we didn't learn about it until January 1964.

29. What did the people say about his overthrow?

They discussed with each other. I found that only the Catholics in the village missed Mr. Diem. No one else in the village missed him. I think that the reason the Catholics missed Mr. Diem was because when Mr. Diem was in power, ~~xxxxxxxx~~ ~~xxxxxxxx~~ the Catholics received much assistance from him. They received lots of rice, flour and clothes. These things were distributed to the Protestants and Buddhists also but only rarely and in small quantities

30. Were there any Government forces stationed in ~~xxxx~~ or near your village?

There were about 30 Montagnard Civil Guards ~~in station~~ stationed in the village. ~~xxxxxxxx~~ In 1960 they were in the village, In 1961 they built a post on a mountain next to the village. They stayed in their post for about one year and then withdrew.

31. Did any other GVN forces pass through your village?

No.

32. How did the MontagnardCivil Guards behave towards the people?

The Montagnard soldiers behaved very nicely towards the people in the village. They didn't cause troubles to/or oppress anyone. They had only one fault that was they were very coward. In 1960 and 1961, the VC often came to the land development to cause troubles there. Every time the VC came, the Montagnards ran into hiding.

33. Did you live in a Strategic Hamlet?

Hamlets 1 and 2 of my village were Strategic Hamlets.

34. When were the Strategic Hamlets built?

In 1961. It took four months to build it.

35. Did the villagers have to contribute anything to the building of the Strategic Hamlets?

No one had to contribute any money at all. But we all had to work for four months straight. Every now and then we were given two or three days rest so we could do our household chores, work in the field, grow potato. We went to the woods every day to cut down trees and bamboo trees to make hoops and fences. The work was very hard, the people were very miserable. Many people like me for example had to go hungry/at noon when we went to the woods to cut down the trees. We all complained. Since our arrival to the land development center the period when we had to build the Strategic hamlet was the hardest one.

36. What did you like most about the Strategic Hamlet?

What I liked most about it/was security. Before the Strategic Hamlet was built, the VC used to come in and cause troubles. From the time the Strategic Hamlet was built until June 1965, the VC didn't come and cause us any more troubles. The people could work in peace.

37. What didn't you like about the Strategic Hamlet?

There wasn't anything I didn't like about it. Only when we had to build

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the Strategic Hamlet, it was very strenuous time.

38. What happened to the Strategic Hamlet afterwards?

The VC soldiers came to the hamlet in June 1965. Their strength was about 150 men. When they were approaching the hamlet, the militia and the Village Council who were then in the hamlet, run into hiding. They entered the hamlet and wouldn't let anyone leave the hamlet. After having been there for 3 days, they held a meeting with the villagers and told them to go and destroy the hamlet fence. But the destruction of the fence was'nt complete because some sections of it was too further out thick with bamboo.

39. What do you think about the Strategic Hamlet?

I think that the Strategic Hamlet is very beneficial to the people because the VC can't infiltrate into the hamlet in small groups. The people can enjoy security. Therefore I like to live in Strategic Hamlet.

40. How did you find your life Before the VC took over your village?

When I first migrated there I felt very miserable and angry, and I had a hard time earning my living. But, some time afterwards, the work became easier and I was better of. The soil there was very fertile. Each year I could put aside 50 or 60 thung of paddy. I also raised pigs and chicken and grew corn and potato to feed pigs and chicken. It was easy to grow corn and potato and raising chickens and pigs was very profitable.

41. How did you feel about your future then?

If the VC hadn't come to cause troubles and take over the hamlet, my future would have been much better off. If I could work in peace, I believed I could be rich.

42. Did you have any dissatisfactions?

No.

43. When did you first hear about the Front?

I don't know about the Front. I only know about the VC. The first time I heard of the VC was in 1960. At that time some villagers men from the village went to the woods to cut down bamboo trees and met some VC. The VC came and talked to

~~thuxxxxxxxxx~~ them they asked them whether the people in the village were well off, and they promised to ~~xxxxxxx xxxxx~~ come for a visit. These villagers told me of the incidentthat was why ~~x~~ I hea rd of the VC for the first time.

44. Did anyone in the village join the VC?

No one in the villagex joined the VC.

45. When did the VC come to your village?

In 1960 also.

46. What did they ~~xxxxxxxx~~ come for?

I remember that one evening they came and exchanged fire with the SDCs ~~xx~~ and the Civil Guards. One SDC was killed and another one wounded. The firing lasted for a while, then the SDC and the Civil Guards all withdrew. The VC entered the village, they burned down the meeting hall, the Area Chief's office, but they didn't set fire to any of the people's houses. Meanwhile the Master sargeant who was the Area Chief ran to the fields and ~~xxxx~~ hid there. In the morning the VC withdrew and set up ambush around the village. The Master Sargeant ~~xxxxxxx~~ decided to go to ~~x~~ the district but was captured. The VC asked him where he wanted to go and he replied that he was a village looking for his buffalo which had run away because of the firing. The VC let him go. ~~They~~ He went to the district to make his report. At about 10, the district forces arrived to the village on the trucks. When they were near the village, they met the VC, and there was shooting. Two VC were killed, and the rest ~~xx~~ ran in confusion. These two bodies were left on the side of the road and two days later the VC came back ~~xx~~ and burried them right there. There are two graves there now. The district forces entered the village but withdrew at the end of the day. Two days later, the Master Sargeant Area Chief returned with the Civil Guards who had run into hiding the day before. ~~xxxx~~ They were ambushed by the VC when they were near the village. The men on two sides fired at each other. The Master Sargeant and one Civil Guard were wounded. After that incident, the VC all withdrew.

47. What was the strength of the VC when they came to your village? Were there any Montagnards among them?

There were quite a few of them, but I don't know how many of them were there. I only know that most of them were Montagnards. There were few Lowlanders.

48. Did they hold meeting with the people to make propaganda?

No.

49. Did they come back again during the period between their first visit and the building of the Strategic Hamlet?

One month later they returned and burned down the Youth Center. There was no firing this time. They came back again at the beginning of 1961. This time they came in great strength, but they didn't entered the village, except for a few. They hung their flag on the flag pole of the Area Chief's office. The next morning, the hamlet chief had someone to get the flag down and then he gave it to me to put it away because I lived near there. I hid it in the garden. But I was afraid that the VC might know about it and so/I gave it back to the hamlet chief. Four days later in the afternoon I asked permission to return to Quang Nam to sell my land so there so that I might buy some farming equipment. At that time the Civil Guards and the Village Council had all left the village. I stayed 20 days in Quang Nam. When I returned, the villagers told me that the VC had stayed around the village for 10 days before they withdrew. During those 10 days, they searched the village for the Nationalist officials but they found no one. They took many 7 civilians to the woods for 6 days and then released them. Some time later, the province chief, the district cadres and the Village Council returned and started the study course about the Strategic hamlet for the people. When the study was over, the building of the Strategic hamlet was began. From then on the VC didn't come to the village again until June 1965 when they returned to take over the village.

50. When the VC took over the village, did they confiscate the people's identification cards?

Yes. They forced the people to turn over their identification cards to them. The majority of the villagers turned their cards to the VC. As for me, I hid it and told them that I had lost it somewhere and hadn't been able to find it. I promised to turn it over to them when I found it. That is why I still have it now.

51. Did the VC say why they confiscated your identification cards?

They only said that we should turn in our identification cards to them so they could keep them for us. Whenever anyone wanted to go to the Nationalist controlled areas, they would give their cards back. That was what they said, but the truth was they never returned the cards to anyone.

52. How did the VC cadres treat the villagers?

They treated the villagers nicely. They never beat up or oppressed anyone.

53. Did the villagers like the VC cadres?

No one hated the cadres, but the older people didn't like them. Only the young were excited over them.

54. Why did the young like the cadres?

I think it was because the young people could join them in singing. That was why they preferred the cadres.

55. After the VC had taken over the village, did they say anything about the National Liberation Front of the South to the people?

I never heard anything about the Liberation Front. Perhaps the cadres had said something about it, but I never attended any meeting. That is why I know nothing.

56. What aims did the VC have in mind when they fought against the Nationalists?

I don't know.

57. In your opinion, do the VC love peace?

I don't know.

58. In your opinion, are the VC patriotic or do they betray the people?

I don't know if the VC are patriotic or not. I don't understand what is meant by betraying the people.

59. Do you think the VC are courageous?

I think that they are courageous. I found that they often fought against the Civil Guards, destroyed roads, set up ambushes, and weren't afraid of the Nationalist soldiers.

60. Did the VC love the people?

They said they loved the people, but I don't know if they really meant it.

61. Did the cadres often hold meetings in the village? What did they talk about in those meetings?

The cadres held a meeting every now and then. During the meetings, they usually told the people about the victories of the VC units. I remember they once told about the victory of Dong Xoai. I've forgotten all others.

62. Did the people believe what the cadres said about the victories?

I don't know whether the people ~~xixi~~ believed what the cadres said or not. As for me, I think they exaggerated.

63. Why do you think so?

When the VC first took over the village, the cadres always said that they would help the people, and protect their rights. Later on, all I saw was that theyonly ~~xxiixxxxix~~ collected rice from the people, and didn't ~~xix~~ help the people or protect their rights. Thus the cadres never told the truth. Once they didn't tell the truth, the news of victories they gave out wouldn't be very truthful. That's why I had doubt.

64. Did the cadres say anything about Red China?

No.

65. Did the cadres say anything about the GVN?

The cadres didn't say much about the GVN. They ~~xxixy~~ only said that the GVN underwent too many changes, and

criticized it for letting ~~pe~~ rare and precious things such as elephant tusks, iron, zinc, gold, and coal mines go into the hands of foreigners.

66. Did the cadres say anything about the Americans?

They said the Americans wanted our treasures so much, that 's ~~xxxx~~ why they come here to take over ~~xxix~~ and govern ~~xxi~~ Vietnam in order to seize those things.

67. Did the cadres say anything about this war?

They said sooner or later the Revolution would win and the South would be liberated.

68. Did the cadres say why the Revolution would win?

They only ~~xixi~~ said vaguely so.

69. Do you believe the Revolution will win?

I don't know whether I ought to believe or not. The cadres often said untruthful things.

70. Did the cadres ever force the people to go elsewhere for re-education?

Before the VC took over the village, they had sent six people to the mountain for re-education for six days. I've told you about this incident. These people later on ~~xxixdx~~ said that they were well-treated by the VC, they were fed with pork and dog meat. One of them was given two chickens when they were released.

71. After the VC took over the village, did they send anyone away for re-eddcation?

They sent another three persons away for ~~xxdxc~~ re-education after they had taken over the village. ~~xxx,xxxxx~~ One was

the wife of the hamlet chief -- the hamlet chief himself had fled the village -- and [illegible] the other two women were wives of Popular Force men. The husbands had also fled to Lac Thien District Town.

72. Why were those three women arrested?

About a month and a half after the VC had taken over the village, the hamlet chief's wife took her three small children and fled from the village with the other two women. But they were arrested by the VC as soon as they got out of the village. They were all sent to the mountain for re-education. I don't know which mountain. They were released after three days, and from then on they stayed put in the village, and didn't make any attempt to escape again.

73. What did they learn when they were sent to the mountain?

I was told that they were sent to re-education, but I don't know what they learned.

74. Were they ill-treated while they were in the mountain?

According to what they said, they weren't badly treated. Only the food was bad.

75. How many young men over 18 years of age were there in your village?

I only know that there were about 25 young men over 18 in my hamlet, not counting 3 others who had joined the Popular Force. But these men have left the hamlet one after another. By the time I left the hamlet in December 1965, there were only 2 men left who joined the VC forces.

76. Where did the Popular Force men go when the VC took over the village?

All the Popular Force men went to the district town to take refuge. Only eight men came back to the village.

77. What happened to those Popular Force men who came back to the village?

Nothing happened to them. Three of them led an ordinary life. Five others joined the hamlet guerrillas.

78. Did those who join the guerrillas did so voluntarily, or were they forced to join by the cadres?

They did so voluntarily.

79. Do you know why they volunteered to join the guerrillas?

I guess it was because the guerrillas were allowed to take care of the xxxx houses of those who had left the village. Especially in Hamlet 1,xxxxx almost all the people had gone. The guerrillas who were detailed to take care of these houses might enjoy the xxxitx products yielded by the property of the absentee villagers such as potato, manioc, and fruits from their orchards. Some of those guerrillas even went as far as taking things from others' people's houses such as furniture, earthenware, jars, and milling stones. Maybe those who joined the guerrillas did so because they saw the advantages of being guerrillas.

80. Besides the Popular Force men, did anyxxxxx other people from your hamlet join the GVN force?

Between 1960 and 1965, xxxxxxxxxx about 35 men xy from my hamlet joined the Civil Guards or were drafted. Four among

have died in action. There were a lot of men from Hamlet 1 who joined the GVN force, but I don't know how many exactly.

81. Did any of those who joined the GVN force come back to the village?

Two of them deserted their ranks and came home. One ~~was~~ still remains in the village, another has joined the Popular Force and is now in Lac Thien district town.

82. How many men have joined the VC force?

Only two, as I've told you. The rest joined the guerrillas.

83. How many guerrillas were there in your village?

There were 6 guerrillas in my hamlet.

84. What were the guerrillas supposed to do?

I don't know what those guerrillas ~~xx~~ were supposed to do. I only saw them carry the guns and walk up and down the hamlet. I guess they would arrest any one who got drunk. Perhaps they would fight against the GVN soldiers if they were attacked. I only guess so, I don't know for sure.

85. How did the cadres treat the families of GVN soldiers?

The cadres didn't ~~xxxx~~ shout at or mistreat families of soldiers. They only advised those people to write to their relatives in the GVN army and call them home, so that when the country was liberated, they wouldn't have to ~~xxxxxxxx~~ lose face with the people. But I didn't see anyone write letter to call ~~xxxx~~ his relatives home.

86. Did the cadres organize/any land redistribution program?

No.

87. Did the cadres promise to redistribute land to the people in the future?

No.

88. Did the cadres confiscate land from ~~xx~~ anyone?

The cadres didn't confiscate any land from anybody. If anyone left his land idle, the cadres would allow the Communist Montagnards work on that land.

89. Did the cadres make the people contribute money or rice?

When the VC first came to the village, the first thing they did was to ask the women in the village to contribute each a bunch of vegetable -- ong toy, spinach, ~~xx~~ banana buds, or any kind of edible vegetables. The vegetables were taken to one designated house, and the Montagnards' soldiers would come to collect them in the evening. After the vegetable contribution came the rice contribution. Each family had to have a jar of economy rice. A handful of rice was taken from each canful of rice that the family cooked for its meals. This practice continued endlessly. The cadres came to each family ~~xxxxxx~~ every month to collect the economy rice.

90. What did the cadres do with that rice?

I don't know what they did with the rice. I guess they ate it. ~~xxxxx

91, Besides that, did the people have to pay any kind of taxes?

Yes, the people had to pay troop support tax besides. At harvest time, the cadres organized a "production cell" whose job was to reap the rice for the people. As they worked, they had to be paid. But the main purpose was to help speed up the reaping process, and for the cell leader to note down how much paddy each family earned that season. The cadres argued that the troops were fighting the enemy to liberate the country, thus the people had the duty to feed the troops. Each family was compelled to contribute a certain amount of paddy. The cadres didn't order the people to contribute, they only plead to the people to do so, but nobody refused. On the average, about five or six buckets of paddy were taken away from each hundred buckets earned for contribution. The people also had to pay tax on the amount of corn earned.

92. Where were the paddy and corn collected from the people stored?

The cadres asked the people to husk the paddy and then mix it with corn. The mixture was three-fifth rice and two-fifth corn. The Lon Nol soldiers then took it away. I don't know where they took it to.

93 How much paddy did you have to contribute each season?

I didn't wait for the production cell to reap my paddy for me, I did it myself. As soon as my paddy ripened, I

reaped it immediately, and hided it away. The production cell had no way to know the exact amount of my paddy earnings. Thus I was able to declare less than the true amount, and had to pay less tax than others.

95. Did you heard your paddy in the mountain?

I didn't have much paddy. I didn't store it in the house, but I didn't hoard it in the mountain either. I kept it in my orchard. A number of families didn't want to store their paddy in the mountain, they stored it in their orchards just like I did.

96. Did the people say anything about having to contribute paddy?

Everybody was aware that the rate of contribution was too heavy, but I didn't hear anybody complain.

97. Were there any other kinds of taxes besides the paddy contribution?

Just before I left the village, the cadres made it known that the people would have to buy bonds. They said that bonds would be sold to get money to feed the troops. According to them, even the poorest man had to buy 500 piasters worth of bonds, well-to-do people had to buy more, and they could invest up to 5000 piasters. In the propaganda, the cadres said that a lot of high-ranking GVN officials had bought bonds, some of them had invested over ten thousand piasters. Among the buyers there were province chiefs, district chiefs, and officers of the rank of major. The cadres said the bonds were redeemable in four years with interest.

98. What did the people comment about having to buy bonds?

I only saw the people speculate with each other to see how much each person could invest. Some of them announced ahead that they didn't have the money to buy any bond. But I didn't see anybody complain or look worried. When I left the village, bonds weren't issued yet.

99. What were the main products of your village? Where were they usually sold?

The main products of my village were paddy, pigs, and fish. Fish was the one of the big sources of income of the village. The village had a lot of fish ponds. Formerly, under GVN controls, buyers used to come from Ben Me Thuot. Ever since the VC came, nobody has come to buy, and the products weren't allowed to be taken outside of the village for sale. It was understandable that paddy couldn't be sold outside of the village, because it was stored in the mountain. But even pigs and fish weren't allowed to be sold! A man had to have permission of the cadres if he wanted to kill one of his pigs who wouldn't grow big even if it was well-fed, or his buffalo who was too weak to ~~do farm work~~ plow the paddy. If he got permission of the cadres to kill his animals for meat, he would have to sell the meat within the village at price fixed by the cadres. For example, the price of lean pork was 30 piasters per kilogram, pork with bone was sold at 25 piasters per kilogram and tripe at 40 piasters per kilogram. The product had to

pass the cadres' inspection before it was allowed to be sold. Deer and wild boar meat was also not allowed to be sold outside of the village. The guerrillas usually shot down those animals, and they had to sell the meat to the villagers at 25 piasters per kilogram. If they got those animals with their spears, that is they didn't have to spend and bullet on them, they would have to sell the meet at 20 piasters per kilogram.

100. Where did the people buy other necessities?

Other necessities such as msm and salt were very hard to get. Once in a while the cadres allowed a few women to go to [redacted] market place to buy those things and resell to the people. But they weren't able to buy much of those things, and they had to paid high prices. That is why life was terrible in the village.

101. Did the cadres bgy anything from the people?

The cadres never bought anything from the people. On the contrary, every now and then they sold salt to the families who desperately needed it. They sold it in small qunatities, a few kg each time but with a very low price. They sold each kg for 5 piasters, instead of 30 piasters which was the price/resale paid by the villagers to those who had bought it from the market. A few times, the cadres sold sleeveless shirts to some whose clothes were all worn out. The prices were low. Until the time I left the village, the people there had enough clothes to wear.

102. Where did the villagex cadres come from?

When they first took over the village, there very many cadres, but a little while later, they all left except for one. He wasn't from the village. He was a regroupee, and from Ninh Binh. He was the one who appointed some of the men in the village to the cadre position to assist him.

103. What organizations were established in your village?

The regroupee cadre organized an Autonomous Committee to solve all the [redacted] problems in the village. All the members of this committee were from the

village and were appointed by the regroupee cadres. All had to work under his orders and he was the one who was the leader of the entire village. Every now and then, every ten or fifteen days, a district cadre came to the village and stayed there for one day and then left.

104. Were there any associations organised in your village?

There were many organizations associations organised in my village such as the Soldiers' Forster Mothers and Sisters', Old People' and the Farmers' Associations.

105. Did you belong to any of these associations?

No.

106. Did many people join these associations?

I don't know.

107. What were the purposes of these associations?

I only heard that they had been organised. I don't know anything more.

108. How was the cadres who was the leader of the village? How did he treat the people?

He treated the people very nicely. He didn't have a definite place to stay. Each day he stayed in a different family. Wherever he went, he always carried with him a small radio and a pistol. The people liked him very much. The people criticised him only on one thing, that he often told the guerrillas to kill dogs to eat.

109. How were the other cadres?

None of them disliked the people.

110. Were there any female cadres?

I saw the women went to every family to collect rice which had been saved in the saving jar. There were women in the prod production cells. I don't know if these women were mil cadres or not. They were all from the village.

111. Did the people say anything about them?

Nobody said anything about them.

112. Was there a Village Party Chapter in your village?

I don't know.

113. Were there any Party members in your village?

I don't know.

114. Did you see the cadres quarrelling with each other?

No.

115. Was there any change in the people's attitude towards the cadres?

The cadres were always nice to the people, and the people's attitude towards them from the time they first came until the time I left the village, remained the same. They liked the cadres.

116. Besides those who were arrested and sent to attend some study course in the mountain, did the cadres arrest, punish or beat up any other persons?

Besides those who were sent to attend some study course in the mountain, I saw the cadres arrest two other people and sent them away. One was sent away in August 1965 and the other one in October 1965. The cadres didn't punish or beat up any other one.

117. Where were these arrested people sent to? For how long?

Two were sent somewhere, I don't know. They hadn't been released yet when I left.

118. What did the people say about the arrest of these two people?

They didn't say anything.

119. Did the cadres kill anyone?

No.

120. Did you and the people in your village have to do corvee labor for the Front?

I don't know about corvee labors. I only know that twice the cadres told some villagers to go and bring back sauce and salt to be sold to the people. The first time 16 people had to go and bring back sauce. They went for 8 days and came back empty handed. The cadres explained that there was no sauce because of difficulties. The next month, the cadres told 16 people to go and bring back salt. The cadres said that the salt would be distributed to the people, each would receive three cans. Also, each person could buy a few

extra kg of salt. They had been away for a month and a half and hadn't been back yet. By that time I left the village and so I don't know whether they were ~~xx~~ able to bring back any salt or not.

121. Each time they had to go on transportation missions, did these ~~xxxx~~ appointed men ~~xxxxx~~ have to bring along with them to eat?

Each time, they had to bring rice enough for three days only. The ~~xxxx~~ cadres would ~~xxxxxxxx~~ distribute rice to them the rest of the time. That was only what I heard, I don't know how the truth was.

122. After the VC had taken over ~~x~~ your village, did your hamlet become a combat hamlet?

No.

123. Didn't the cadres ask the villagers to do anything for the defense of the village?

No. They only asked the people to make spikes. Each person had to make 200 spikes finished in four sessions. They then told the Montagnard soldiers and guerrillas to plant them somewhere, I don't know. They weren't being planted in or around the village.

124. How did the cadres ~~xxxx~~ Vercige their control over the villagers?

All the routes that led out of the village were guarded by Montagnard soldiers or guerrillas. They knew immediately anyone who left the village.

125. In your opinion, why didn't the cadres permit the people to leave the village?

I am not sure about it, but I ~~xxxx~~ think it was because the cadres didn't want the people to move to the GVN controlled areas.

126. Why didn't the cadres want the people to live in the GVN controlled areas?

If the people moved out of the village, ~~xxx~~ who would contribute paddy to them.

127. When you were still in your village, did you know anything about life in the Front forces?

No.

128. Did you ever meet cadres who weren't Southerners?

No, but I heard members of the village ~~xxxxxx~~ Autonomous Committee mentioned that they had heard the ~~xxx~~ cadre who was the leader of ~~xx~~ the village said that there

were many Northerners cadres came to the South to work.

129. From the time the VC took over your village till the time you left your village, did you see any changes in the cadres' activities?

I didn't see any change.

130. Did you ever hear of the defeats of the Front forces units?

I never heard anyone mentioned that.

131. Was there a hospital or doctor in your village?

When the Vietnamese Nationalists were still in control, there was a hospital in the village. The VC burned it down in 1960. Afterwards, the Village Council turned a private home into a hospital with nurses in charge of it. But the nurses left before the VC came and took over the village. Since the time the VC took over the village, there was no hospital nor nurse.

132. Did the cadres ever distribute medicine to the people?

Every now and then the members of the Village Autonomous Committee distribute distributed in very small quantities cough and fever medicine to the people.

133. When you were in your village, did you ever hear of the present Nationalist Government?

I only heard what the cadres say. I have told you about it before.

134. Do you know the names of the leaders of the present Nationalist Government?

No.

135. In your opinion, are the Nationalists strong or weak?

Personally I think that the Nationalists are strong because they have plenty of vehicles, weapons and airplanes. Compared with the Nationalists, the Nationalists are like firestorm jungle fire, while the VC are like candle light.

136. In your opinion, is the Government compassionate toward the people?

The Nationalist Government helps the poor people, gives them mosquito nets, blankets, rice, oil, distributes to them land, buffalo, builds hospital to cure their sickness. As such, the Nationalist Government is compassionate toward the people.

137. In your opinion, are the Government officials dedicated or ~~xxx~~ lazy?

As far as I know, the Government officials from the district level down are always enthusiastic in helping the people. They ~~xx~~ aren't lazy. I only saw that Montegnard ~~Xxxxxxxxxx~~ Militia and Civil Guards are lazy. They didn't do a thing. They only uses Government ammunition to shoot fish. Personally I think, that is doing harm to the Government.

138. Are the Government officials from the district level down ~~xxxxxx~~ more ~~xxxx~~ dedicated today than ~~xxxxxxxxx~~ those under Mr. Diem?

These officials are ~~xxxxxx~~ more dedicated than those serving under Mr. Diem. As I told you before, many Government officials ~~xxxxxx~~ serving under Mr. Diem oppressed, mistreated the people. But nowadays, I find that all the officials are good. When I left my village to go to Lac Thien District~~x~~, the district ~~xxxxx~~ chief asked me if I lacked cigarettes ~~xxxxxxxx~~, he would give them to me to smoke, if I had no food, he would provide it for me to eat. He talked much nicer and gentler than the former district chief.

139. When you were still in your village, did you hear about ~~xxx~~ what happened in Saigon?

No.

140. Did you know what happened in other places?

No.

141. Were there newspapers in your village?

No.

142. Were there ~~xxxxx~~ any radios sets?

Four or five families owned them, but I never listened to them.

143. Did the cadres permit the people to listen to the radio?

I ~~xxxxx~~ don't know.

144. Did those who went to the market talk about what they had heard at the market?

Very few people were permitted to go to the market. I never heard them ~~xxx~~ say anything about what they had heard at the market.

145. Did the cadres say anything about life in the North?

They said that life in the North has completely changed. Everyone has a new life, no one is unemployed or miserable.

146. Did you beleive what they said?

At first, when I first heard about it, I beleived what they said. But later when I found that the cadres say many untruth things, I didn't believe them any more.

147. Before you took refuge, did you hear about the Chieu Hoi Program?

I knew about the Chieu Hoi Program before the VC took over my village. I heard the Government officials in the village mentioned it.

148. What did you know about the Chieu Hoi program?

Chieu Hoi means calling to those who have strayed from the right path and joined the VC to return to the Nationalists.

149. Did many people in the village know about this program?

Many people in my village knew about it. Also, after the VC took over the village, there were airplanes coming to appeal to the people and the VC to rally to the Government. I heard the broadcasts very clearly. Many few people in the village couldn't listen to the broadcasts.

150. What did the cadres say when the airplanes made the broadcasts?

I didn't hear them say anything.

151. What did the villagers say?

Many people asked each other how could they leave their village as appealed by the airplanes, why didn't the airplanes land and take the villagers with them.

152. Did the airplanes dropped leaflets in your village?

The airplanes never dropped leaflets in my village. I picked up a leaflet in the wood before the VC took over my village. This leaflets made appeals to the VC soldiers to return to the Nationalists.

153. Did many people in your village read leaflets?

I don't know.

154. Was your village attacked by Nationalist forces?

At about November 1965 there was an indeterminate number of Montagnard Militia from the district came and attacked my village. There were about 40 of them. At about midway to the village, they met four women on their way to Lac Thien market to buy sauce. They asked these women if there were any VC in the village. These women replied that there were none. When they were near the village, they saw four other women coming out of the village. They also were going to the market. The soldiers forced them to return to their village and made them indicate which houses the VC were staying in, so they could capture them. These women went back with the soldiers, but when they arrived at the entrance of the village, they stopped and pointed to the village, but didn't dare enter it with the soldiers. As soon as the soldiers entered the village, six guerrillas who were hiding in the garden of the first house fired at them, killing one soldier. The soldiers returned fire and the guerrillas ran into hiding. The soldiers entered and searched the house. They found a cave behind the house where the owner of the house, his wife and their two children were in hiding. The soldiers took them up and shot them all. Then they withdrew instead of going further in. On their return, at about midway they found the four women they had met before. These four women came back from the market. They were the ones who had told the soldiers that there were no VC in the village. The soldiers said that these women had lied to them, so they were arrested and shot them all.

155. In your opinion, why did these women lie to the Montagnard soldiers that there were no VC in their village?

These women didn't lie. In their village was only the cadre who was the leader of the village was the VC. And that same day, that cadre was away. As for the

other cadres and the guerrillas, they were from the village, and [illegible] to these women, they weren't VC. That was why when the soldiers [illegible] asked them if there were any VC in their village, they sincerely told them that there was none.

156. What did the village say about that attack?

The people [illegible] complained very much. They all [illegible] asked why didn't the Nationalist soldiers look for VC to kill, why did they always kill innocent people?

157. What did the cadres say?

The Village Autonomous Committee organised the burial of these dead people and held a meeting with the people in the village for a memorial service. After the service was over, the families [illegible] of the four dead women asked permissions from the Autonomous committee to go to the district. Two families said that they wanted to find a priest to ask [illegible] him to say Masses for the dead, and two other families said they wanted to find a Buddhist monk to say prayers for the dead. The Autonomous Committee [illegible] agreed to let these families go. But when they arrived at the district, the district stopped them there, forced them to build their houses at the district, and wouldn't let them return to their village again. Furthermore, since the attack, any villager who went to the market, whether he was an adult or a child, was stopped at the district, and wasn't allowed to return to his village. About 20 adult and children were held at the district in all. That was why later no one dare go to the market, and most of the people in the village didn't have salt to eat, they either had to eat salt free food or ate food with hot pepper. Only a few could save some salt and they hid it away for their own use. I had some salt myself but didn't dare tell anyone.

158. Did the Americans or other allied forces attack your village?

The Americans attacked my village on December [illegible] 1965. That morning about 9AM a recon plan [illegible] circled over my hamlet. A little while later, six fighter bombers appeared and strafing at random at my hamlet. I was cooking rice, but had to run into hiding in the [illegible] trench. These fighter bombers strafed for a long

while. When these six fighter bombers left, six new ones arrived strafing again. When the strafing was over, about 40 or 50 helicopters landed outside the hamlet and many American soldiers and Montagnard Special Forces were airborn there. They charged into the hamlet and forced the people to converge in one place. By then the cadres and guerrillas had all ran into hiding. There were 138 families in my hamlet, but only 90 families came to the meeting place. Of these families only 5 families had all their members present, the rest had only children and old women. The young people were then either working in the fields, in the woods or fishing at the lake, and so they weren't captured. After concentrating the people in one place, the Montagnard Special Forces went around and burned down all the people's houses. They didn't leave one intact. Afterwards, they took all these families to the district. The people had to walk until they were near the district before they were picked up by trucks.

160. Did anyone get killed in that attack?

No.

161. What did the people say?

The people were taken away so suddenly, and so each one of them had only their new outfit they were wearing, and they had to leave all their [illegible] behind. The people complained so much. They all cried when they arrived at the district. At the district, they all had to go hungry for one day. The district chief gave each one of them some candies, and they didn't receive any rice until evening. The next day the Americans came to visit them giving them canned milk, candies, bananas, rice and corn.

162. Before you took refuge, did you meet any Americans?

I am a Protestant. The preachers were all Americans. That is why I knew the American for a long time.

163. The cadres said that the Americans came here to take over and rule Vietnam. Did you believe it?

I don't beleive it. The cadres said that the Americans wanted to take over Vietnam so that they could have all the mines in Vietnam. The United States is a rich and strong country. The Americans don't ~~xxxxx~~ care for the mines ~~x~~ in Vietnam. They is
hate the Communists, that ~~x~~ why they come here to help the Nationalists to fight against the communists.

154. In your opinion, why do the Americans hate the communists?

The ~~xxxxxxx~~ communist doctrine is: all ~~xx~~ the properties be put together and distributed equally to everyone. The Americans are rich, they would never agree to putting all their ~~xxx~~ riches together and distributed them to other. It is the same with the rich families. They have to spend so much sweat and tears to build up their properties, to become rich. They would never ~~xx~~ agree to putting their riches together and distribute them to the poor, the lazy people who ~~xxxxxx~~ don't want to work, to save. The Americans are the ~~xxxx~~, that is why they help the Nationalists to fight against the communists.

165. Do you think the Americans are ~~xxxxxxx~~ like the French before?

Before the French ~~xxxxx~~ came here to rule Vietnam, to make the people pay taxes to them: ~~xxxxx~~ tax on people, on animals, on houses, on orchards, on fields. The Americans aren't ruling Vietnam, they aren't taking anything from the people. They come here to help the Nationalists fighting ~~xxxx~~ against their enemy. They give gifts to the people. They aren't like the French before.

166. Did you hear of ~~xxxxx~~ people from other countries who come here to help the Nationalists?

I heard that the Australians and the Koreans came here to helpt the Nationalists ~~xxxxx~~ fight against their enemy, but I have never seen them.

167. Did you hear of the bombing on the North?

I heard on the radio that the North was being bombed and much damage was caused by these attacks.

168. Did you hear about it when you were still in your village?

When I was still in my village, I knew nothing about the bombing on the North.

The villagers knew nothing about it either. The cadres never mentioned about it.

169. In your opinion, why was the North being bombed?

All the people in the North are communists. The Nationalists are fighting against the communists, and so they have to bomb the North.

170. Why did you leave your village to take refuge here?

I was taken away from my village by the American troops, like the majority of the people in my village, in the attack which occured in December 1965 as I told before. Althought I didn't leave my village on my own, I had intended to leave the village long before that. I didn't go because I was afraid the VC would arrest me.

171. Why did you want to leave your village?

I had to work hard for 8 or 9 years before I could build the houses and own the garden. To leave them all behind, I felt very bad. But I knew that I could never stay in the hamlet with the VC. I knew that if the VC were in the hamlet, sooner or later the Nationalists would come to bomb it and I might get killed any time. That was why I decided to leave my hamlet.

172. Before you were taken away by the soldiers, was there many people in your hamlet ~~who~~ leave their hamlet?

When the Nationalist soldiers in the village withdrew, which was right before the VC took over the village, most of the families in the hamlet next to mine left with the soldiers. After the VC had taken over that hamlet, those who were left behind eventually found way to escape. There were some people in my hamlet who had left their hamlet before the Americans attacked it.

173. In your opinion, why did the people in the hamlet next to yours leave their hamlet before the VC came?

All the people in that hamlet were Catholics and Protestant. I guess they didn't want to live with the VC, and so they left their hamlet.

174. How long have you been in this refugee village?

Over a month.

175. Where had you been and what had you done during the period from the time you left your village untilit the time you arrived at this refugee village?

I stayed in Lac Thien District for three months in an my abandonned Montagnard home. During that time I had to work as hired laborer every day and had to gather firewood for to earn my living. Every now and then the Government gave me some rice. Afterwards, I asked permission to go to Ban Me Thuot to stay with Minister Cung. I stayed with him for 10 days and then he took me to "Trung Tam Tinh Thuong" (a Chieu Hoi Village). I stayed with the people there and continued to work as hired laborer to earn my living. A little while later, the hamlet chief told me that I was a refugee and should to to the new refugee village to live because "Trung Tam Tinh Thuong" was reserved for families of the ralliers. That was why I came to this refugee village.

176. Did you want to return to your village, when the soldiers took you away?

I myself had decided to leave the village even before the soldiers came to my village. That was why I didn't intend to return there again. Also there was nothing left in my hamlet, and so if I returned there, I wouldn't know what to do to earn my living.

177. How many people have returned to the village out of those who had left their village on their own and those who were taken away by the soldiers?

No one has returned.

178. What have you received from the Government since you came to this refugee village?

I haven't received anything from the Government. When I first came here, I asked the hamlet chief to buy for me 10 kg of rice with a low price. I haven't found job to do. I went out and cut down some bamboo, gathered some elephant grass and built a house for my own. No one helped me with the building of my house. Each day I ate only one can of rice because I had have to save money. That is why I have to eat soupe often.

179. Did the Government promised to give you any help?

No one has promised to help me with anything.

180. Has the ~~xxx~~ refugee village organised any training course for the refugees? What kind of training do you like to take up?

There is no training organised at the refugee village. Also I am too old, I ~~xxxx~~ don't think I can ~~xx~~ learn any profession now.

181. Do you have security at the refugee village?

Many people have built their houses there to live. As of now, I find it very secure But I don't know how long it can last.

182. Are there anyone in ~~xxx~~ this refugee village who were Government officials in your village?

No.

183. Is there a ~~xxxxx~~ school for the children in the refugee village?

I find that there is a small ~~xxxxxx~~ school in the refugee village completed with chairs and desks, but no child attends that ~~xxxxx~~ school yet because there is no teacher.

184. Who do you think if to be blame for ~~xx~~ all the hardships you have to bear now?

[redacted] ~~xxxxx~~ is ~~xx~~ the will of God ~~xxxxxx~~ and I have to accept it. I don't ~~xxx~~ blame anyone. No one is responsible for my hardships.

185. Since you left your village, did you hear any news from your village?

No.

186. This is the picture of a ladder [redacted] rung is numbered one and the bottom rung is numbered 10. Take for example the top rung represents the best life you can imagine and the bottom rung represents the worst life you can imagine. Where on this ladder would you say that your life was before the Front came to your village? ~~xx~~ After it came to your village? Where on the ladder would you put your life now?

Before the VC took over my village, I was on rung 8. After the VC took over I was on rung 9 and now I am on rung 10.

187. How would you describe the worst life you can imagine yourself living back in your village?

Back in the village, the worst life would be to have to live with the VC, not permitted to go anywhere, to have to attend study courses whenever you did something they didn't like, to lack food to eat, clothes to wear, to have to worry about bombs and bullets.

188. What would be the best life you can imagine for yourself?

To live in a secure area with many Nationalist soldiers stationed there, to live in big house and to have good food to eat.

189. If you have a son, what kind of life do you hope your son will have?

If I had a son I would hope that he would have a home, an orchard, fields, wife children and have good food to eat.

190. If you could ask three things of the Government, what would they be?

First I ask the Government to make the place I am living now which is the refugee village, into a permanent secure area. Second, I am lacking food to eat, I would like the Government to come to my assistance immediately. Third, I would ask the Government to give me medicine when I am sick.

191. Do you think the present Nationalist Government can grant you these three wishes?

I beleive that the present Government can do that.

192. In your opinion, how long will the war last?

I don't know.

193. In your opinion, which side is winning?

I think the Nationalists are winning and the supporting evidence is the Constituent Assembly has just been elected.

193. Do the other refugees agree with you?

I think that they all think the same.

195. In your opinion, which side is winning the support of the people?

The people don't support the VC because life is hard with the VC. I have never had to work in the fields at night time since I was young. When I was with the

VC I had to work at nighttime. I had to work so hard and yet I had to contribute paddy to them. How could I support them?

196. If the VC win, what do you think the people's life will be like?

I had lived nine years with the VietMinh. Our country is like a clear well which they have stirred up to make it dirty. They have returned "the three submissions and the four virtues" to the Scholars. They said that there was only space over our head, that there was no God or Buddha at all. Everyone had to work for them. If the VC win, life would be much worse than that. Then human beings would become animals.

197. What will happen if the Nationalists win?

If the Nationalists win, the people will enjoy peace and comfort.

Interviewer's comments

The subject was an old man, simple and without instruction. Though he lived a long time in an area controlled by the Front, his knowledges of the VC were limited. He was sincere and cooperative.

No. AGR 69

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

1. Name of interview[redacted]

2. Name of subject [redacted]

3. Time and date of in[redacted]

From 10 10 to 11 30 on Oct 196 6

From 2 30 to 5 00 on [redacted] 1966

From 10 00 to 12 00 on Oct 196 6

Total time 2 30 2 50 4 30 Oct 1966

Interview based on : tape ( ) hand written notes (x)

4. Place of interview : [redacted]

5. Sex of subject : Male (x) Female ( )

6. Age of subject : 63

7. Ethnic background : Vietnam

8. Place of birth :

hamlet [redacted]

village [redacted]

district Thanh Binh

province Quang

9. Residence prior to becomin[redacted] a refugee :

hamlet [redacted]

village [redacted]

district Loc Thuan

province Quang [illegible]

10. (a) Length of residence in last location : 8 years

(b) Who controlled the place of residence:

GVN ( ) VC ( ) Contested ( )

(c) Was there control contested ? [illegible]

11. Number of brothers (1) and sisters (/)

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : None

13. Marital status : Single

14. Number of children : /

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age : _____

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject( ) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject( ) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion : Protestant

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : Farming

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation Doesn't know
(b) Landowner ? _____ How much land 3 hau

20. Education :
illiterate ( )
literate (Read
schooling completed : _____

21. Any relatives in VC : No

22. Any relatives in GVN : No

23. Any relatives (how many? when?) killed by :
(a) French No
(b) GVN No
(c) VC No

24. When became a refugee : December [redacted] 1965

25. Where took refuge first Loc Thien District

26. Present residence [redacted]

AGR

INTERVIEW

70

AGR 70

1. How long had you and your family lived in this village before you took refuge?

My family and I moved to the [redacted] land development center 8 years ago. We were from Binh Dinh, and the Government brought us to the center in 1958.

2. What did your family do? Did you have enough to eat?

We farmed. When my parents first arrived in [redacted] they received from the Government 5 sao of land. Since there was so much abandoned land in the land development center, my parents cleared three more mau to farm. We had enough to eat. I got married about two years ago. My husband's family lived in [redacted] land development center. My husband owned no land and so we had to live in with my parents.

3. How big was [redacted] land development center? How many people lived there?

[redacted] had [redacted] hamlets. I don't know about the population or how many families there were. I only know that it was quite densely populated. All the people came from Binh Dinh.

4. What did most of the people do? Did they have enough to eat?

They all lived by farming. In 1958, when the people first arrived from Binh Dinh, the Government distributed 5 sao of land to each family. Later, big families cleared more land to farm. Some families farmed three or four more mau. Even so, many people still lacked food to eat, about half of the population. They lacked food to eat because of lack of labors in their families and they couldn't clear more land to farm, or because of bad soil, weed ate up their land and the production was low.

5. How was [redacted] land development center where your husband lived?

[redacted] had [redacted] hamlets and the people there came from Binh Dinh also. It was organized three years after the [redacted]. Many people there were poor.

6. How many members are there in your family?

I have my husband and one child, one year old.

7. What is your religion?

I am a Catholic.

8. Were there many Catholics in your land development center?

There were about 100 Catholic families and 10 Protestant families in the center. The majority of the people in the center were Buddhists or they had no religion at all.

9. Were there any conflicts between people of different religious affiliations?

Never.

10. Were there any Montagnards in the land development center?

All the people there were Vietnamese.

10. What was your education?

I didn't go to school. I don't know how to read or write.

12. Was there a school in the land development center?

There was one school with three classes in the land development center.

12. Did all the children in the center go to school?

The majority of the children went to school. A few of them wouldn't go because their families were poor and they had to stay home to work.

14. Did you have any intimate friend in the hamlet?

I didn't have any intimate friends, just acquaintances.

15. Could you talk freely with those acquaintances?

I could talk to them, but only about work.

16. Who was the most important important person in the hamlet?

I don't know.

17. Who was the most respected person in the hamlet?

I don't know.

about what happened in other places
18. Who was the most informed person/in your hamlet?

I don't know.

19. How was life in your family before 1954?

I don't know because I was born in 1948.

20. Did you hear anyone in your family joined the Vietminh to fight against the French?

No one in my family joined the Vietminh. My father has always been a farmer

He didn't become a hamlet policeman until he came to the land development center.

21. Was there a village council in the land development center?

There was a village council in the land development center. Also, there was the area chief of the land development center.

22. Were all the officials from the land development center?

They all came from the land development center, except for the area chief. I don't know where came from. He was sent by the Government to become the area chief of the land development center.

23. Were these officials elected by the people?

Except for the village chief who was elected by the people in 1958 which was the when the land development was first organized. He has been in that position until now. The rest were appointed, but I don't know who made the appointment.

24. Besides the village chief election, was there any other one?

I seems there was no other one besides that one. I don't remember very clearly.

25. How did the officials behave towards the people?

The officials behaved very nicely towards the people, especially the village chief. I nver heard anyone complaining about them at all.

25. Did you know anything about the Government of Mr. Ngo Dinh Diem?

I don't know anything about that Government.

27. When Mr. Diem was overthrown, did you know about it?

When Mr. Diem was overthrown, I heard the people around mentioned that fact and so I knew about it.

28. What did the people say about that coup?

I was very young then and busy all day long, so I didn't pay attention to what was happening. And so I don't remember what the people around said about that coup.

29. Did anyone seem to miss Mr. Diem?

I don't know.

30. Did anyone criticize Mr. Diem?

I din't hear anyone criticize him at all.

31. Were there any Nationalist troops in the land development center? Which kind?

There was a post in the land development center where the Nationalist soldiers were stationed. I only know that they were Vietnamese and Montagnard soldiers. I also heard that there were a Civil Guards, Militia and Special Forces. But I am not sure about that.

39. Since when were the Nationalist troops stationed in the land development center? Were they there in great strength?

They were stationed there since February 1966. I didn't pay attention and so I don't know if they were there in great strength or not. Before that, there were only the SDCs.

33. How did the SDCs behave towards the people?

They all came from the land development center. They were nice people.

34. How did the Nationalist troops behave towards the people?

They were also nice to the people. They never caused any troubles to anyone. Except every now and then the Montagnard soldiers would steal the people'spapaya guava and sugar cane. But no one complained about that.

35. Did you ever live in the strategic hamlet?

The hamlets of the land development center were organized into the strategic hamlet which was built in 1960.

36. Did the people have to contribute anything to the building of the strategic hamlet?

When the strategic hamlet was built, I was very young. So I don't know anything about it. I only know that last year the fence was runed down and repairs had to be made. My family had to contribute 400 trees to fence the hamlet. Since my parents were sick and they couldn't go to the wood to cut down the trees themselves, they had to hire people to do it and it cost them about 2000 piasters. The people had to cut down the trees in the woods and the Government provided trucks to haul them back to the center.

37. What did you like most about the strategic hamlet?

I don't know.

38. What did you dislike most about the strategic hamlet?

There was nothing I didn't like about it.

39. Do you like to live in the trategic hamlet?

I like to live in the strategic hamlet very much because it has a fence on the outside and the VC can't go in to destroy the hamlet. If the VC could enter the strategic hamlet, my parents would be arrested immediately because my father is the hamlet policeman.

40. What has happened to the strategic hamlet?

It is still there intact and my parents are still living in there.

41. Did you have any dissatisfactions before you took refuge?

No.

42. How did your husband get along in his work?

My husband owned no land to farm and so he has to work as a mason in Ban Me Thuat, and I had to live in with my parents. My husband couldn't get work do to everyday and so we didn't earn enough to eat. Later my husband applied to take the training course for the "reconstruction cadres". He is now in training in Ban Me Thuat.

43. Do you think that your future will be better?

I think that when the training is over and my husband begins his career we will be much better.

44. When was the first time you heard about the Liberation Front?

I don't know what the Liberation Front means. I only heard about the VC.

45. When was the first time you heard about the VC? On what occasion?

I heard about the VC the first time in January 1965. One afternoon, about 5PM, suddenly there was gunfire. Some one ran to my house and told my father that the VC were outside of the hamlet. My father ran into hiding because

he was the [redacted] hamlet policeman and he was afraid if the VC entered the hamlet, they would arrest him. I heard sporadic gunfire [redacted] until midnight when it stopped. It was from that time on that I knew that there were VC.

46. Did anyone suffer any damage?

According to what I heard people say when the whole thing was over, that there was only firing from the soldiers in the hamlet, the VC didn't return the fire and so no one was killed or wounded.

47. Was your [redacted] hamlet attacked again after that?

No.

48. Why did you leave your hamlet to take refuge?

My husband's mother lived in [redacted] land development center. Some time in February 1965, about 5 or 6 VC soldiers came to live in that center for 5 or 6 days. In February 1966 American and Special Forces troops went to the land development center and forced everyone there to move to the district. They set fire to all the people's houses and then built a post and were stationed there. My husband's mother had to go to the district to live, but she stayed there for just a few months and then moved to [redacted] to live. My husband was then working in Ban Me Thuot. Since [redacted] Ban Me Thuot, my husband told me to go there to stay with his mother. That was why I had to leave my hamlet and move here.

49. What did you hear about the VC?

I know nothing about the VC. I didn't hear anyone say anything about them Even my father, he never talked aboutthe VC with me. I only heard my husband's mother said that the people in [redacted] land development center were scared still of the VC.

50. Why were the people in [redacted] scared of the VC?

I don't know why. Perhaps they were all afraid of being arrested by the VC.

51. Why were they arrested of being arrested by the VC?

I don't know.

52. Did you hear about the conditions of life in the VC forces?

No.

53. Did you ever meet a VC cadre or soldier?

No.

54. Do you know why the VC are fighting against the Nationalists?

I don't know.

155. Were there many young men in the land development center?

There were many of them, but I don't know their number.

56. Did any young men or adult people in the land development center join the VC?

I didn't hear that anyone has joined the VC at all.

57. Have any young men in the land development center joined the Nationalist army?

About 10 of them joined the Civil Guards and 40 of them joined the Militia.

58. Has anyone in the land development center paid tax or voluntarily contributed rice and money to the VC?

No one had to pay tax to the VC because the VC couldn't infiltrate into the hamlet. I didn't hear that anyone has contributed rice or money to the VC at all.

59. Have the VC arrested or killed anyone in the land development center?

No.

60. Have the VC ever forced anyone to do corvee labors or other things for them?

I have never heard about corvee labors, I didn't hear that anyone was forced to work for the VC.

61. You said before that the VC soldiers came to land development center for four or five days. What did they do during these days? Did they force anyone to do anything for them?

Although I said that they had lived in the center for four or five days, but in reality they spent only the nights there. During the day, they were in the wood. According to my husband's mother, they didn't do anything and force anyone to do anything for them.

62. Did they hold meetings with the people to talk to them?

No.

63. Did they ask the people for food or force them to contribute rice or other things to them?

I don't know.

64. Have you ever heard of the VC victories?

No.

65. Have you ever heard of the VC defeats?

No.

66. When you were still in the land development center, did you hear about the Nationalist Government?

No.

67. Do you know who are the leaders of the Government at the present time?

I only know the names of the two leaders in the Government. They are Mr. Ky and Khanh.

68. According to you, do the people in the land development center like the Nationalist Government?

All the people in the land development center like and support the Government The Government distributed land to the people so they could earn their living the Government also gave them rice, oil and helped them to live comfortably.

69. According to you, has anyone in the land development center sympathized with the VC?

No one has joined the VC. The VC are in the woods. If you join them, you will have to go to the wood, where can you get food to eat.

70. In your opinion, Who is stronger, VC or Nationalists?

The Nationalists are strong because they have plenty of soldiers. I use to he ar other people say that wherever the Nationalist soldiers come, the VC run into hiding.

71. In your opinion, is the Nationalist Government sympathetic towards the people?

The Government is very sympathetic towards the people. It has helped the people a great deal. Furthermore the Government moves the people from the insecure area to a more secure area and gives them rice, and clothes. If the Government isn't sympathetic towards the people and refuses to help them, they would starve.

72. Are the Government officials dedicated or lazy?

I found that the officials in the land development center were very dedicated

They never oppressed or threatened anyone. As for laziness, I don't know if they were or not.

73. How are the recent behavior of the village and district officials, are they better/or worse then before when Mr. Diem was still in power?

The village chief was elected when my Diem was still in power. He still holds that position. He has always been nice. As for the district level, a new district xxx chief has replaced the former one, but I xxx found that both of them are nice to the people.

74. When you were still in the land development center, did you xx hear about what happened in Saigon?

I don't know. I never xxx get to hear about anything that/had happened out side of the land development center.

75. Has anyone x in the land development center owned a radio set?

Many families owned radio sets. I guess those who owned a radio set could listen to the news about what had happened in other places. My family didn't own one, and I have never listened to a radio.

76. Were there newspapers in the land development center?

I don't know.

77. Have you ever heard rumors about the VC?

No.

78. Have you heard about life in the North?

No.

79. Do you know anything about Red China?

No.

80. Have you ever heard of the Chieu xxx Hoi program?

The place where I am living now was a "Chieu Hoi Village", but xx that name has been changed to "Trung Tan Tinh Thuong". I only know the word "Chieu Hoi", but I don't know what it= means.

81. Have you heard of the use of chemicals to destroy vegetation and crops?

I have never heard of it.

82. Before you took refuge, did you ever meet any Americans?

I often met the Americans when I was still in the land development center. They were the Americans soldiers stationed in [redacted] land development center and they came to our place to buy food such as vegetables, fruits and meat.

83. How did they behave towards the people?

They paid for what they bought. They never caused troubles to anyone and treated the people nicely.

84. Have you met any Americans laterly, after you took refuge?

They come to the [redacted]" often and brought to the people in the center medicine, oil and rice.

85. In your opinion, what are the aims of the Americans in Vietnam?

I don't know. I only see that they fight against the VC together with the Nationalist soldiers. They often give people help such as food, clothing and medicine.

86. Why do they help the people?

I don't know.

87. Why do they fight againstthe VC together with the Nationalist troops?

I don't know.

88. Are they the same like the French before?

I don't know about the French. I have never seen the French and so I can't make any comparison.

88. Did the people in the [redacted] say anything about the Americans?

They all say that the Americans are good.

90. Have you heard of people from other countries coming here to help Vietnam?

I heard that the Korean soldiers came here to help Vietnam also, but I have never met them.

91. Do you know why the Korean soldiers come to help Vietnam?

I don't know.

92. Do you know anything about the bombing on the North?

I have never heard anyone say anything about the bombing on the North.

93. Have you ever seen leaflets dropped from aircraft?

Once I was working in the field I saw the airplane dropped leaflets in the wood and some of them scattered on the field.

94. Did you pick them up to read?

I don't know how to read and so I didn't pick them up. Other farmers picked them up to read.

95. Did they tell you what was said in the leaflets?

No one told me anything.

96. Has the airplanes ever come to broadcast over or near the land development center?

Once the airplanes made broadcast over the land development center, but I couldn't hear anything because the wind was too strong. My parents couldn't hear anything either.

97. Have you ever taken refuge before?

I have always been at home since I was young until now. I never went anywhere.

98. Before you came here, did you hear about life in the other GVN controlled areas?

I know nothing about life in other GVN controlled areas at all. I only heard some people in my hamlet said that the refugees in the [redacted] received help from the Government.

99. How did they know about it?

I don't know. I guess they must have heard other people told them about it.

100. How did your husband's family make preparations to take refuge?

My husband's mother couldn't make any preprations because she had to leave in a hurry. She could only bring with her a bed, some clothes and a few rice bowls.

101. How did she leave the hamlet?

She carried her own belongings and walked together with other people in the hamlet. She went straight to the district, then she came to my parents' place to stay for a few days. Then she went to [redacted]

102. Did she ~~thing~~ think that she would return to her hamlet?

My mother-in-law ~~xxxx

111. How many people are living in the center now?

Over 400 families.

112. In your opinion, is the center safe?

It is safe to live here because there are many soldiers in the ~~xxxx~~ center. Also it is near the town [redacted].

113. How is the leadership in the center organized?

There is the center chief and the policeman. Both of them are refugees and were elected last year by the people in the center ~~xxxxxxxx~~.

114. How do they treat the people?

They are very nice, The people all like them.

115. Since your arrival to the center, have you received any news about ~~xxx~~ your mother-in-law's land development center?

I heard other people in the center ~~xxxxx~~ say that the Nationalist troops were stationed there and there ~~x~~ was a brand new air base.

116. Is there a school in the center~~f~~ for the children~~f~~ of refugee families?

There is no school now , but I heard that there would be one soon.

117. Who do you ~~xxx~~ blame for the hardships you have to bear now?

Hadn't the VC destroyed ~~xxx~~ my mother-in-law land development center, she would have to take refuge and I wouldn't have to come along. The VC are the cause of everything~~x~~ otherwise I would still be home and happy with my parents.

118. Do you think you will leave this center later?

I think I will remain in this center.

119. Do you want to learn any profession to earn your living?

I want to learn an easy profession so that I can earn my living, but ~~xxxx~~ right now my baby is still too young, I can't leave him with anyone. Also, I don't know how to read and write, and so it must ~~xx~~ difficult for me to learn any profession.

120. This is the picture of a ladder with ten rungs. The top rung is ~~xx xxx~~ numbered one and the

last rung is numbered ten. Suppose the top rung represents the best life that you could imagine and the bottom rung represents the worst life that you could imagine. In your opinion, on what rung were you before you took refuge and where are you now?

Before I came to this center, I stayed home with my parents, I was on rung 5. Now at the center, I am on rung 9.

121. Where will you be in five years from now?

Five years from now, my husband will be a cadre already, he will receive a salary. I will be able to save something, and I will be as happy as when I lived with my parents. I will be on rung 5.

122. In your opinion, which is the worst life that you could imagine?

To have no job, to lack food to eat and clothes to wear. That is the worst life.

123. In your opinion, which is the best possible life?

To have a husband who has a salaried job, to have money for spending, for raising the children nicely and some saving.

124. If you have a son, what kind of life do you hope your son will have?

If I have a son I will want him to be healthy, to get an education with a Baccalaureat degree and to become a Government employee.

125. If you could ask three things from the Government, what would they be?

If the Government permits, I will ask only for one thing: The Government gives me clothes, rice, and money so that I and my baby can live until my husband finishes his training, takes up his job and receives his salary.

126. Do you think that the Government could give you that?

I am sure the Government can give me that.

127. In your opinion, how long will the war last?

I don't know.

128. In your opinion, which side is winning now, the VC or the Nationalists?

The Nationalists are winning because they are strong and have many soldiers.

The VC are always hiding in the woods, but the Nationalists will find them to fight against them.

129. In your opinion, which side do the people support at the present time?

No one supports the VC at all. Wherever the VC come, the VC move out. And the fact is there are about 400 fmmx refugee families in this center.

130. If the VC win, what do you think the xmx people's lives will be?

If the VC win the people will be miserable. I have never heard that the VC help the people at all. If the VC win, the people will have to live with them. Thexx Nationalist won't be here anyone, no one will come to the help of the people, and they will be miserable.

131. What happens if the Nationalist win?

If the Nationalistswin, no one will have to take refuge, the Government will give more help to the pmkpx people, and so the people will be happier.

Interviewer's comments

The subject fxxxxx was a very young woman(18 years old), She wasn't intelligent knowing not how to readx or write. She has never had to live in area controlled by the VC, she knows nothing about the VC. If she left her kxxxhamlet, it was because her husband asked herx to come to live with her mother-in-law who was a real refugee. She was sincere and cooperative.

NO. AGR 70

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

1. Name of interviewer [redacted]

2. Name of subject [redacted]

3. Time and date of interview :

From 10.00 to 12.00 on Oct [redacted] 196 6

From 3.00 to 4.45 on [redacted] 19 6

From [redacted] to [redacted] on [redacted] 19

Total Time 3,45 Based on hand written note

4. Place of interview : [redacted]

5. Sex of subject : Male ( ) Female (✓)

6. Age of subject : 18

7. Ethnic background : Vietnamese

8. Place of birth :

hamlet [redacted]

village [redacted]

district Phu Cat

province Binh Dinh

9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :

hamlet Hamlet

village [redacted] Development in

district Phuoc An

province Darlac

10. (a) Length of residence in last location : 8 years

(b) Who controlled the place of residence :

GVN (✓) VC ( ) Contested ( ) How long? _____

NO. AGR_____

11. Number of brothers (4) and sisters (2)

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : /

13. Marital status : Married

14. Number of children : 1

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age : _____

16. Parents with subject (Y) or not with subject ( )
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject( ) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject(Y) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion : Catholic

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : Farming

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation _____/_____
(b) Landowner? _____/_____

20. Education :
illiterate (Y)
literate ( )
schooling completed : _____

21. Any relatives in VC : No

22. Any relatives in GVN : Husband in training for "rural service Cadre"

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by :
(a) French
(b) GVN
(c) VC
No

24. When became a refugee : 6 months

Present residence [redacted] Tan Binh

AGR

INTERVIEW

71

AGR 71

1. How long had you and your family lived in your village before you took refuge?

I was from Quang Tri. I and my family went searching our fortune at the [redacted] land development center six years ago which was also when the center was first organized.

2. How big was the [redacted] land development center? How many people lived there?

There were [redacted] hamlets or [redacted] families in the center. They were all from Quang Nam and Quang Tin and brought there by the Government in order to establish a land development center.

3. What did you do to earn your living?

I was a farmer.

4. Did you own land? Did you have enough to eat?

When I first arrived at the land development center, the Government gave me 3.7 sao of rice field and 2 sao for corn growing. Later, I was able to clear 2 more sao for potato growing. With that amount of land, I just had enough food in the good years because we could use the land for only one season a year.

5. What did most of the people do? Did they have enough to eat?

They were all farmers. When first arrived at the land development center, each family received the same amount of land as I did. Later, some of them cleared some more land themselves. Even so, the majority of them just had enough to eat in good years. In bad years, the Government had to help them with extra rice. Only those who did some trading on the side had enough to eat.

6. How many members are in your family?

I had a wife and four children. But my wife and one of my children died after I left the hamlet to come to Ban Me Thuat to enter the hospital. I have only three small children with me now.

7. What is your religion?

I am a Catholic.

8. Were there many Catholics in the land development center?

About two thirds of the families in the land development center were Catholics, and the other one third were Buddhists.

9. Were there any conflicts between people of different religious affiliations?

Never.

10. Were there any Montagnards in the land development center?

There were no Montagnards in the land development center, but there was a Montagnard hamlet right next to the center. The Montagnards from that hamlet often came into the center.

11. Were there any conflicts between the Montagnards and the Lowlanders?

Never.

12. How much education did you have?

I wasn't sent to school when I was young. When I was older, married with family I attended popular class at night. I know how to read but not to write.

13. Was there a school in the land development center? Did all the children in the center attend that school?

There was a school with five classrooms in the land development center. Many children attended that school. A few of them couldn't go to school because their families were too poor and they had to stay home to look after the cows or do this and that to help their families.

14. Who was your best friend in the hamlet?

When I was in the hamlet, I was more concerned about earning a living. I seldom went around visiting people. I don't have any intimate friend.

14. Who was the most important person in the land development center?

The most important person was the area chief. He was sent down from the Government to take charge of the land development center, therefore when he said something, the people had to listen to him, or when he told them to do something, they had to obey his orders.

15. Did the people respect and like the area chief?

The man who enjoyed the most respect and affection from the people wasn't the area chief, but the village xxx chief. When the VC took over the village, he escaped to Ban Me Thuat. He has enlisted into the Nationalist army.

17. Who was the best informed person about what had happened outside of the land development center?

I don't know who was the best informed person about what had happened in other places.

18. How did the officials behave towards the people?

When Mr. Diem was still living, the area chief was a very hard person to get along with. He often threatened the people, and sometimes even beat them up. Later, there was a new area chief. He was very nice and there were no complaints against him. As for the village chief, he remained in his position from the beginning until the end. Although he was young of age, he was virtuous, the people all respected and loved him. The other officials such as the man in charge of finance and the policeman were all nice to the people. These officials held their positions from the beginning until the time when the VC took over the village.

19. Did these officials come from that area?

Except for the area chief, the other officials all came from the land development center.

20. Were they appointed or elected?

Except for the area chief who was appointed by the Government, the other officials were all elected by the people in 1961.

21. How was the election organised?

At that time the people were free to elect three men to fill in three positions: the village chief, finance and police. There were six candidated in all. Out of these six persons, five were Catholics, and one Buddhist. Through two thirds of the voters were Catholics, the Buddhist candidate was elected as the village chief because he was a virtuous man as I told you before. Two

Catholics were elected to the finance and police positions.

22. In your opinions, Were those who won the election the right men for these positions?

All three of the winners were the right men. They discharged their duties with ability and treated the people nicely especially the village chief. That was why all three of them remained in their positions from the time they elected to these positions in 1961 until the time when the VC took over the land development center in 1964.

23. Was there any other election besides that one?

No.

24. What do you know about the Government of Mr. Ngo Dinh Diem?

When the people in the land development center were still living in Quang Nam and Quang Tin, they were very hungry and poor. The Government of Mr. Diem brought them to the land development center, distributed land to them, built their houses, gave them farming equipment so they could earn their living. His Government also gave the people clothes, blankets for use, and when they lacked food, gave them rice and sauce. In a word, through a few Government officials weren't good to the people such as the area chief, but the entire people should be grateful to the Government of Mr. Diem.

25. What did you and the other people think about the overthow of Mr. Diem?

When the news that Mr. Diem had been overthow reached us, many of us felt very sorry for him.

26. Were there any Nationalist forces in or near the land development center?

There was one post in the land development center where one company of Civil Guards were stationed.

27. How did the Civil Guardsbehave towards the people when Mr. Diem was still in power? How did they behave later?

Before or after, the Civil Guards always treated the people nicely. They didn't oppress anyone or cause anyone any troubles. Many people who lived near the post let the wives and children of the soldiers stayed in their homes.

28. Did other Nationalist soldiers pass through your land development center?

Every now and then the Vietnamese and American Special Forces soldiers went on their operations through the land development center.

29. How did they treat the people?

They didn't contact the people because each time they passed through the land development center, they made their way across the fields and didn't come to the hamlet. The people who were working in the fields greeted the American soldiers when they passed by, and they returned the greetings very nicely.

30. Did you ever live in a Strategic hamlet?

There were [redacted] hamlets in the land development center, and three of them lay in the strategic hamlet. Hamlet [redacted] was too far away and so it was out side of of the strategic hamlet. I lived in hamlet [redacted] so I was in the strategic hamlet/

31. When was the strategic hamlet built?

It was built in 1962. It took four months to finish it.

32. Did the people have to contribute anything to the building of the strategic hamlet?

All the people had to contribute their labors to the building of the strategic hamlet. They all had to go to the wood near the land development center to cut down trees in order to make the girdle and the fences. They worked one week at the building of the strategic hamlet, then took off one week to do their own production work and so on. I took four months to complete the building. No one had to contribute any money, but while they worked at the building of the strategic hamlet, they ate their meals at home.

33. What did you like most about the strategic hamlet?

What I liked most was the good fence which stopped the VC from infiltrating into the hamlet.

34. What did you dislike most about the strategic hamlet?

There was nothing I didn't like about it.

35. What happened to the strategic hamlet later on?

In February 1964 a group of VC came to the hamlet. They didn't destroy the fence but they came in through the hamlet gate. The next day all the Civil Guards withdrew and a few days later, the VC came back. They than burn down all the fences and the Civil Guards post.

36. Did you and the people like to live in the strategic hamlet?

I liked to live in the strategic hamlet very much. I think the people were of the same mind as mine. I beleived that if the hamlet gate were well built and there had been people standing guard there, the VC would have never been to enter the hamlet.

37. Did you and the people have any dissatisfactions before the VC came to destroy the hamlet?

I had no dissatisfactions of any kind. The other people were the same. We were all working in peace.

38. Did you think that your future could be improved?

If the VC hadn't come, I am sure my future would have been much better off. I could clear up more land to grow corn and potato, and my income could be improved a great deal.

39. Did you think what should the Government do to help the people to better their lots?

I think that the Government should have left the soldiers in the hamlet, so that they could fight against the VC. If that were so, the people would be able to work in peace and well-off. The Government withdrew the soldiers and let the VC took over the land development center and made the people miserable.

40. When did you first hear about the Front?

When the VC took over the village, they declared that the Front had liberate d the land development center. That was the first time I heard of the Front. I heard of that name, but I didn't know what the Front was.

41. When did you first hear about the VC?

The VC attacked the land development center the first time in 1960. That was also when I and my family had been at the center for about one month. One night, the VC stealthily came in and threw a hand grenade at the Civil Guards post and damaged the post, but no one was wounded. The Civil Guards returned the fire, but no VC was wounded.

43. Did the VC come in great strength?

No one knew their strength when they came, but they returned about 10 days later. This time there were about 100 of them and most of them were Montagnards. They brought three elephants along with them. There were some youths guarding on the outside. These VC shot some of them and arrested about 30 youths and tied them up. They then charged into the Civil Guards post. Some shots came from the inside of the post. That night the Civil Guards platoon— there were one platoon at that time—had just finished their meals. They were all drunk and so there was no defense at all. One Civil Guard was shot to death, one was wounded and one was captured alive. The rest ran into hiding. They opened the storage place in the post and confiscated everything stored in there such as ploughs, pickaxes, shovels, flour which the Government gave but hadn't been distributed to the people, and the Civil Guards' rice. They used the elephants to transport them all away. Before they left, they released all the youths whom they had arrested and tied up, set fire to the area chief's office, the Civil Guards' post and the hospital.

44. Did they held meeting with the people to make propaganda?

No.

45. From then until the time they took over the land development center, did the VC attack your village again?

They returned to the land development center one more time, about five months later. This time there was one company of Civil Guards in the center. But this company just withdrew and would be replaced by a new company. The new company

hadn't arrived yet. And so when the VC came, there was not one Nationalist soldier present in the land development center. They set fire to two tractors in the land development center. The people begged them not to burn the tractors so that the people could use them to farm their land. They replied that the tractors belonged to the Americans, not the people, and they set fire to the tractors. I saw they set fire to the tractors with my own eyes. After that they all withdrew.

46. What was their strength that time?

About 100 men. Most of them were Montagnards.

47. How did the VC take over the land development center?

They took over the land development center in February 1964. The strategic hamlet had been built. That day, about 5AM, they charged through the hamlet gate and to the Civil Guards post where they shot down a soldier on guard outside. The people in the post returned the fire, the VC all withdrew. They didn't go very far. They withdrew to the mountain which was about one km from the land development center. At about 7AM the entire company of Civil Guards in the post withdrew. The area chief went along with the soldiers, but the village chief remained. A few days later, the VC returned, took over the land development center and destroyed the strategic hamlet. After that, they went to [redacted] land development center and took over it also. The Civil Guards in [redacted] ran into hiding also. And so, the VC have been in control all two land development centers until now.

48. Did the VC confiscated the people's identification cards?

About one week after they had taken over the land development center, they confiscated all the people's identification cards, including mine.

49. What did they say when they confiscated the identification cards?

They ordered the people to send in their identification cards. They didn't say why the people should do so.

there?

50. Did the VC remain in the land development center after they took over

The VC soldiers remained there for a few days and then withdrew, except for four cadres.

51. How did the cadres treat the people?

The cadres treated the people nicely, but they stayed only five days at the land development center. During that time, they organized the village administrative committee, then they all departed. But one or two of them would come back every five or seven days and remained for two or three days.

52. What did the people think about these cadres?

I don't know what the people thought about them. I only knew that no one seemed to be afraid of them.

53. How was the administrative committee organized?

The cadres appointed four men in the land development center to be members of the village administrative center: a chairman, a secretary, a policeman and a man in charge of finance.

54. Who were the men who were appointed by the VC?

These four men had been suspected and imprisoned by the Nationalist Government in 1961. Each one of them stayed in prison for three or four months before they were released.

55. How did the members of the administrative committee treat the people?

At first, they were very nice to the people, but later on, the chairman often threatened the people especially when the people were forced to do corvee labors for them. That was why the people disliked them.

56. Did the cadres organize any associations?

They organized the Farmers' Associations. Anyone who wanted to become a member could do so. Very few people joined it, only five or six people did so. And so the Farmers' Association wasn't able to accomplish anything, and sometime later, I didn't hear of it anymore.

57. Did the VC organisations help the people to better their lives?

Compared with before, the living conditions of the people after the VC took over, were much worse. The members in the administrative committees were untalented, and did nothing to help the people. All they did was forced the people to make contributtions xx and to do corvee labors. The people xxxxxx became more miserable with the establishment of the administrative committee.

56. Did you know about the aims of the VC?

According to the cadres, the aims of the VC were to fight against and drive the American imperialists out, to liberate the South and to bring xxt about comfort to the people.

59. Did you and the people believe that that were the aims of the VC?

When we first heard of the propaganda, I and a lot of other people beleived that these were the aims of the VC. But later xxxx I found out that the VC hadn't done anything for the people, except taken away things from the people. That was why no one/including me beleived in them any more,xxxx

60. Do you know the names of the leaders of the Liberation Front?

I don't know. I only heard the cadres say that Ho Chi Minh was the leader of Vietnam.

61. In your opinion, are the VC xx peace-loving people?

I don't know.

62. In your opinion, are the VC xxtt patriotic?

I don't know.

63. In your opinion, are the VC courageous?

Every time the Nationalist soldiers conducted their xxxxx operations, the VC all ran into hiding. You can't call that courage.

64. Are the VC sympathetic to the people?

The cadres always said that they loved the people. But, the truth xx is, I didn't see the VC do anything to help the people. They didn't care if anyone xxt sick. You can't say that they xxe sympathetic to the people

65. Did the cadres hold meetings with the people in the hamlet?

Usually there was one meeting every 15 days or a month.

66. What did the cadres say during the meetings?

At first, when they just took overthe hamlet, the cadres only made propaganda about their aims which were to fight against the ~~xxxx~~ drive out the ~~xxx~~ American imperialists, to liberate the South and to bring comfort to the people. Later on, they talked about the VC forces victories in the meetings.

67. What did the people say when they heard of the VC victories?

The VC talked and the people listened, but I found that no one seemed to beleive them. Everytime the Nationalist soldiers conducted their operations, they went into hiding. How could they win in other places?

68. Did the cadres say anything about the North?

The cadres said that ~~x~~ up North the people ate ~~xxxxxx~~ and worked together, as help that Red China has sent in/plenty of machines, that was why the people there were comfortable and happy.

69. What did the cadres say about ~~xxxx~~ Red China?

They only said that Red China has assisted the North a great deal. That was only what I heard, I don't know more about that.

70. Did the cadres organized study courses for the people?

There was no study course. Only every now and then they gathered the people together and made their propaganda, as I told you before.

71. Were there many youths in the land development center?

Many, but I don't know their number.

72. Did any of them join the Nationalist army?

Six of them joined the Civil Guards before the VC came.

73. Were any of them drafted?

No.

74. Do you know why these young men were of the draft age, and they weren't being drafted?

I don't know.

75. Did the VC appeal/to force the young men to enlist in their army?

Many times the cadres made their appeals to these young men to join them, but no one did. Later on, they forced 10 young men to join the guerrilla and 4 other to take up first-aid study.

76. Did they force the other young men to do anything?

After the VC took over the land development center, the young men escaped for fear of being forced to join the VC army. That was why they could only force 10 young men to join the guerrilla and 4 other to take up first-aid study. Of the last four, one has escaped and is now living at the [redacted]

77. Did you hear the cadres mentioned military duty?

They never mentioned military duty.

78. Did the people say anything about the cadres forcing the young men to join guerrilla?

I didn't hear anyone say anything about that.

79. What effect did the absence of the young men in the hamlet have on farm/farming production?

Because most of the young men had left, most of the families were unable to farm all their lands. Each family had to abandonne some land for lack of labor.

80. Were all these abandonned land left unfarmed?

The cadres let the Montangard/communist soldiers farmed them.

81. How did the VC treat families with members in the Civil Guards?

I donIt know.

82. Did the families whose sons were in the guerrilla enjoy any privileges?

I don't know.

83. Did the cadres redistribute land in the land development center?

No. They did't touch the people's land.

84. Did they promise that they would redistribute the land some time later?

They didn't make such promise.

85. Did the people have to to contribute anything to the VC?

The people had to contribute paddy to the cadres. Each one of them had to contribute one third of their paddy when the harvest was over.

86. What did the cadres say when they told the people to contribute paddy to them?

They said the troops fought to liberate the country, the people had to make contributions for troops' support. The people could stay home and work in peace, they had to grow more corn and potato to eat with rice.

87. Did every one have to pay one third of their paddy?

That was right.

88. How much did you have to contribute each season?

Each season I harvested 40 thung of paddy and I had to contribute 13 thung.

89. Did you have enough left to eat?

I had five mouths to feed and I need 60 thung of paddy a year. I harvested only 40 thung. I was already short on food there and I had to eat rice mix mixed with potato, manioc and corn. Now I had to contribute 13 thung of paddy, how could I have enough left to eat?

90. Were there many families who lacked food to eat after they had made their contributions to the VC?

The lack of food situation in which people had to eat rice mix mixed with potato and corn was the common situation of everyone in the land development center.

91. Did the people say anything about their having to contribute paddy?

They complained very much. Many of them asked the cadres to lower their amount they had to contribute, but the cadres refused. In the end, we all had to pay as they told.

92. What did the cadres do with the paddy they had collected?

All the paddy collected were carried away by the Montagnards. I don't know where they carry the paddy to or where they come from.

93. What other taxes did the people have to pay?

No other.

94. Fromthe time the VC took over the land development center until the time you left your village, was the amount of paddy you had to contribute to the VC lowerxx or higher than before?

The amount remained the same all through.

95. Were there any produce in the land development center that could xx be sold on the out side?

The produces that could be sold on the outside were pigs, chicken, green dry beans and potato.

96. Where did they sell them?

They forbade them to sell their produce outside of the land xxxxxxx development center. The cadres said that to sell these produces outside would mean to x feed the enemy. Even so, some people took their produce xxxxxxxx stealthily to the xx main road and sold them there. The main road was about 10 km from the land development center.

97. Did the cadres ever buy anything from the people?

Xxxx Every now and then they bought pigs, green xxx dry beans and potato from the people. They bought in small quantities and with the prices xxx xxx determined by them, and naturally they were very low. They paid 50 piasters for one kg of pork instead of 150, for green xx dry beans 10 piasters a kg instead of 15, and potato 2 piasters a kg instead of 8.

98. Did the cadres use the food they bought there and then?

When they bought meat/xxxx, they bought three or five pigs at one time and they didn't kill them in the hamlet, but had the Montagnards carried them away. It was the same with green dry beans and potato. I don't know where the Montagnards took them. No one knew.

99. Where did the people get the xxxxxx things they needed which weren't being produced in the land development center?

There were four or five women in my hamlet who had always been tradewomen.

The cadres gave these women the permission to go to the Nationalistscontrolled areas to buy things that the people needed such as sauce, salt, clothing material and then sold them back to the people. But the tradeswomen could never bought enough. That was why the necessary things were very scarce and very expensive. It was also why the people living conditions became worse and worse.

100. Did the people ever change their attitude towards the cadres?

At first, a few people beleived the cadres and like and liked them. But as time went no one beleived the cadres any longer and had any affection for them either.

101. Did the cadres ever arrest anyone in the land development center?

When the VC first took over the land development center, they arrested four people: the village chief, the Youth group leader and two other people. They took these people away. Five days later the village chief escaped, and one month later the Youth group leader was released, but was re-arrested. As for the other two persons, no one [redacted] has received any news from them.

102. What happened to the village chief?

The village chief escaped to his hamlet one night to inform his family about his situation, then he left immediately. I knew that he went back to his home because my home was next to his. He has enlisted in the Nationalist army.

103. How did the cadres treat his wife and children?

The cadres didn't know that he had visited his home. That was why they didn't do anything to his wife and children. Later, taking advantage of an operation conducted by the Nationalist forces his wife and children all left the hamlet. They are now living in the [redacted] I am now living in their home.

104. Why was the Youth group leader recaptured?

After he had been released for a few days, he escaped. But midway, he was recaptured by the VC. They took him some place. There has been no news from him.

165. Did the cadres kill anyone?

I didn't see any one being killed. But about five months before, the VC arrested three/more people. They arrested one old man because he criticized the VC. He said that the Nationalist Government brought the people to the land development center, helped them to have enough food to eat and clothes to wear, but didn't force anyone to do corvee labors. Why did the VC cadres often force the people to do corvee labors? The cadres said that he was a reactionary and so they arrested and took him away. The second man who was being arrested was a young man. He was arrested because he refused to join the guerrilla. The third men was the one the VC had appointed to the position of assistant hamlet chief. The people were forced to do corvee labors, they criticized him and he got mad and resigned from his position. Because of his resignation, he was arrested All three of them were taken to a/place, no one knew. We received no news about them until I left the hamlet to move out here.

106. What did the people say about the cadres arresting those people?

Many people got so furious, but no one dare say anything for fear of being arrested.

107. Did you have to do corvee labors?

I had to go on transportation missions three times, once to carry goods, and the other two times to carry wounded soldiers.

108. Would you describe the transportation missions? How many people took part in each mission? Where did you go? For how long? What did you do?

The VC organized the first transportation mission about one week after they took over the land development center. The group was composed of 80 people, but only 20 of them were from the land development center. There were three guides. When we left for our mission, each one of us had to carry his rice along. After walking for 20 days—just about time when our rice ran out— we arrived at a station located in a wood of Phu Yen Province. It was a station where clothes

were being made. There were five sewing machines and, three women and two men were working. Many clothes had already been made and they were all in black material. All 80 of us had to carry the clothes away. Because of the slippery roads and much mountain climbing, we couldn't carry heavy loads. Each one of us could carry more than 10 uniforms. It took us also 20 days to get back. At every station there were cadres to distribute rice to us. We had two meals a day and we ate one can of rice a day. Arriving at a wood in Darlac Province, we stored all the clothes in a house located in the middle of the wood. I saw five persons living in that house. It took us half a day to get back from that place to the land development center. And thus, we walked four 40 days straight without one day rest. The second trip was to transport the wounded. I remembered that that trip took place sometime during the first few months of 1965 but I don't remember the exact date. The transportation group started on their trip early in the morning and at 9AM, we arrived at [redacted] I heard that there had been some fighting at [redacted] the day before. I don't know how many VC soldiers had been killed, but I found that there were 43 wounded lyingthere. Each wounded person were carried by four laborers—two persons took turn to carry the wounded—. The entire group walked straight into the wood, and spent the night there. Early the next morning, we continued to go again. We arrived at the station at about 8AM. The station was a long house with thatched roof. Inside there was a long wooden bed where the wounded soldiers could lay on. There were two assistant doctors, four nurses and five women cooks. After putting the wounded on the wooden bed, the transportation group left immediately. We arrived home at 6PM. The third trip was also to transport the wounded I remembered it took part in May 1965. That time, the laborers from other hamlet carried to our 10 wounded soldiers. I don't know where the wounded came from didn't dare ask the transportation men. The cadres forced 40 persons to carry these wounded people to the stations where we had been on our second trip.

109. What did the people say about having to go on transportation missions?

They complained very much. As I told you before, some people crititized the cadres for forcing the people to go on transportation missions. And the cadres arrested him and took him away. Many people wanted to protest their having to go on transportation missions, but didn't dare do it for fear of being arrested.

110. Did the VC turn the strategic hamlet into a combat hamlet?

The VC only destroyed the strategic hamlet, they didn't build the combat hamlet

111. What control did the VC have over people leaving the land development center?

All the roads that led out of the hamlet were being guarded by the guerrillas and so it was very difficult to leave the hamlet. If anyone wanted to make an escape, he had to make it by way of the wood.

112. Why didn't the VC let the people leave the hamlet ?

They said that to go to the GVN controlled areas means to go over to the enemy.

113. Did you meet any Northern cadres?

I never met any Northern cadres. I only met the Northern soldiers.

114. When did you see the Northern soldiers?

On our transportation mission to carry the wounded soldiers at [redacted] I saw the Northern wounded soldiers.

115. Were all those wounded soldiers Northerners?

There were Northerners, Southerners and Montagnards among these wounded.

116. What do you know about conditions of life in the Front forces?

I don't know.

117. Did you find any changes in the activities of the cadres in the land development center in the last year?

I didn't see any change at all.

118. Did you hear of the defeats suffered by the Front units?

Neither nor the people ever
/The cadres/ mentioned the defeats suffered by the VC, but I figure they must have suffered defeats.

119. Why do you think so?

I have had to go on transportation missions and carry many wounded VC . They must have suffered many defeat to have so many wounded soldiers.

120. Was there a school in the land development center?

When the Nationalists were still in control, there was a school. The VC came set fire to the school and then they built a small thatched roof houses to teach the children. A little while later, the Nationalists soldiers set fire to it when they passed by in their operation . From then on. there was no more school in the land development center.

121. Did the people ask the cadres to rebuild another school?

No one mentioned that matter.

122? Was there a hospital in the land development center?

When the Nationalists were still in control, there was a hospital, a nurse and a midwife. But when the VC took over, the nurse and the midwife all moved out. No one was left.

123. Did the cadres ever give medicine to the people?

Never.

124. Did you hear about the Government in Saigon when you were still in the land development center?

I didn't hear anyone talk about the Government.at all.

125. Do you know who heads the Government at the present time?

The leaders of the Nationalist Government at the present time are Mr. Thieu and Mr. Ky.

126. Do you know the aims of the Nationalist Government?

The aims of the Nationalist Government have always been the same, from the time Mr. Diem was still in power until now. These saims are to help the people to better themselves.

127. In your opinion, is the Nationalist Government strong or weak?

The Nationalists have armored cars, airplanes and many weapons. Thus they are strong. Also the Government has to be strong in order to be able to help the people. The Government is always helping the people, and so it must be strong.

128. Is the Government sympathetic towards the people?

The Government is sympathetic towards the people, and the fact is it helps the people.

129. Are the Government officials dedicated?

I found that the officials in the land development center as well those in the [redacted] are dedicated in helping the people.

130. Are any of them lazy?

No one is lazy.

131. When you were still in the land development center did you know anything about what had happened in Saigon?

I didn't know anything about what had happened in Saigonat all.

132. Was there a radio set in the land development center?

There were two radios sets ownedby private people, but I never listened to them.

133. Did the cadres permit these people to listen to their radio freely?

I don't know.

134. Were there newspapersin the land development center?

No.

135. When you were still in the land development center, could you send letters to other places, or received letters from other places?

I know nothing about sending or receiving lettersat all.

136. Did those who went to Nationalists controlled markets ever mentioned what they had heard at the markets?

I don't know if those who went to the Nationalistscontrolled markets had heard anything, but I never heard they mentioned anything there at all.

only once I was told by one of them that she was fined by the Nationalist policeman because she had bought to many clothes which she would sell back to the people.

137. Did the cadres ever organized shows or entertainment for the benefits of the people?

When the VC first arrived, they taught a group of young men and young youths to sing some VC songs. It lasted for just a few days because no one showed up for the singing lessons. No show was organized in the land development center.

138. Did you hear of the Chieu Hoi program?

I heard of the Chieu Hoi program when I was still in my hamlet, before I made the escape.

139. What do you know about Chieu Hoi?

Chieu Hoi means to appeal to the people to come and live with the Nationalists so that they would receive help from the Nationalists.

140. Who told you about the Chieu Hoi Program?

I had a friend in the hamlet. When the VC took over the hamlet, he escaped and went to work for a coffee plantation. A month later he returned to the hamlet and was captured by the VC who took him away for re-education for two days. He himself told me that life in the center was miserable with lack of food, clothes and I should escape to go to the Chieu Hoi Center in Ban Me Thuat where I would receive help from the Government in rice, clothing, and blankets, housing.

141. What did you think about what he told you to escape?

I wanted to go very much, but was afraid of being captured by the VC. I told him to go first, and I would follow him later. But as soon as he left the land development center, he was stopped by the guerrillas. A few days latter, he became extremely sick, and the cadres had to let him go to the hospital in Ban Me Thuat. But he died when he arrived at the hospital.

142. Did many people in the hamlet know about the Chieu Hoi program?

Very few people in my hamlet knew about the program.

143. Was the land development center attacked by the Nationalist troops?

The Nationalist troops conducted four operations during the period between the time when the VC took over the land development center until the time of my escape. Only once was there a small fighting with the VC, otherwise there was no fighting at all because each time the Nationalist troops came, the cadres and guerrillas all ran into hiding.

144. Would you describe these operations?

The first time was in April 1965. There were two Civil Guards companies composed partially with Montagnards. The Civil Guards fired just a few shots. No one was hit. They then entered the land development center and set fire to four houses belonging to four VC cadres, and then they withdrew. When they withdrew the Montagnards took away with them some chickens and pigs. The second time occurred in August 1965. There were many Montagnards soldiers this time and they fired many shots, but no one was hit. They entered the land development center, set fire to about two thirds of the people homes and captured a lot of chiken and pigs, and then they withdrew. The third time occurred in January 1966. This time the Nationalists met the VC soldiers outside of the land development center. Both side fired at each other for a while. Two VC were killed and one was wounded. I don't know if there were any casualties on the Nationalists side. When the fighting against the VC was over, the Nationalist troops entered the land development center, set fire to all the the people's homes, arrested six persons --four men and two women-- and killed them all. These people weren't cadres, but simple civilians. I don't know why they were killed. After this operation, all the people had to left build small shacks to live in because there was not one house/standing in in the land development center. The fourth time occurred in February 1966.

There were only Special Forces this time. They entered the land development center and set fire to all the shacks, cattle shacks, paddy and potato.

145. Were the people ever informed in advance of the operation?

They were never informed in advance. Usually at about 7 or 8AM when we heard the gunfire then we knew that there would be an operation.

146. What did the people say about these operations?

They complained very much. They all asked, why didn't the Nationalist troops look for the VC to fight, why did they always set fire to the people's houses, paddy and potato to make the people hungry and miserable?

147. What did the cadres say?

Each time the Nationalist troops arrived, the cadres all went into hiding and didn't showed up until the Nationalist troops had all gone. I never heard the cadres say anything about the operations at all.

148. In your opinion, should the Nationalist Government inform the people in advance of any operation?

I don't think it would make any difference. Only if the Nationalist troops stop from setting fire to the people's homes, paddy and potato.

149. Did you see or hear about the use of chemicals to destroy vegetation or crops?

I have never seen such operation, but I heard other people say that in Quang Nam the Nationalist Government sprayed chemicals any place where there were VC, to destroy the people' vegetetion and crops.

150. Did you hear when and where the spraying was carried out?

I only heard people mentioned it in passing, I don't know all the details.

151. In your opinion, why did the Nationalist Government sprayed chemicals to destroy the people's vegetation and crops?

According to people, the Nationalists only sprayed places where the VC were [illegible]. That meant the people wouldn't have anything left to support the VC with.

152. In your opinion, should the Nationalists use chemicals to spray?

I think the Government should continue to do the spraying because the spraying will cause people in the VC controlled areas to have nothing to eat, and they will have to move to the Nationalist controlled areas. If the people move out, the VC won't be able to remain alive.

153. In your opinion, what effects did the spraying have on the VC troops?

I think that the destruction of crops affects the VC troops a great deal. If the people have no food to eat, they won't have anything to contribute tothe VC. No contributions, the VC troops won't have food to eat. Without food, the VC won't be able to fight.

154. Before you took refuge, did you meet any American?

When I was still in the land development center, when the Nationalists were still in control of the center, I had seen the Americans. They came to the center five or six times to distribute rice to the people.

155. How did they behave towards the people?

They were very nice.

156. In your opinion, what are the aims of the Americans in Vietnam?

I think that the Americans come here because they are rich and they find that the Vietnamese people are poor and and hungry. So they come to help.

157. What did the cadres say about the aims of the Americans in Vietnam?

They said that the Americans came here to take over the South, to use the South as a springboard to take over the North.

158. Did you and the people beleive it?

I don't know if other people beleived so or not. As for me, I don't beleive it because if the Americans wanted to take over the North, they could attack the North directly. Why did they have to use the South as a springboard to attack the North for? Furthermore, I only found that the Americans helped the people by giving them rice and clothes, I didn't see them anything that we could accuse them of taking over the South.

159. Do you think that the Americans and the French are alike?

The French took over Vietnam. How could the Americans and the French be alike?

160. Did you hear about other people helping the Nationalist Government?

After I took refuge I heard that the Koreans came to help Vietnam. I only heard about them, but have never seen any of them.

161. In your opinion, why should the Koreans come to help Vietnam?

I don't know.

162. Did you hear about the bombing on the North?

When I was still in the land development center I had heard about the bombing on the North. The cadres didn't say how the North was being bombed or how much damage was caused by the bombing. They only said that many airplanes had been shot down and the total amount came to hundreds. I don't remember the exact number.

164. Did the cadres say why the North was bombed?

They said that the North supported the Front in the South, and so the Americans bombed the North for revenge.

164. Do you think that the Americans bomb the North for revenge as the cadres said?

I don't think this is a revenge. The North sends troops into the South. The Americans want to stop the North from sending troops into the South, that is why they bomb the North.

165. What did the people say about the bombing on the North?

I didn't hear them say anything.

166. In your opinion, what effects did the bonbing on the North have on the Front in the South?

The North is being bombed. It can't send troops to the South to help the Front and so the Front is affected.

167. How did you take refuge?

About two months ago, my entire family--my wife and I and all our four children became sick. My wife and two of my children became extremely sick. I asked

permission from the cadres to take my wife and two of my children to the hospital in Ban Me Thuat. The cadres agreed. I asked other people to carry my wife and two of my children in a hammock to the main road and from there I put my wife in a three-wheeled vehicle to go to the hospital in Ban Me Thuat. A week later I took the other two children and escaped to the wood. We started out late in the evening and didn't reach the main road until early next morning. There we took the three-wheeled vehicle to Ban Me Thuat to go to the hospital. After one month in the hospital, one of my children died and one month later, my wife died. After my wife's death, I left the hospital and went to [redacted]

168. You left the hamlet to take refuge because of sickness?

I took advantage of having sickness to escape. But the truth is I had wanted to escape a long time ago, when I heard some acquaintances said that the refugees in Ban Me Thuat were helped by the Government. I wanted to leave the hamlet because my house was burned down, pigs and chicken were all killed, I couldn't continue to farm the land and we were so miserable for there was no food to eat.

169. Why didn't you leave your hamlet before?

It was very difficult to make an escape with many people at the same time. And so I had to wait for a propitious opportunity to make our escape.

170. Did the aircrafts ever broadcast over your hamlet?

One or two months before I left the hamlet, the aircrafts broadcasted twice They appeals appealed to these who had joined the VC ranks to return to the Nationalist Government and they the Government would be lenient with them. I heard it very clearly.

171. What did the people say about the boradcasts?

There were no comments from the people.

171. Did the cadres say anything?

They didn't say anything at all.

173. Were leaflets ever dropped from airplanes ~~x~~ in your hamlet?

The airplanes dropped leaflets twice,but the cadres told the children to pick them all up and burned them all.

174. What did they leaflets say?

I ~~xx~~ didn't get to read them, so I don't know.

175. Did any people get to read them? Did anyone say anything?

Very few people got to read them, but they didn't tell other people about what they had read. I only heard ~~xxxx~~ people discussing among themselves that they should find ways to move out of the hamlet, it would be impossible to remain there. The Nationalists had dropped leaflets, and the next thing they would do was to bomb and shell. If they didn't leave, they would be killed.

176. Have you ever taken refuge before?

Never.

177. Did anyone try to stop you from leaving the hamlet when you did so?

No one tried to stop me from leaving. Only people encouraged me to leave as I told you before. When I left, I was afraid the guerrillas might stop me from leaving. And so I had to leave at night and by way of the wood.

178. What preparations did you make when you left your hamlet? What could you bring along with you?

Through I had decided to move out a long time a go, I didn't make any preparations or could I bring anything along with me because I had nothing left to ~~xxx~~ bring with me.

179. Did anyone leave the hamlet at the same time with you?

No.

180. When did the people in the land development center start to move out of the center?

They began to escape since January 1966. The guerrillas tried very hard to stop them, but they ~~xxxxx~~ couldn't succeed because the land development center was surrounded by woody areas. Once the people have escaped into the wood, it was easy for them to make their way out here.

181. Which families were the first to ~~xx~~ leave?

The people left because they were too miserable. Most of the people in the land development center lived in dire need and so they all wanted to escape There was no distinction.

182. Were there many families left in the center?

Some one just escaped told me that there were about 70 families left there. There had been [redacted] families in the center.

183. When you left your hamlet, did you know how long you would be away from it?

When I left, I didn't know how long I would be ~~xxx~~ away. I decided that ~~x~~ I would return only after the Government has re-established its control over the land development ~~xxxx~~ center and told the people to ~~xxxxx~~ return.

184. Has any refugee returned to the hamlet?

No one has returned.

185. What would happen to you if you returned?

If I returned now, the VC would arrest me and take me to the mountain immediately because they would accuse me of going over to the enemy. Even through weren't going to arrest, I couldn't return now, because if I did, I would die of starvation.

186. What has the Government helped you since you took refuge in this center?

I Have been in this center for 10 days staying in some friend's home. Until yesterday I received three kg of rice.

187. Have the authorities in this center promised you anything else?

No one has promised me anything but I am sure that I would receive help from the Government because all those who had taken refuge before me received rice clothes, mosquito nets, blankets and each family received 3500 piasters to build their house in this center.

188. Have you received your identification card?

No, I didn't hear anyone mentioned anything about the identification at all.

189. Has the center organized any training class for the ~~xxx~~ refugees?

No.

190. ~~Xxxx~~ Would you like to receive some kind of training?

I am old now. I can only do farming to earn my living. I can't learn any other profession.

190. In your opinion, would the other refugees like to learn some profession?

I don't know.

192. Have anyone in this center done anything to earn their living?

Some of them ~~worked~~ as hired laborers at other places, some work in the coffee ~~xxxx~~ plantation. I have been working at the coffee plantation for four days and receive 60 piasters per day. The plantation only hires people when it is sunny. It has been rainy for days now and there is no job to do.

193. How many refugee families ~~xx~~ are there in this center?

Quite a few of them, but I don't know the number.

194. Do you feel safe in this center?

The center is very safe because it is very close to the town [redacted]

195. How is the leadership committee of ~~xxx~~ this center organized?

I am a newcomer here and so I don't know how the leadership committee is organize I only find that ~~x~~ all the officials in the center treat the ~~xxx~~ people very nicely.

196. Have you received any news about the land development center since you ~~xxxxx~~ took refuge?

Some ~~xxxxxx~~ people left after me, told me that after I had left the hamlet there was another operation. The Nationalist soldiers entered the center and arrested some woman. No one knew why.

197. Since you came to this center, have you seen any foreigners coming here?

Though I am in this center but I live far away from the office of the center and so I don't know if any ~~foreign~~ foreigners have come here or not.

198. What do the children in this center do?

They don't do anything.

199. Is there a school forthe children?

There is only one small private ~~x~~ school, and so only few children go there. I heard that very soon there may be a public school here.

200. Who do you blame for all the difficulties you have to bear now?

The Government brought me from the Center ~~xxxx~~ to this place so I could work in peace and earn my living. ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ But the VC came and made me and many other people so miserable. If it hadn't been for the VC, I wouldn't have been in this dire situation. The VC are the cause of everything.

201. Do you think you will leave the center to go some other place?

I will stay in this center.

202. This ~~xx~~ is the picture of a ladder with 10 rungs. The top rung is numbered 1 and the bottom rung is numbered 10. If the top rung represents the best life you can imagine, and the bottom rung ~~x~~ represents the ~~xxxxx~~ worst life you can imagine. In your opinion, where on this ladder would you say that your life had been before the ~~Communists~~ VC came to your village? After they came to your village? and where would you put your life now?

Before the VC came I was on rung 5 or 6. After the VC came I was on rung 10 and and I am on rung 10 now.

203. Where would you be five years from now?

I don't know.

204. How would describe the worst life you can imagine yourself back in your ~~xx~~ hamlet?

The worst life would be to have to live with the VC, to be hungry and thristy to ~~xx~~ wear torn clothes, to have medicine when one is sick and ~~x~~ no coffin when one ~~xxxx~~ is de ad.

205. In your opinion, what would constitute the best ~~xx~~ life possible?

To be well-off, to have more than enough to eat, to have many clothes and the children healthy.

206. What kind of life do you hope for your son?

I hope that my son would have a good education, receive high degrees, and later

have good job so he could live comfortably.

207. If you could ask three things from the Government, what would they be?

First I would ask for a house to live in; second I would ask for clothes, rice and medicine and third I would ask for identification card.

208. In your opinion, could the Government satisfy your demands?

I beleive that the Government could.

209. In your opinion, how long will the war last?

I don't know how long the war will last, but I know that it won't last very much longer. I found that the Nationalists are too strong and the VC only run into hiding. They can run all they want, but can they keep on running all the time?

210. Do the other refugees think the same like you?

I think they are of the same mind like me.

211. That means that you think the Nationalists are winning?

It is clear that the Nationalists are winning, the VC only run. All the refugees know it.

212. At the present time, which side, the VC or GVN are getting the people's support?

I don't know about other areas./In my land development center and only 4 There were 215 families supported of them the VC because they had members working for the VC. The rest supported the Nationalists. It shows that the people support the GVN not the VC.

213. In your opinion, what should the Government do to get the support of the people everywhere?

I think that if the Government would help all the refugees to have enough food to eat and clothes to wear, then the people everywhere will support the Government.

214. If the VC win the war, what do you think the people's lives will be?

If the VC win the people will have to pay heavier taxes, will be more oppressed As such the people will be extremely miserable.

215. If the Nationalists win the war, what do you think will happen to the people's lives?

There is a war now and yet the people are receiving help from the Government

How much more help they will receive if the Nationalists win the war?

The people will be very happy then.

Interviewer's comments

The subject is a man with little instruction. He looked skinny, pale and sick. He spoke slowly, laboriously and coughed constantly. Through he seemed sincere and cooperative.

NO. AGR 7.

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

1. Name of interviewer [redacted]
2. Name of subject [redacted]
3. Time and date of interview :
   From 9.00 to 12.00 on Oct [redacted] 1966
   From 2.30 to 4.30 on [redacted] 1966
   From 8.35 to 10.45 on Oct [redacted] 1966
   Total Time 7h.10 Based on hand written notes
4. Place of interview : [redacted]
5. Sex of subject : Male (X) Female ( )
6. Age of subject : 45
7. Ethnic background : Vietnamese
8. Place of birth :
   hamlet [redacted]
   village [redacted]
   district [redacted] Tien Ky
   province Quang Tin
9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :
   hamlet Hamlet [redacted]
   village [redacted]
   district Tuc Thien
   province Darlac
10. (a) Length of residence in last location : 5 years
    (b) Who controlled the place of residence :
    GVN ( ) VC (X) Contested ( ) How long: Feb. 1964

NO. AGR_____

11. Number of brothers ( ) and sisters ( )

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : _____

13. Marital status : [redacted] Widower

14. Number of children : 3

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age : /

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject( ) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject(x) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion : Catholic

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : Farming

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation _____
(b) Landowner? x

20. Education :
illiterate ( )
literate (Know how to read
schooling completed : _____

21. Any relatives in VC : no

22. Any relatives in GVN : no

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by :
(a) French
(b) GVN /no
(c) VC

24. When became a refugee : 2 months and 10 days

25. Where took refuge first : [illegible]

26. Present residence

AGR

INTERVIEW

72

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INTERVIEWS CONCERNING THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR - 72

Date of Interview : October [redacted] 1966

Subject's Category : Refugee (September 1966)

Area of Residence : [redacted] Land Development Center
Darlac Province

This interview is for the information of US and Vietnamese official agencies and personnel on a need-to-know basis. Permission to distribute or show this interview to non-official persons requires the prior approval of The RAND Corporation and the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs.

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1. How long did you and your family live in this village before you became a refugee?

   Ten years.

2. How large was your village?

   This village consisted of 4 hamlets, and 850 families. It was very large and there was much land to work.

3. What did you do to earn your living?

   I am a farmer. I was given two hectares. (Paused) On the whole, the number of refugee families had already reached one-third.

4. Did anybody flee at the same time?

   In several groups, not all the same time.

5. When did you people leave the village?

   A number of us started to leave last year, now they are well settled here. This year, there was another number like that. As for me, since I just got here, I haven't received any assistance.

6. How many families went with you?

   There were only four families with me. But actually, where I used to live, there were 25 families in all. The other 20 families got here 1 month earlier. They still haven't received anything.

7. What did most of you do to earn your living in the village?

   We were mostly farmers. Some were fishermen, but just for fun, because farming was our main work.

8. On the whole, were you living well, or were you poor?

   Most of us were poor. There were only a few rich people, who lived in brick houses.

9. Did the poor have enough to eat?

   Being poor only meant that they could not build brick houses, but all of them had enough to eat. Lots of ricefields, lots of soya beans, too. At each crop, a person like me would get 200 bags of rice, 12 bags of soya beans too, each bag 100 kg.

10. Did you have any land?

The Government gave me two hectares at the time of resettlement.

11. Generally, with each crop, did you always get 200 bags of rice?

About 200 bags if there was no flood. But there was a flood every other year, and, in those years, there was not even a single bag of rice. If it weren't for that problem, we would all be rich people.

12. Is it because you didn't have clothes, or because you couldn't carry them with you when you fled, that you didn't have anything to wear?

The reason is that about six months ago, when Government forces arrived there, the VC forced all of the population of the [redacted] hamlets to follow them up to the mountain. I asked permission to stay behind in a cave, but they didn't agree, arguing that I might have the intention of stealing things belonging to the other people of the hamlet. Therefore, I was forced to rush out after them, without having time to take anything along. I had a little money with me, but during the two months we stayed in the mountain, I had to buy anything they sold, whether cheap or expensive, so that there was nothing left. Being unable to endure this suffering any longer, I had to escape and return here and, together with other people, we set up huts to live in because, when the Government troops got here, in two days they burned up everything.

13. What mountain was it?

It's called Boun Tich S'renh, a Montagnard name. Last year, they forced the population of three hamlets: [redacted] -- refugees from Binh Dinh -- [redacted] -- from Quang Nam -- to prepare rice and they took it all away, no one knows where, and they told the people of the three hamlets to go to [redacted] to be repaid. They took about 30% of the [redacted] rice to repay the farmers of the other three hamlets. Then they gathered a large number of persons near the foot of the mountain to work the ground under the supervision of one cadre. A small number of persons sided with the [redacted] group. When Government troops arrived, they all fled to the mountains. Now, they are starving, always hiding themselves in the mountain without seeing the daylight. People died every day and every day they were buried. They insulted the other side very much, and the cadres just bowed their heads and suffered the verbal storm in silence.

14. When Government troops arrived, were there any airplanes?

There were helicopters landing troops, and they managed to bring a few of us out here. There were also many jets and fighter planes that strafed and bombed a great deal. But bombs and bullets did not kill anybody, because once we got to the mountain, we were safe. However, the following day, jets and fighter planes returned and strafed again, killing 75 cows belonging to the farmers of hamlets [redacted]. In the recent event, I myself had lost over 30 thousand VN$, house, belongings, everything was burned up by the Government forces. But I don't regret it. Being able to get out here to enjoy life is the main thing.

15. How did the farmers react when they lost 75 cows and found that all their possessions were burned or destroyed?

They didn't complain. But the few who were wealthier drank a lot to make others believe that they were drunk, in order to insult those Revolutionary people once and for all, "Because of you stupid bastards we have lost all our belongings, etc."

16. When you were in the mountain, how many of you died of disease? And of what disease?

Always having to live in the jungle, and in grottos in the mountain, everyone had clumpsy attitudes and looked very pale. Partly due to starvation, partly due to fever, there was someone to bury every-day. I knew a family in [redacted] the son died first, then the mother a few days later. Besides, I think that the number of those who still live there will certainly die because this year's rice crop harvested in June wasn't any good. This year I think they will all starve. I don't know about people from other places but the people of [redacted] just had what they deserved, for [redacted] is close to the District of Thuan Hieu, and they did not join this side, but instead, went with the VC. So, if they suffered, that was their fault. (Paused) The people who still live there wait only for the Government forces to go there once more and then they will follow them out. Right now, they can't go out even if they wanted; every place is guarded and no one can escape.

17. After two months in the mountain, did you decide to return to the village, or were you forced to do so by the Viet Cong?

Because a great number of us were sick, we decided to return and build huts and camps in which to live. They had asked us to move farther, but we refused.

18. Did the VC try to prevent the population from going back to the village?

No.

19. How much did the VC suffer from the operations conducted by the Government forces?

They fled before the operations and didn't suffer any damage. (Paused) It was only after they got to the mountain that three farmers and one armed cadre were killed by the bombing.

20. What was the rank of that cadre?

He was not a high ranking cadre of the district or province level, but only one of the lower echelon, of the village or guerrilla fighter echelon. A higher ranking cadre does not wear a gun, but usually carries a brief case.

21. How many VC have died of disease?

None.

22. Don't they get sick at all?

They let us have the outside tents while they, themselves, went further inside. They didn't let us get there. But if someone happened to lose his way and get in there, they still didn't say anything. There didn't seem to be any sick people in there. It could be seen that they had built pig cages and set up good places to store food. They also had cattle that they lent us so that we could plough for them.

23. Had there been any spraying of chemical products over [redacted] to kill the plants?

Some farmers wondered, "Why is this year's wheat so strange? Maybe because the airplanes had sprayed products on it, and that's why it had died away like that." Others said that, "Perhaps they had picked up the wrong grains for the wrong season, that's why it hadn't bloomed."

24. Those who said that the airplanes had sprayed chemical products, did they themselves see it or did they just guess it?

Well, they didn't see it. They only guessed it. (Paused) On the other side, their propaganda said that airplanes used to spray chemical products over remote areas deep in the jungle. Therefore,

we were told to dig shelters and everytime we rushed for safety, we were supposed to take a can of water and a towel with us, soak it with water and put it on our faces to avoid being intoxicated. (Paused) But, to tell you the truth, one thing that I have noticed is that, over here, you are not careful enough. Their cadres are dressed like the civilian people here and can mix with them without being unmasked. When I was still there, I used to see one cadre who often went to Banmethuot to buy supplies for his men.

25. What kind of cadre was he?

Really, I don't know what kind of cadre he was, but I assume that he must have been a district cadre, because he always carried a brief case. When I was still there, I used to listen to the people's radio. They didn't allow us to tune in the National radio; therefore, we could only listen to Communist broadcasts. When I heard that the province of Quang Nam had been completely liberated I told the other VC that it was a lie. Then they invoked Heaven and said, "It's from the radio and you dare say that it's a lie?" If I were still young, I would certainly be taken away to be re-educated. Besides, when they spread the rumor that the population of Banmethuot had started to move, we had asked them what they were waiting for and not launching the attack. They replied that there was no need to attack Banmethuot itself, but only the district of Thuan Hieu, and Banmethuot would surrender. Among the older people, everyone said they were big liars. (Paused) There were four families that returned with me but, because they took the direction of [redacted] they were given blankets, rice, soya sauce, all kinds of clothes. My daughter's family among them. As for me, because I had used a sampan to go directly to the post of [redacted] I didn't get anything. The captain at [redacted] post saw that I was an old man, he took pity on me and gave me 200 piasters, I left my boat there too. Today, my daughter's family stays with me, whereas the other three families went to the "Open Arms" Center.

26. Why was your daughter's family authorized to stay with you, while the other three families had to go to the Open Arms Center?

The other three families had relatives among the returnees; therefore, they joined them.

27. With whom do you live now?

I have with me here one daughter and one son of 18. I have two other daughters at [redacted] My two elder sons are still at Quang Nam.

28. Does your son-in-law live with you?

My son-in-law is with me. He has two children and is expecting another one.

29. Is your youngest son married?

My youngest son is not married now, although he has been married three times.

30. How could it be? Eighteen years old and married 3 times?

When I asked for the hand of his first wife, the villagers laughed at him saying, "A guy like you marrying a girl like that, aren't you afraid of being laughed at?" That was the reason why he refused to marry that one. I then went to ask for the hand of his second wife and, according to Catholic custom, the wedding had to be celebrated within six months, but the girl's father wanted to find a good day and wanted to celebrate the wedding one year later. I protested and he got drunk and insulted me, so we cancelled the whole thing. As for the third wife, a few months after she was approached about the mariage, she came here for business. Out here, Mr. [redacted] who worked at the "Open Arms" Center here, scared her by saying, "If you return there, you'll die." So, the girl was so scared that she stayed out here for good and later got married to someone out here. That's why my youngest son is still single and still lives with me.

31. How old was your son when you wanted to seek a wife for him?

He was only 15 when I started to look for a wife for him.

32. Why did you want him to get married so young?

Because I was getting old and living conditions were difficult, so I wanted my son to have his own family. Besides, when we first got to the village, he was so small we had to carry him everywhere; within only 9 years, he had grown up so fast.

33. Are your two daughters, who live at [redacted], married?

They are. One has two children, the other has four children.

34. What are your two older sons doing?

About my two older sons: one is a farmer, the other is a baker and sells his cakes in the market. About my grandchildren: the older one has five children, the younger one has two.

35. Are your two older sons helping you in any way?

We are so far from each other that they cannot help me.

36. Why did you leave Quang Nam?

Well, at that time, my two older daughters were already engaged, but not yet married, and I became a Catholic. Since our counterpart was not Catholic, they refused the marriage. Therefore, my two daughters became sad and hated to stay there and when the Government offered to transfer people to the village, give them money and rice, they both urged me to leave. They only got married once they got here.

37. What are your two sons-in-law doing at [redacted]?

They are farmers.

38. Why didn't they leave with you?

Because one of them didn't own or know how to drive a sampan, and the other one didn't have anyone to help him carry his four babies along with him. The day I left, they cried and said that they hoped the Government forces would get there once more so that they could ride out with them and meet me here.

39. When did you leave? How long did it take you to get here?

We left at 10:00 PM, on a bark, and got to [redacted] post at 11:30 AM the following day. I left with my wife and my youngest son.

40. Are there any Montagnard people at [redacted]?

At [redacted] there are only refugees, but at two or three kilometers further away, there is a Montagnard village (a buon). There are a total of 4 buon's like that. [redacted] comprises 850 families, of which the 4 Montagnard villages represent about 2/3 of the population. But when the Government forces arrived here, the Viet Cong forced about 5 or 10 people from each buon to follow them and now the Buon I was completely destroyed by fire, Buon IV had one house destroyed, and Buon's II and III are also seriously damaged.

41. Did the Montagnard people complain about this?

The VC had taken all the rice and belongings of the Montagnard people to the mountains. Those who followed the VC are gone for good, and those who returned to the Government are now living in peace here. Nobody has complained about anything.

42. Has there been any friction between the Highlanders (Montagnards) and the lowlanders (city population)?

They all live together without friction. But I am afraid that the day when the Montagnard people return, the Vietnamese people who still live there will certainly be in trouble, because the Montagnard people will think that all their belongings have been stolen by those Vietnamese. The truth is that, at the beginning, these people used to have business with the Montagnard people and had often come to take rice and other merchandise home to use, but the Revolution people (VC) had prohibited them from buying anymore and then they took everything to the mountains. (Paused) Once, when I was still in the mountain, I witnessed a funny situation: they shot at each other. A guerrilla fighter was wandering about when a North Vietnamese soldier fired a summons shot in the air. The guerrilla fighter protested, asking why he wanted to shoot at his comrade-in-arms. The other guy replied that he had only shot in the air because had he shot at him, he would be a dead man already. They quarrelled for a while and then the guerrilla fighter fired a shot, the bullet went through the head of the North Vietnamese soldier from below his lower jaw, killing him immediately. Today, the guerrilla fighter must still be in jail or being re-educated about something, I don't know.

43. After the Front arrived at the village, could you speak more or less freely than before?

They didn't forbid anything. We could speak freely, as usual. But they did prohibit gambling, drinking, love making and unnecessary expenses. These four things were absolutely prohibited. (Paused).
However, as I understood it, they forbade us to do all that because they were afraid of starvation, I mean they wanted us to save food and money, so if we had enough to eat, they had enough to eat. Every week 3 or 4 of them used to come back and when they arrived, the father and mother had to serve food for them to eat. At each visit, they had to be served for two days, or at least two meals.

44. Have you ever lived in a Strategic Hamlet?

After our arrival here, we built houses and set up our Strategic Hamlet right away. [redacted] has two Strategic Hamlets.

45. After Mr. Diem was overthrown, wasn't it renamed New Life Hamlet?

No, it was just as before. Until last year, when the VC came and took it over.

46. When they took it over, did they destroy the Strategic hamlet?

When they conquered the place, they also destroyed the Strategic hamlet.

47. How much work and money did you have to contribute to the building of the Strategic hamlet?

The Government took care of all the expenses. The population only had to work.

48. Was there anything in the Strategic hamlet that you liked?

We liked to live in the Strategic hamlet, that's why we built it very carefully and surrounded with two lines of sharp sticks. When the VC came, they said that they could get rid of much stronger steel fences, that these fences were nothing for them.

49. Do you miss your Strategic hamlet?

How can we not regret it when we had put so much work and sweat in it and saw it destroyed by those VC? But what could we do? (Paused).

Now, I hope that the Government will send 4 fighter planes over to start a surprise attack on Buon Tich S'renh mountain and launch a military operation at [redacted] to liberate its population. I am sure that they will be very grateful because they all wanted to come out here, but they could not. I said attack by surprise because, I don't know how, but last time, when Government forces arrived, the VC knew it one day before and took us to the mountain. They cannot live without the farmers. Right now, they are forcing us to grow wheat extensively, 1500 wheat thickets for each hectare of land, in preparation for the day when the farmers happen to be away, so that they will have something to eat. (Paused) The VC said the following to frighten the farmers, in order to force them to follow them to the mountains. They said that, now, on the Government forces side, there was a certain type of soldier, I forget the name, who had a very strange look, who raped women wherever they went. That's why the farmers were so scared and followed them to the mountains.

50. Did they mean American soldiers?

Not American soldiers. A certain type of soldier.

51. Korean soldiers?

No, they said some other type. I can't remember.

52. Filipino soldiers?

They said some kind of European or Australian soldiers.

53. Are there still many farmers in Buon Tich S'renh mountain?

There are the farmers from three villages: [redacted] and [redacted]. They are dying one after another, as I told you before.

54. What do you and the other farmers think of the overthrow of Mr. Diem?

Any Government is all right, provided it works for the people. When we wanted to know why Mr. Diem was overthrown, there were some Government cadres who explained that Mr. Diem and the other lady (Mrs. Nhu) ruled the nation as dictators and should be overthrown.

55. Were you upset about it?

What did we know about it to be upset? However, a few of us had shown some regret saying, "Perhaps our own father wouldn't have done for us what he did." Mr. Ngo Dinh Diem gave us money, rice, blankets and mosquito nets.

56. Under the Diem regime, were there any Government forces stationed in [redacted]

There was an administrative section and many soldiers of the Popular Forces in the mountain. They were very good to us, particularly those from Binh Dinh. After Mr. Diem's overthrow, those soldiers had slowly disappeared, leaving behind them the Fighting Youths in the village. (Paused)

When Mr. Nguyen Huu Te returned here to the Open Arms Section, he had some propaganda leaflets printed with his picture on them urging the population to come out here. We were very excited, but we couldn't escape because we were very tightly watched. At the beginning, I had picked up a few, but, later, the VC found the flyers and we were forbidden to pick up any more of these flyers. Besides, their propaganda said that out here a sweet potato the size of your wrist already costs 5$, that firewood, water must be purchased, etc., so that we were so scared that we didn't dare come out. Later after we got out here we found that they all were big liars.

57. When did your village become an area of bean culture or when was it controlled by the Front?

About April 1965.

58. At that time were there any clashes between the Front forces and the Government forces in your village or near it?

There were no soldiers on our side then, and when they (the VC) fired several shots of their automatic guns, all the Fighting Youths fled away and they could get in easily.

59. Why couldn't the Government forces control your village?

Since the withdrawal of the Popular Forces three years ago, and since Mr. Diem's overthrow, there were nothing in the village but the Fighting Youths, but when they heard the sound of a gunshot, they all ran away and quickly hid their guns. What do you want us to do then?

60. What do the Front cadres do with the ID cards delivered to the population by the Government?

They were all taken away from us for fear that we would escape. But I managed to get it back because I told them I was old and I wouldn't go anywhere.

61. How did the Front cadres treat the population?

Everyone was crazy about the cadres of the higher echelon whenever they spoke, but the cadres of the lower echelons, of the hamlet and village level, were very arrogant; therefore, the population was very mad about them. Even Mr. Nguyen Van Te, because he gambled and was arrested by the other cadres, was so upset that he escaped and went to the Chieu Hoi Center.

62. What do you know about Mr. Nguyen Van Te?

He was a President Cadre of the village level, but because he gambled, he was arrested by other cadres so that he could be sent to a re-education center. Because of that, he was upset and came out here.

63. How did the soldiers of the Front treat the population?

They were not too bad. When I happened to see them, I joined my hands and bowed to them, but they refused to bow back, saying that I was old and that they should be considered as my children, that I shouldn't do that.

64. How did the guerrillas treat the population?

They treated them all right.

65. Did you know anything about the objectives of the Front then?

They had told us that their job was to fight on the front line and that our job on the rear line was to support them, so that, together, we could repulse the agressors. They said, "Suppose someone kicked you out of your house and kept it for his own use, would you like that?"

66. Did they say that to turn you against the Americans?

Yes, they tried to convince us we should oppose the Americans,

67. When the Front first started to control your village, did you see that they were peace-lovers or dangerous people?

I noticed that they didn't want peace, because they said that peace could only be restored when the Americans leave this country. They would continue to fight, even if there was only one American left.

68. Do you think they are patriots or traitors to the nation?

They kept saying that they had to fight like that because they were patriots; otherwise, they wouldn't bother us.

69. Do you think they are brave or are they just cowards?

When they came to take the place over, they seemed to be rather brave, not cowardly. But I think that they looked brave because they knew there wouldn't be much resistance.

70. Do you think they loved the farmers or did they mistreat them?

As I told you yesterday, the people of the higher echelons seemed to love us very much, but the lower-level cadres seemed to be tougher, and watched us, etc.

71. Did the Front set up any meeting in the village?

Yes, it did.

72. How often did they set up meetings?

Once every month.

73. What did the cadres say at those meetings?

That every meeting they set up, we must attend. (Paused) In general, we didn't know anything, but they talked, and we had to listen.

Last year we attended the meetings but, this year, of ten families, only two attend; the rest just ignore them. They made announcements in the daytime and, at night, they went from door to door to remind us to come and attend, but we still didn't go.

74. Usually, what did they talk about? What did they propose?

They urged us to produce more for them. Those of us who were lazy were forced to study or were re-educated.

75. What did they say about your village?

They didn't say anything and didn't promise anything for Ngoc Dien.

76. What did they say about the Government?

At the meetings with farmers, they only told us how to produce more for them and nothing else. (Paused) This year, after we had left, they (the VC) brought in their own labor and did all the work. The farmers were so disgusted that they stopped working.

77. Had they ever set up meetings to do propaganda work?

Never.

78. Didn't they try to do propaganda work against the Government and the US?

They urged us to produce more wheat and feed them well so that they could fight the Americans. (Hesitating) That's what they said. (Laughed)

79. What did they say about North Vietnam?

They said that North Vietnam was very far from here, but that the North Vietnamese had not hesitated to come down here, whereas we, living here in the South, mean't any spirit of sacrifice.

80. What did they say about Communist China?

They said that the Chinese Communists were ready to come here and help us, but, because we were strong enough to resist the US, they hadn't yet received instructions to come. But, in the future, if needed, the Chinese Communists would come to assist us immediately.

81. Did they say anything about the USSR?

Nothing.

82. What did they say about this war?

They said that no matter what might happen, we would win this war. Even though we hadn't enough people to fight, the Chinese Communists would help us immediately. It was only because Uncle Ho Chi Minh hadn't felt it was necessary yet that they hadn't come.

83. What do you think of their arguments?

The other farmers and I all think that they are big liars. That's just propaganda to stimulate us. They said that, from the North to the South, they had already liberated everything. This was the only area left to be liberated. That's what they said.

84. More recently, were the things that the cadres told you different from what they had told you at the previous meetings?

In the past, we attended all the meetings, but later, except for a few organized by the cadres of higher echelons, we didn't attend all the other meetings set up by the lower cadres, we just ignored them. To tell you the truth, I, myself, had taken alcohol to the point of getting drunk and had criticized them like this: "Well man, what kind of a fighter is that, hiding himself in the mountain and shooting at others?" There was one cadre who replied to me and we quarreled. He reported, later, that I wanted to beat a cadre. I thought I would be taken away to be re-educated, but I don't know why they did not do that.

85. If you were taken away for re-education purposes, where would they take you?

For light offenses, they would send us to Buon Tieh D'renh mountain; for serious offenses to Yu Bon (Yu Pong). "Yu Bon" is also a mountain and, in the past, there were villages for pioneers in that

area; now it's one of their districts (VC). They used to say districts, provinces, but, in reality, their districts or provinces are just a spot under a tree and that's about all.

From Vu Bon, they usually went down to the main road to stop trucks and buses and rob passengers, taking, in particular, salt that they would give to their merchants who would, in turn, resell to us at 30 or 35VN$ a kilo, and 50VN$ a kilo to other merchants. But this rarely happened. Only when they could stop buses, could they get salt. (Sauted) From what I have noticed, I know that they never kept their full strength in the village. They kept their people on both sides, along the road to Nha Trang and Saigon. They were on all the hills and mountains along that road. At the village, there were only their supply personnel, i.e., those who stayed there to collect food and bring it to the hills to feed them.

It's too bad that I cannot write; otherwise, I would draw a map showing Buon Ich S'renh to Vu Bon, their stronghold, so that our Government could annihilate them once and for all.

86. Which main units were stationed at Buon Ich S'renh and Vu Bon?

I have noticed that there were about two or three sections that were either passing by or stayed there and had the farmers serve them food. Their superior cadres spoke with my accent but the private soldiers spoke mostly with a North Vietnamese accent. They weren't stationed at Vu Bon Village. They just passed by and camped in the mountain instead. This is a beautiful place. All the robberies on buses from Saigon or Nha Trang originated from Vu Bon (Vu Pong).

Every year, when the rainy season begins, they claim that this is their period of progress; they draft farmers and force them to go to work for them by carrying guns, rice, etc.

87. What did the farmers say about this?

They couldn't endure any more of this. For instance, evacuating wounded soldiers under the rain, climbing slippery hills, falling and falling. They all complained very much.

88. Do you know in which battles the farmers were requisitioned for the evacuation of wounded people?

For example, at the Kim Chau battle last year, they had to evacuate one group from Kim Chau to [redacted], a distance of [redacted] Km, and another group from [redacted] to their field hospital at Vu Bon a distance of another 50 km.

They used to have one hospital in the mountain, about 3 km from [redacted] but in January or February of this year, it was discovered; therefore, they moved it to Vu Bon.

89. Did you ever volunteer to work for the front?

I am old and they didn't force me to go and work, but my son, in May or June of last year, had to carry wounded people 3 km away from [redacted]. He and the other people were shelled by the Government forces, and he hid himself on the side of the road, scared to death. This time, they intended to requisition him once more for another three months, but we managed to escape.

90. Each time they needed "volunteers of work", how many people did they take at a time?

A group of ten or 15 people. All these groups rotated and when the last group had gone, the first group goes again.

91. Each time, how long were they gone?

Each time, they were gone from 10 to 15 days. This time, the VC planned to take them for three months and they were all frightened.

92. How many youths over 16 years of age were there at [redacted]?

In hamlets [redacted], there must be about 5 or 6 obliged to fight as guerrillas and, in all five hamlets of [redacted], there must be about 15 or 16 of them. My son, too, was forced to take a gun and fight, but I went to see the village chief of squad, who happened to be a close friend, and asked him to allow my son to be exempted because my wife and I were old and we needed him at home. The village chief of squad told me that, actually, there were two solutions: 1) become a guerrilla fighter and stay home, which was good, or 2) volunteer for work under bombs and bullets, which was much more painful and dangerous. We were free to make our choice. I turned the rifle back to the village deputy chief of squad, thinking that it would be better to volunteer for 10 or 15 days and get it over, rather than become a guerrilla. One never knows when he could be free again. (Paused)

Today, I think things are not going well for them (VC) there. Everything is going wrong, because the farmers refuse to volunteer for work or to become guerrilla fighters. They simulate sickness in order to avoid work in the fields. Everyone is fed up with it.

93. How many youths were enrolled in the Government army?

There were twenty, who served in the militia forces at Thuan Hieu.

94. What type of young people joined the Front? What type of people enrolled in the Government army?

In general, nobody wanted to fight for them (VC). Those who followed them did it because they were forced to do so when they were still in the village. While those who joined the Government forces are all right now I guess.

95. When did the Front start drafting young people?

They started last year, but it didn't last very long because the majority of them went for a few days and then came back and returned the guns, protesting they were sick and stayed home. When ordered to report for work, they just kept pretending to have a very serious illness. Therefore, finally, the draft didn't work out at all.

96. Has the Front ever drafted women?

Drafted as women soldiers, no. But as student nurses, yes.

97. How many people from [redacted] went to attend nursing courses?

Five women from the five hamlets.

98. Did the VC treat differently those whose children were sent to the Front?

They came and told the parents that after victory, they would be very happy, etc.

99. And those whose children had joined the Government forces, how were they treated?

The VC told the parents that they should understand the true meaning of the struggle of the nation and call their children back. If not, later, when the Revolution succeeded, they would have to go and live in the United States.

100. What happened to the youths who tried to avoid being drafted?

Nothing. I have personally seen a number of them leave the Front and return here simulating sickness or craziness. When the VC came to take them again, they simulated insanity and told them nonsense. The VC finally left, leaving them in peace.

101. Had the Front ever promised to take the land of some people in the village and distribute it to others?

Never, and they didn't take anybody's land. The land that was abandoned or left unexploited, was taken and used. Right now, from my place up to Buon Tich S'renh, everything; i.e., rice, wheat, belongs to them and nothing belongs to the farmers.

102. In what category did the Front classify your family?

In the past, in Quang Nam, the Viet Minh classified me in the Average Farmer category, but later, here, they haven't classified me. They have just used class A and class B. Class A is the category of farmers with a relatively good income, like me. On each crop, I get 200 bags of rice. I am considered as belonging to class A. Each time, I have to pay 30%, i.e., 60 bags, but they keep asking for more and more and, slowly, it has gone from 20 kilos to 50 kilos, in addition to what I pay them.

103. How did they work out class A, class B, etc.?

Class A is the class the income of which is 100 bags of rice and over. Class B is the class the income of which is less than 100 bags of rice. Class C, 20 or 30 bags, for example.

104. Every category must pay 30%?

Yes.

105. Who collects taxes?

The village economic cadres.

106. Later, did they increase taxes?

No, they were still 30%.

107. How did you pay those taxes, with rice, money or food?

Paddy and green beans; 50% for each of them. As for rice, the VC set up a committee of mothers and sisters to collect rice for the families of guerrilla fighters, arguing that these fighters were busy doing common work and could not take care of their families. So everybody was requested to contribute a little to help them. And, finally, we had to pay an additional 4 or 5 cans of rice.

108. What did the Front cadres say about these taxes?

It was the responsibility of everyone to provide supplies to the armies. And how could we expect those people to fight and sacrifice themselves if they had nothing but roots to eat?

109. What was the farmers' reaction?

They complained very much. Only a small number of them still had enough to eat after they paid the taxes, but the majority of them couldn't endure any more, because, as I said, back there we had one year of good crops and one year of flood. Therefore, they didn't have enough to eat.

110. What do you think of those taxes?

I think that they obviously tried to force people to feed them. They said, "If you don't eat, do you have enough strength to hold a pick? The same for us;we cannot carry guns if we don't eat. Therefore, you must work in order to feed us." When the farmers complained, they (VC) told them that after the Revolution had succeeded, everyone would be very happy. Now that we were at war, everyone must accept some sacrifices. (Paused)

I teased them by asking, "Since the old days, has Vietnam ever been able to produce bombs and ammunitions so that you can say that, later, we will be happy?" They replied, "My Goodness, don't you know that the Vietnamese people are very clever?" I thought just for myself that the Russians are helping us now, but who knows that, later, they would not consider us their servants, no more no less, and then where would the promised happiness be?

111. Presently, the US is helping the Government. Do you think that, later, after the Government has won this war, the US will consider the Vietnamese people their servants as the French did in the past?

Maybe so. (Paused) Maybe it's better.

112. Why?

As I told you yesterday, I think that even our parents cannot take care of us as well as the Government did. I don't know about suffering, but I am asking you who does not want happiness when it's within reach?

(The interviewer explained to the subject the reason why the Americans came here, and why they are unlike the French in the past.)

113. For example, a family with five children. Is it obliged to pay the same amount of tax as another family having the same amount of land, but only two children?

The same amount, 30%. They don't grant any deduction for numerous children. But after the tax is paid and if they have to ask for more contributions, they will only go to the families with few children.

114. Generally, when do the farmers sell their products?

Since they (VC) occupied the place, they moved the market from place to place, 1 month here, 1 month there, and only opening at 5PM. The products sold were just green beans and to be sold to them exclusively. They paid 12 VN$ a kilo. Rice and paddy were not allowed to be sold. Last year there was some left that could be sold, but this year there was nothing left for the market. Only paddy and wheat could be planted according to their instructions.

115. Were the farmers authorized to go to the markets in Government-controlled areas?

They were not. Only some merchants could come out here to buy certain things to be taken back there, but the products from that area were not allowed to be brought out here. Anyone who wants to come to the markets here must still have a pass.

116. Did the fact that the VC impose certain restrictions on the sales of the farmers' products have any influence on their production?

No influence. They kept producing as usual. They simply had to give the VC the correct amount of goods and that was it. (Paused) Should there be any change, it would be within 3 months because the population of the 3 villages of [redacted] and [redacted], after they had moved there, couldn't find enough to eat and

complained so much that the VC had to requisition the products of the Montagnard people, such as rice, green beans, black beans and cattle to feed these people, with the promise of repaying the Montagnard people when they returned. I doubt that they could ever repay it. For example, I have only a small amount of wheat in the fields, but they sent their people out there to cut it, saying they just wanted to borrow it. If we get 100 bags, we report 50 bags to the VC; they list 50 bags in their records. Later, they would give us back 50 bags. The same procedure was followed for rice in jars, in pots; they put everything in their records. Later, when I returned, they gave it back to me. But, so far, I have never seen the VC give anything back to anyone.

117. Did the Front set up any organization in the village?

They set up the village administrative section, comprising a President, a security branch, an economics branch, etc. All were people of the village. The privileges these people enjoyed consisted only of receiving paddy and rice from the food the farmers gave to feed the armies.

118. From whom did this administrative section receive instructions?

Of course, the leading person must be a person from their side. They went from one village to another, reminding the villagers of what they should do in the village.

119. Did this set-up do any good for the population?

When they started it, everything went wrong. It didn't do any good at all.

120. Are there any secret organizations in your village?

I don't think there are any. The VC must work openly; if not, how could the people know how to follow their instructions?

121. How about the security section?

It's not secret. It tries to prevent thievery and watches the Chieu hoi campaign. Those who plan to become Chieu Hoi returnees, and who ask other people to join them, are immediately arrested if this plan is known.

122. What kind of people are the cadres?

I don't know where they are from.

123. What is the most important position of cadre in the village?

It's the position of President of the Front in the village.

124. Is he a native of the village or of elsewhere?

He is a native of the village.

125. Is the village President of the Front elected by the people or is he appointed by others?

Appointed by other (VC) cadres. Only the clerk who works for the President is elected by the people.

126. What do you think of this cadre?

All we know is that he was appointed by the cadres of higher echelon. We just endure him. We don't know if we like or dislike him.

127. Wasn't the village chairman with the Communists before?

He was with them before.

128. What was he doing before the Front took the village?

He wasn't doing anything. Only after he was appointed, did he really start to work. (Paused)

He just started recently, right after Mr. Nguyen Huu Te went to the Chieu Hoi. The VC found that he was qualified so they gave him the job.

129. Is he a member of the Communist Party?

I don't know if he has ever been a member of the Communist Party during the war, but right after the village was taken by the VC, he became very enthusiastic about the Revolution and worked very diligently, so the VC made a chairman out of him.

130. Which cadres or groups have the most influence in the direction of operations and policy of the Front in the village?

There are four groups in there: the Buddhist group, the Catholic group, the Protestant group and the Caodaist group. All these groups have to work for the VC in this or in that. If not in big things, it must be in small things. But the cadre that is the most listened to is the Finance cadre because he speaks well and explains well.

131. Are there any woman cadres in your village?

There is a female cadre in the village.

132. Is there a section of the Communist Party in your village?

I don't understant and I don't see any (seemed reluctant).

133. Have you ever seen or heard of disputes between cadres of the Front?

I have, like the case of Mr. Nguyen Huu Te, about whom I've already spoken to you.

(Subject looked more and more tired, and it seemed that the interview deteriorated with time because of his old age.)

134. Are the Front cadres divided into various factions?

No sir.

135. Has the farmers' attitude towards the cadres ever changed?

No sir.

136. Has the Front ever apprehended, punished or killed anyone in the village?

For serious offenses, one is sent to a remote place for re-education; for small offenses, one is sent to a nearby place for re-education. That's all. The person is sent away for 10 days or 1 month, but they (VC) don't kill anybody.

137. What are the cases punishable by re-education?

For instance, whoever speaks against the Revolution is punishable by re-education. (Paused)
For example, those who steal the belongings of others and who are found guilty, but who do not accept ammendments.

138. Have they set up fortified villages in [redacted]

No. They only destroyed the old strategic hamlet of the Government.

139. What does the Front do to control the flow of people going in and out of the village?

There are guerrillas watching the roads at each section. Those who go to work in the fields are free to do so, but those who circulate for business must have authorization from the village chairman.

140. What does the Front do to make those who leave the village return there?

They don't do anything. Recently, there was a guy from hamlet # [redacted] who applied for authorization to leave, and who quit the village on his bicycle. The VC couldn't do anything against him.

141. In your opinion, why does the Front control the people's movements?

If they don't control them, the whole population would run away from them. (Paused)

In the past, there were some young people who worked in the village squads out, because they were so enthusiastic, they were released and sent back to their homes to do fishing work. When we tried to escape on our sampnas, the VC asked where we were going and one of the farmers told them we were going to the Chieu Hoi. They replied, "Go ahead if you want." Later, they reported, "If we don't stop them, others will. Besides, we are not armed; if they had guns and suddenly opened fire on us, we would certainly be in trouble."

142. Have you ever talked with those of the village who just returned from the Front units?

Once, while one of the units was passing by the village, one guy stopped at my house to rest on the hammock. We had been instructed to report to the village security every time there was a stranger in the house. I asked him to follow me outside, where there was more room, because it was inconvenient for me to go underneath him on the hammock every time I wanted to move around in the house. He went outside and stood there, but refused to follow me to the village security. He also threatened me, saying that he knew what kind of a person I was. Later, he reported

to the village chairman that I had refused to help the fighting units, that I was an anti-revolutionary, etc. I just told them the truth that, according to the instructions received, every time there was a stranger in the house, it must be reported to the security service and, besides, I didn't think that an old man like me should have to walk underneath a young man on a hammock whenever he wanted to go around in his own house. Because I couldn't write a report, I had to take him and introduce him to the security officer so that he could have a better place to rest. They didn't take any measures against me.

143. Have there been any Front invalids who returned and settled in the village?

No sir, if there are any wounded people, they are taken to Vu Bon to be treated.

144. Did you ever hear about Front unit defeats?

They never told us for fear of deteriorating our morale. But the forced laborers who returned from the front line discreetly reported that, since last year, there had been three defeats, one at Kim Chau and two at Thuan Hieu. (Paused)

There is one thing that bothers me most: why, each time the Government forces launch an operation, the VC are already aware of it and have time to force us to follow them to the hills? Obviously, there must be a traitor on the Government side. I think something must be done to avoid this in the future.

145. Has the Front built any schools in the village?

They have built three primary schools. During the last operation of Government forces, they were all burned up.

146. How did the population react after the Government forces did that?

I don't know what the population thinks, but, personally, I had three large houses in all and I still don't regret anything. Being able to get out here is enough.

147. How many children attended those schools?

Each school accommodated about 30 children.

148. Did the children have to pay any fees?

In reality, the parents had to contribute to the construction of the schools and then, each month, the children had to pay 15 VN$ to the teacher.

149. Who were the teachers?

The VC appointed those who knew how to read and write and who could teach; their age did not matter.

150. Did the grown-up people of the village attend those schools?

No, they did not. Only the kids did.

151. What did they teach in school?

They taught primary classes.

152. How is their dispensary? How much does it cost to be hospitalized?

They only take care of the troops, the people have to take care of themselves. There is no medicine for them.

153. When you were still at [redacted], what did you learn about the present Saigon Government?

I don't know the name of the present Government. After Mr. Ngo, I don't remember the name of the others. (Paused)

Why were there so many Governments at that time? One government is formed today, to-morrow it's down and another one is formed, I cannot tell one from another.

154. Do you think the Nationalist Government is strong or weak?

Actually, I think the Nationalist Government is very strong. That's why the farmers used to say that the VC can only hit and hide themselves; therefore, they will not do anything to the Government forces.

155. Do you think the Government loves its people or not?

The Nationalist Government has always loved its people. It's not like these people (VC). What will happen later, I don't know.

156. Do you think that the Nationalist Government is just or corrupt?

Later, I don't know, but, right now, I think the Government is just.

157. Do you think the Nationalist Government is clearsighted or blind?

Over there, we saw nothing but suffering. Compared with the VC, the Government is so clearsighted. Out there, we saw nothing but difficulties. For example, they had already asked the farmers to plant 1500 sets of sweet potato plants in each hectare, but, later, they asked each family to plant 50 additional sets of plants, saying it was the instruction of Uncle Ho. They said that, but, later, the farmers didn't comply with these instructions.

158. Do you think the Government already works for the people or not?

I have seen that, so far, the Government always works for its people.

159. Why do you think that the Nationalist Government is strong, loves its people, is just, clearsighted, and entirely devoted to its people? Didn't you use other qualifiers in the past?

I think that nobody likes to suffer and, in this war, the people on the other side only make us suffer more and more, whereas those on the Government side always try to assist us.

160. When you were still in your village, how did you get news on events happening in Saigon?

It was impossible to get news.

161. Did the Front forbid its people to use certain sources of information?

We were not allowed to listen to the Government radio or read newspapers and propaganda materials.

162. Have you ever heard anything different from what the Front told you?

As I said yesterday, they spread rumors that, out here, one sweet potato costs five piasters, one cup of rice fifteen piasters. Water, fire wood, etc., everything had to be purchased. But the truth is quite different.

My son-in-law, who returned to the Chieu Hoi earlier, wrote back. He sent the letter to his father, but had Mr. [redacted], a man from

our village, who came here to have his radio set fixed, etc., hand carry it. This man, for fear of being caught, gave it to a lady, who came here to visit her son. She kept it glued to her skin under her clothes, but, even so, it was discovered by a woman cadre. Mr. [redacted] informed my son-in-law's father who then went to see this woman cadre to beg her to let him read the letter. When she showed it to him, he took it and left for good.

163. When you were living in the village, did you receive any letters?

No.

164. How did they handle the mail to and from the village?

After the village was taken by the VC, there was no mail.

165. Between the Front and the Government, which side gives the most accurate information?

Because we were not allowed to listen to the Government radio, the only source of information was the propaganda leaflets. The people from the other side had told us so many lies that we couldn't believe them any more.

166. Have you ever watched or listened to variety shows, such as the Cai Luong (stage play) or the Vong Co (songs)?

Never. The Saigon radio was prohibited. The VC had set up variety shows, but the majority of spectators were kids and very few adults watched them.

167. What were they about?

In general, about the war between the Front and the Government, but I don't know much about it.

168. Who were the performers?

The Front's group of actors.

169. How often did they perform?

About every three months.

170. Were the actors from your village or were they from somewhere else?

They travelled around for some time and then returned to the village for a performance. There were also several women from the village who took part in the show.

171. Did they perform daily or nightly?

They performed nightly using gas lamps, from 6 PM to 12 PM.

172. Had the performances ever been interrupted?

Very freqently, all the lights were turned off when they heard the airplanes coming.

173. When this occurred, did the farmers say anything?

After the airplanes had flown away, the interrupted performance was resumed, and the farmers just laughed and didn't say anything.

174. Suppose you were allowed to submit three requests to any Nationalist Government, which requests would you submit?

If possible, I would like to get first, a certain amount of money; second, rice; and third, clothes to keep me warm.

175. How long do you think the war will last?

They (VC) said that, at the end of the eighth month of the lunar calendar, the war will end and there will be peace. But I think that it will be many more than eighth months before this war can end.

176. Which side do you think is winning the war now?

It must be the Government. They (VC) cannot do anything to change this.

177. Why do you think that?

I think that because I don't know what kind of war they are fighting, hiding themselves and shooting at people from behind, while this side has airplanes of all kinds. Besides, the farmers are tired of all this and they will quit. And after they are gone, who will take care of food supplies for them (VC)? Without the population, they are already defeated.

178. According to you, which side do the other refugees think will win?

They must have a strong belief in the Government to return here. If they didn't believe in it, they would still be there. (Paused) Since the second month of the last lunar calendar, they (VC) started to tell the population to be confident, because, around the eighth month, they would be happy. In this, the population wanted to believe, but, then, the days went by one after another and nothing happened. Instead, they became more and more unhappy and angry with the VC.

179. What were your reasons for fleeing the VC?

To tell you the truth, it was mainly because I couldn't endure any more of that impossible life with them (VC). Today, we have to rush to the mountains; tomorrow, to the mountains again. One cannot work in peace. If the VC didn't force them to stay, all the people would have come out here.

180. Did the fact that you knew who would win this war have any influence on your decision to take refuge here?

It was not because we saw that this side was winning the war that I or the other farmers decided to come out here. It was because we had been fully assisted by the Government and then we had to feed them (the VC). Besides, having to kill ourselves at work just to feed the VC was nonsense. And with so many shells and bombs dropped on the area, the population couldn't stay any longer.

181. This is the picture of a ladder. The last step is marked No. 10 and the first No. 1. For example, the highest step (No. 1) represents the best living conditions that you can imagine and the last step (No. 10) represents the most miserable living conditions. At what step of this ladder do you think life was in your village before the Front came and took it over?

At the highest step, No. 1.

182. After the Front took control of the village, at what step do you think life was?

The seventh step.

183. When you left the village, your life was at what step?

The tenth step.

184. And now at what step do you think your life is?

The seventh step.

185. And what step do you think your life will be in five more years?

In five years, who knows? I only hope that it reaches step No. 5. That's good enough, but is this possible?

186. How miserable was life in your village?

Before they (VC) took over, there was plenty of food, decent clothes, etc. After they took over, there was no salt, no food; we had nothing to eat but rice, only torn clothes, and no material to make new clothes. Salt was not available, even at 30 piasters a quart. It took a lot of questioning and flattering to find out who sold it, in order to buy it at any price.

187. What would the happiest living conditions be for you?

Having enough to eat and decent and clean clothes to wear. But could this ever come true?

188. When still at [redacted], what did you learn about life in North Vietnam?

It was told that life was very good there, that the country had become independent and that the North Vietnamese Government was now sending troops to the South to liberate this country, in order to bring happiness here as it had in the North.

189. What did the population say when they heard this type of propaganda?

They said that a province like Quang Nam had not yet been liberated. How could we believe that all of South Vietnam had been liberated, except for this little place? Others said, "The North has been bombed, all the buildings have been destroyed and they (VC) dare to say that life is happy there?" The reply was, "All the airplanes are shot down before they can get close enough to drop their bombs." The population couldn't believe in this and said that they (the VC) were big liars.

190. Did you personally hear of air raids over North Vietnam?

I was told that the North was bombed, and all the buildings destroyed. That's what I heard.

191. Who told you?

I heard the others discuss it with the VC, but I didn't know whether they learned it secretly through the radio or through other sources. (Paused)

The Phu Yen case, for example; I don't know how they knew about it, but the rumor spread all around that the jungle and mountains were bombed, burned, and leveled.

192. What do you and the others think of these air raids?

The North was so powerful, but, even so, it was bombed and seriously damaged. What can the VC in the South do against this, hiding themselves as they are doing here? Besides, the population heard that Phu Yen was all jungles and hills and, still, it was burned and leveled. They were very scared when learning of this.

193. When did you hear that Phu Yen was raided?

Last year, but I cannot remember what month.

194. Have you ever heard of the Chieu hoi program?

I have, sir.

195. Who told you?

The airplanes urged us to return.

196. How many times did you hear this?

Many times. This year I heard it very often. When propaganda flyers were dropped, we were not allowed to read them.

197. Did you pick up any?

I did. I picked up six, but they (VC) tore them up. Those of Mr. Nguyen Huu Te gave us joy. Everyone wanted to return, but it was impossible because the VC watched us very closely.

198. How many times did the Goverment forces enter [redacted]

Twice this year, and once last year in August; that makes three times.

199. Has your village ever been attacked by allied forces?

Last year, in August, by a section of Government forces, accompanied by several Americans. This year, because we were taken to the mountains, we did not know.

200. Did they attack [redacted] or did they just launch an operation up to the [redacted] city limits?

There had never been any clashes. The last time, there were a few Government soldiers who were washing themselves in the river when they were fired at from the hills by VC snipers. But no harm was done. The first time they came last year, I was so afraid that I hid myself under the floor, while all the men and boys ran away. There was a lady who tried to hide herself under the floor, but she was discovered and she came and asked me to go and serve bananas to these soldiers. (Hesitant) I had three chicken then(smiled) they were eaten by the soldiers, but that was all right.

201. What was the attitude of the Americans then?

They just smiled or sat there and didn't say anything to the villagers.

202. Have you ever been attacked by the Montagnard soldiers?

I don't know about these last two times, but the first time there were only our troops and no Montagnard troops. (Paused)

These last two times, at the beginning, the villagers said that if our troops came, it would only be the Popular forces and that there was nothing to be afraid of. Then, the VC replied, as I told you the other day, that there were also Australian and European soldiers, or something like that. That they would steal everything, and as many as 5 or seven of them would rape one girl, etc. The villagers were scared and followed the VC to the hills.

203. What did the Front say about the Americans?

They rarely do propaganda talking with the villagers, but used to talk among themselves, between cadres. But they did say this, "Fighting against our own people is so difficult, it's too pitiful, but fighting against the Americans, it's no problem. They have large backs, it's easier for us to shoot at them."

204. When you fled away, what personal belongings did you take with you?

When we rushed to the hills, we took some clothes and money to spend. When we returned to the village, we still had not decided to come out here. One night my son came back from a meeting he attended and said that we were going to have big troubles, and that we must flee away because the VC said they would send him to the volunteer labor force for three months. He cried so much that my wife and I had to take him to the sampan to flee away, bringing along with us one trunk, the clothes we were wearing, and the book of prayers that I always carry with me.

205. Was the fact that your son was afraid of beeing taken to the Labor force you main reason for escaping?

Yes, that was the main reason.

206. What did you leave behind at the village?

Only a pile of wheat, everything else had been burned.

207. In short, you managed to take along only one trunk?

Well, we were escaping, and we didn't even dare sneeze; how could we bring anything else with us? There was a kettle with rice in it, but my wife fell into the communications channel and lost it.

I had just enough time to pull her out, go to the sampan and flee away.

208. When you left your village did you think that you would be gone for a short or long period of time?

I thought only of leaving forever. Later, when peace has returned, maybe the Government will allow us to settle at a place where the soil is good for agricultural work, because the actual settlement area is worthless, nothing but stones.

209. Do you know how many families have left the village?

Since last year, there have been various groups and I think about 1/3 of the families have left, but how many exactly, I don't know.

210. Why did the other 2/3 stay there?

Because the VC had set up a very tight control system in the hamlets, so tight that it was impossible to escape. I know that everyone wanted to leave, but it was not possible. They were watched so closely.

211. If you returned to your village today, what would happen to you?

Well, I know I will be sent to the re-education center.

212. What have the local authorities done to help you?

Nothing yet, sir. The other day, a certain quantity of rice was received, but the local representative said that that my name was not on the list. But I don't know why my name was not on the list, so, today, I went to see the "Father" (priest), who wrote a letter to the representative. I am living here, but the village chief said I was just staying here for a short time because I was sent over by the village board. I will only be considered a member of this village when I have an introduction from the chief of sector. I still don't know why.

213. How many people are making extra money by doing part-time jobs here?

A number of people are making firewood and others are sawing wood.

214. How much money do they make a day?

Those who know how to saw are making 150 VN$ a day. Those who work at the firewood factory are getting 100 VN$ for half a day. There is another group cutting grass for the inhabitants here; they are getting 80 VN$ a day for a man and 60 VN$ a day for a woman.

215. How many refugees are there in this camp?

This is a "Chieu noi" camp for returnees; there are 27 families of Communist refugees settling here.

216. Do you feel safe here and unworried about being attacked?

At the "Chieu noi" center, I was advised to stay there where it was safer for me, but my daughter my son-in-law, who were up here, urged me to join them here. On the last election day, there were many VC flags around here.

217. Have you noticed the presence of foreigners in this camp yet?

Not yet.

218. Which side actually is winning the support of the population and which side is loosing it?

They support this side much more.

219. Why?

Well, noticing that the other side (VC) is getting deeper and deeper in trouble, they naturally support the Government side.

220. If the Front won this war, what do you think life would be like here in Vietnam?

They used to say that after the Communist victory, those who had gone to the Government side would not be punished, because they did so under threat. Whereas those who had diligently served the Government, or those who were holding high positions in this Government, would have to flee to the United States to live.

221. People like me, for example?

(Smiled), yes, sir.

222. If the Government won the war, what would life be like in Vietnam?

I think that, right now, on the Government side, people are happy. This is obvious. But I am afraid that, after victory, the situation will become what it was before, which would not be any better. And saying that life would be better if the VC won the war, because they would not levy taxes, etc., is hard to believe because, today, they are not even able to make bombs and munitions for themselves, and must get their supplies from outside. Later, if they won the war, it would be normal for them to flatter those powers that had assisted them during the war, which would not be good either.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

The subject was old, but well preserved. He wasn't at ease, but he was able and willing to answer all questions asked him. Because of his age, he looked tired as the interview went on.

After the interview was over, he added the following, "Now that you have come from Saigon and have helped me so much, I am very grateful. I only hope that the Government will assist my family according to the three wishes you asked me to make. You have helped me so much already. I am a little scared."

No. AGR - 72

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

1. Name of Interviewer: [redacted]
2. Name of Subject : [redacted]
3. Time and Date of Interview:

   From 10:10 AM to 12:00 AM on October [redacted] 1966
   From 2:10 PM to 5:45 PM on October [redacted] 1966
   From 8:30 AM to 11:45 AM on October [redacted] 1966
   From 2:15 PM to 5:00 PM on October [redacted] 1966
   From 9:30 AM to 12:30 AM October [redacted] 1966
   Total time: 14 hours 25 minutes

   Interview based on: tape ( ) hand written notes (X)
4. Place of Interview: Banmethuot
5. Sex of subject: Male (X) Female ( )
6. Age of subject: 70
7. Ethnic background: Vietnamese
8. Place of birth:
   hamlet [redacted]
   village [redacted]
   district Thanh Binh
   province Quang Nam
9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee:
   hamlet
   village [redacted] (Land Development Center)
   district
   province Darlac
10. (a) Length of residence in last location: Ten years
    (b) Who controlled the place of residence:
    GVN ( ) VC (X) Contested ( )
    (c) Since when controlled or contested? April 1965

11. Number of brothers ( ) and sisters ( )

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age: _____

13. Marital status: Married

14. Number of children: Six (3 sons, 3 daughters)

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age: ~~Six~~ 3

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
    Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
    Brothers with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
    Wife with subject (X) or not with subject ( )
    Children with subject (2) or not with subject (4)

17. Religion: Catholic

18. Occupation prio[illegible] taking refuge: Farmer

19. Economic status:
    (a) VC designation _____
    (b) Landowner? _____ How much land Two hectares given by Ngo Dinh Diem's Government

20. Education:
    Illiterate (X)
    Literate ( )
    Schooling completed: _____

21. Any relatives in VC: None

22. Any relatives in GVN: None

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by:
    (a) French
    (b) GVN
    (c) VC

24. When became a refugee: One month ago (Beginning September

25. Where took refuge first: Refugees' Center near the Broadc[illegible] ~~Station in Bamethuot~~

26. Parent residence: _____

AGR

INTERVIEW

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1. How long had you and your family lived in [redacted] land [redacted] development center before you took refuge?

   [redacted] about 11 months.

2. How big was the [redacted] land [redacted] development center?

   The [redacted] land development center had [redacted] hamlets, numbered from hamlet [redacted] to hamlet [redacted].

3. How many families lived in each hamlet?

   There were about 30 or 40 families in each hamlet.

4. How did you earn your living?

   I farmed the land which I had rent from others.

5. What did your husband do?

   Two days after I had given birth to my son, my [redacted] husband died of plague.

   I want to live with my aunt.

6. What did most of the people in the land development center do to earn their living?

   Some joined the Main Force, some joined the guerrillas,

7. Did they join after the VC took over the land development center?

   Yes, after the VC took over.

8. How many people joined the Main Force? How many joined the guerrilla?

   I only know that there were 3 people in my hamlet [redacted] who have joined the guerrillas. They were forced to join and so they had to comply.

9. Were they forced to join? Were there any volunteers?

   Yes. After the VC took over the land development center, they have forced people to join their army, no one could continue to earn his living. Furthermore, when the people wanted to plant rice, they had to do it at night because at day time there was strafing and bombing from the airplanes. It was very frightening.

10. Before the VC took over the land development center, what did most of the people there do to earn their living?

    Before, some people planted rice, others grew potato. But the VC

[redacted] often came at night time. As time passed, [redacted] more of them came and they often came at night. Then they forced [redacted] people to join their forces and guerrilla, or do this or that for them in the village.

11. Before the VC took over, were most of the people in the land development center well-off or poor?

They were well-off not poor, had tin roofs houses and enough rice and paddy. They raised pigs and chicken and could sell them for benefits. It isn't like the present time (paused) About 8AM on February [redacted] last year, the VC attacked [redacted] post, killing Corporal [redacted] and a Montagnard soldier. At about noon on the [redacted] all the Nationalist soldiers withdrew. At night on the [redacted], the VC [redacted] came and set fire to the post and took over the land development center. The people were too frightened and hide in their houses. The VC came and called to the people to come out and help them do this and that such as setting fire to the post, destroying the strategic hamlet etc... But the people were afraid, they didn't know if the VC would stay there long, or they would leave soon and the Nationalists [redacted] would return and they would be accused of working for the VC. And so, no one dared come out and do anything for the VC, they all hid in their homes. The VC set fire to the post and the [redacted] strategic hamlet. Later, the Nationalist soldiers conducted their operation and set fire to all [redacted] the houses. The fire lighted the whole area.

12. When did the Nationalist force conducted its operation?

The Nationalist troops conducted their operation three or four times, but they never met up with the VC. The VC deployed their [redacted] forces in one [redacted] place, and the Nationalist troops conducted their operations in another place. The Fulro troops came in three or four times also, but was [redacted] ambushed only once by the VC. It [redacted] still [redacted] scares me everytime I remember the Fulro troops. Everytime they came in, they destroyed [redacted] all and set fire to everything. They stabbed everyone--men, women, old and young, and killed pigs and cows to eat or cut them in pieces and took the meat away. Jars, boilers, containers were all smashed.

The first time they came, they gathered all the people to the outside of hamlet [redacted] then set fire to all the hamlets, from hamlet [redacted] And everything was burned down. At night, those who were still alive returned to their homes. There was a pregnant women who was about to give birth to her child, and she was hiding with her mother three children [redacted] between 5 and 7 years old in the trench. The Fulro troops made her come up and told her to move. As it hurt her to walk fast, they kicked her so that she fell down and then they shot them all--the mother and her children. There was an old man whom they [redacted] stabbed many times after they had tied his hands behind his back and taken him to a Montagnard Buon. Each time the Fulro troops came, [redacted] people [redacted] stabbed at their necks and all over their bodies.

13. The VC had taken over that place, why didn't they protect the people?

Because the VC didn't stay in the land development center during daytime. They only came at night. As for the Fulro troops, they only came at daytime. And so how could the VC protect the people? Except for the last time, when the Fulro troops were ambushed by the VC and some of them got killed. Many Fulro troops got killed. After a few hours of fighting, the Fulro troops withdrew, and they haven't been seen since.

14. Did the Fulro troops rape the women?

They set fire, stole and killed people, but I didn't see them [redacted] rape any woman. I don't know if such [redacted] incident happened or not, but I didn't hear anyone mention it.

15. Did the Nationalist troops cause damage to the people in their operations?

The Nationalists came a few times, but they didn't destroy or burn down anything. This was because the VC set up their ambush in one place and the Nationalist troops conducted their operations somewhere else, and so when the Nationalist troops withdrew, the VC retreated also.

16. Why didn't you and the other people leave the land development center and take refuge?

We wanted to move out very much, but we couldn't because the guerrillas stopped us from leaving. Also, we lived too far away, the trip would be arduous, and we had no money. I had raised one pig and seven chicken, but the Fulro troops killed them all for meat, and if so I had nothing left. One woman raised a sow and it was about to give birth to the piggies when the Fulro troops killed it, and then four of them, each using their bayonet cut off four legs of the sow, put them in their sacks and left.

17. How did you escape from the guerrillas and come out here? Please describe your escape?

That night I went to sleep for a while and when I woke up, it was 10PM. I cooked some food, ate it and then walked to the main road and arrived at km52 at about 1AM. I sat down holding my baby and waited until daylight. I took a public vehicle and went to the Chieu Hoi Center in Ban Me Thuat. I told the driver about my miserable situation, but he insisted that I paid him 60 piasters. It cost only 25 piasters during peace time.

18. How much money did you have then that you had to pay 60 piasters to the driver?

I had only 100 piasters, not one cent more. When I first arrived from Quang Nam, I worked at the coffee plantation and later lent my aunt 1200 piasters. That day she got the permission from the VC to sell her cow for 1000 piasters. I lied to her by telling her that I had to bring my baby to Ban Me Thuat to see a doctor and asked her to pay me back a few hundreds piasters. But she gave me only one hundred. Even so, I decided to move out of the village.

19. What religion do you practice?

I practice no religion at all.

20. What religions did other people in your land development center practice?

Two thirds of them were Catholics, and one third was Buddhists. The church was blown up by the bomb and the pagoda burned down by the Fulro troops before the church was bombed, the Fulro troops had cleaned up 4 of all possessions.

21. Were there any conflicts between people of different religious affiliations.

There was no conflicts at all.

22. What was your education?

My family was poor and I had to work as hired laborer since I was young, and so I am illiterate.

23. Was there a sx school in the land development center?

The Nationalists built three xxxxxx thatched roofs schools in Hamlets [redacted] and when the VC took over, they built a small thatched roof school xx also. But they were all burned down by the Fulro troops. They even stabbed to death x the dull teacher.

24. Did all the children in the land development center go to school?

Yes, they all went to school. The small ones studied the " I, T" (Translator's note the alphabet)

25. How was the educational level of the people xx in the land development center?

Many people knew how to read and write, but the majority of them were illiterate.

26. When did you come here from Quang Nam?

I left Quang Nam three years ago. The first two years, I worked in the coffee plantation. I xxx lived in [redacted] for almost a year xxx.

27. When did you get married?

My husband asked for my hand when I was only 10 years old, but we got married when I was 17.

28. What did your husband do?

When he came here, he worked in the same plantation with me. After he xx received his share of land x in the land development center, he moved there to farm and a few months later died of this plague. That year, many people died of the plague. They xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx got sick in the morning and died in the afternoon.

29. Did the Front organise meetings in the land development center?

Yes, but few people xxxxxx attended these meetings.

30. How often did they organise meetings?

Every few weeks they would hold a meeting, but few people attended these meetings because they were too tired after working.

31. Did they hold meetings at daytime or at night?

At night, otherwise no one would dare attend these meetings.

32. What did the Front cadres say during these meetings?

I don't know because I had to take care of my baby and couldn't attend these meetings. They insisted that I joined "the Women", but I refused with the excuse that my husband was dead and my child was too young. Also, I was illiterate. I told them " If you insist, then you take care of my baby, and I will go and attend the meetings." Thanks to that, they left me alone.

33. Did the Front take people to other places for re-education?

Yes, but I don't know where they took these people to.

34. Who were taken away?

Those who refused to do corvee labors were taken away for re-education. Those who liked to discuss politics were taken away also.

35. How long were these people kept away for re-education?

Those who committed less serious crimes were kept away for two or three weeks those with more serious crimes for two or three months, and those with the most serious crimes for six or seven months.

36. What did the people think about this re-education business?

The people wondered if there was anyway to move away so they could continue to earn their living, because they didn't know how long they would live if they continued to remain in that place. People couldn't talk freely even in their homes for fear of being arrested.

37. What did the Front cadres say about this re-education business?

They held meetings with the people and say this and that, but I was busy with my baby and so I don't know what they said.

38. What did the guerrillas do in the land development center?

At daytime, they farmed, and at night, they stood guard carrying their weapons, walking back and forth. When the Nationalists conducted their operations, the most these guerrillas could do was to fire one shot and then ran into hiding. They were scared to death themselves.

39. Did the Front confiscate the land from one person and distribute it to the next?

The people farmed their own land. There was plenty of an unfarmed land which belonged to people who have moved out here.

40. What was your family's economic classification by the Front?

I don't know.

41. When the Front first took over your land development center, what kind of taxes did the people have to pay to the Front?

They had to pay tax when they killed a cow or a pig.

42. How much did they have to pay for a cow or a pig?

It depends. If the cow or the pig weighted 30 kg, then they had to pay 30 piasters for tax. The cost for one kg of pork or beef was 50 piasters.

43. Did they collect agriculture tax?

Yes. Take for example if you produced 100 thung of paddy, they would tell you to contribute 50 thung. If you had plenty of children to feed then they would ask you to contribute 20 thung and paid 5 piasters for one thung for the other 30 thung.

44. Who collected the taxes?

The cadres. I don't know which one was which.

45. Did they increase the taxes afterwards?

No.

46. What did the Front cadres say about these taxes?

They collected them and that was all. They didn't say anything. When they arrived, the people weighted the meat & and then gave them the money.

47. What did the people in the land development center say?

Those who could make the payments, did so. Those who were too poor asked for

exemptions and usually they were exempted from paying taxes.

48. What do you think about these taxes?

I stayed with my aunt and took care of my baby all day long. I didn't pay attention to what they were doing. Only those who had attended meetings could tell you what had happened.

49. Were the Front taxes lower or higher than the Nationalist taxes when you left the land development center?

The Nationalist taxes were higher. Before, the Nationalists taxed one piaster and a half piaster for each kg of pork. I don't know how much they taxed rice and paddy.

50. What would happen to a person in the land development center if he refused to pay taxes?

If a poor person killed a pig, he could ask for exemption from the Front cadres and obtain tax. But if he killed the second pig, he would have to pay tax as usual. Those who refused to pay tax would have to attend re-education course. But in this case the re-education lasted only for half a day or for one day.

51. Where did the people sell their produce?

There was no market in the land development center. The people displayed their produce in front of their homes and sold them there. If they couldn't sell them then they would carry them from one hamlet to the next for sale.

52. Were the people in the land development center permitted to go to the market in the areas controlled by the Nationalists?

A few tradesmen who had money received permission to go to NhaTrang to buy goods and brought them back for resale to the people. Besides these people, no one else was permitted to leave the center.

53. Is it closer from [illegible] Ban Me Thuat or Nha Trang to the land development center?

It is closer to go to Ban Me Thuat than to go to Nha Trang.

54. Why didn't the tradesmen go to Ban Me That instead of to Nha Trang?

Six or seven women had gone to Ban Me Thuat and had been detained there by the

Nationalists. They haven't been released yet. Some of them had two or three small children at home with no one to look after them.

55. Was there enough food or other produce in the land development center?

How could there was enough of x them? They stopped buses coming from Saigon or NhaTrang and confiscated sauce and salt so they could sell them to the people. They sold one jar of sauce about 20 kg for 800 piasters and 1kg of salt for 45 piasters. Sometimes we went without salt for an entire week.

56. Did the Front establish any organizations in the land development center?

They established administrative organizations, organized education courses and held meetings, but since I didn't attend any of their organizations, I don't know what they did. Once an entertainment group came and put up some show then they dissapeared.

57. Were they lowlanders or Montagnards?

They were Montagnards. They sang in their dialect, and so I didn't understand what they were singing about.

58. Were there any Montagnards in [redacted]?

Of course there had been Montagnards in [redacted]. But they have moved out of their Buon.

59. When did they move out? Why did they move out?

They moved out about two or three months after the VC took over the center. A while later they returned and the VC put them through a re-education course which lasted for a few months. They stayed for a while and then moved away again

60. How many Buon were there in the center?

One only.

61. How many Montagnards were in that Buon?

There were quite a few of them, but I don't know their exact number.

62. Had they moved out when the entertainment group came?

They were still there.

63. Was the entertainment group composed entirely of communist Montagnards?

Yes, that entertainment group was composed entirely of communist Montagnards. There were many good looking girls in that group, but I don't know where they came from. I know they didn't come from the Buon in the center.

64. Were the Montagnards still in the center when the Fulro troops arrived?

When the Fulro troops arrived, they had already left.

65. Were there women cadres in the land development center?

There were VC female cadres who came to the center to give instructions to any woman who wanted to join the VC. They left alone those who didn't want to join them. Some single women joined them.

66. What were their functions?

I saw them carrying their purses going to and fro, but I don't know what they did.

67. Did they carry weapons?

They didn't carry any weapon.

68. How did they treat the people?

They used sweet talk to entice the women to join them. They tried to entice me too, but I told them that I had a very young baby and I couldn't go anywhere. They insisted for a while and then accused me of going against their policies.

69. Was there a Party Chapter in the land development center?

I don't know. Had I joined the "Women" I probably would have known about it.

70. Did the people like the Front cadres?

They came to the people's homes and asked the people to cook rice for them so they could eat. The people complained that they had contributed paddy, and now they still had to cook rice for them. Many people refused to cook rice for them and so they left. Those of them who carried their rice along, would do their cooking themselves in the people's homes.

71. Did the cadres do anything to help the people?

When they arrived, all they did was pushing the people to do weeding

and farm and to increase production. I didn't see them help the people in anything

72. Did the Front ever transfer the coolies back and forth?

Every day two or three or six five people came and asked people to cook rice for them so they could have something to eat. One group left and another group came, we wouldn't keep track of them.

73. Did the Front ever arrest, punish or kill anyone in the land development ~~xxx~~ center?

No.

74. Did the Front arrest, punish or kill anyone in the land development center who had worked for the Nationalists?

They sent these people away for re-education. They sent the policemen, the finance people away for six months for re-education. These people have been released.

75. What did the people who were forced to do corvee labors do?

These people had to carry things for the Front troops to some place where the Front troops would conduct their attacks. They ~~x~~ returned in a few days later.

76. What did the people say about doing corvee labors?

When they were forced to go, they went, what could they do?

77. Did they complained about having to do corvee labors?

Once some of them went on a rice transportation mission and one of them got killed when he stepped on some mine planted by the Nationalists. From then on, no one dared go again.

78. When did that incident happen?

Last ~~x~~ February ~~xxxx~~ according to the Lunar Calendar. (March)

79. Is it true that from then on, no one dared go on a transportation mission ~~xx~~ for the Front?

Yes, from then on no one dared go ~~xx~~ on a transportation mission

for the Front anymore. When the Front could no longer force the people to do what they wanted, they used the Montagnards instead.

0. Did the Front ~~xxxxxxx~~ build a combat hamlet in the center?

As I told you before, I only saw the cadres carrying a bag back and forth. I didn't see any forces at all. But at night they came in in great ~~xxxxxxx~~ quantities. And so, I ~~xxxx~~ didn't see them build any combat ~~xxxxxx~~ hamlet at all. But if something happened, they appeared from nowhere in great strength which ~~xxxxxxx~~ really frightened you.

1. How did the Front control the going in and out of the people?

They had guards posted at all the entrances and exits. Some people could ~~xxx~~ get to the outside, but the Front ~~xxx~~ people caught up with them ~~xxxx~~ in the end and they were sent away for re-education.

2. How long did these people had to attend the re-education?

People who were caught this way were sent away for re-education for a few weeks. Generally speaking, the Front ~~xxxxx~~ cadres told these people that there was no rice to eat and no land to farm at the Chieu Hoi Center. (Interviewer's note: the subject was living in a camp ~~which~~ for ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ ralliers and refugees.)

3. How did the Front force the people who have moved out of the ~~xxxxxx~~ land development center to come back?

How could they? The people couldn't live in the center they had ~~xx~~ to move to the areas controlled by the Nationalists to live. ~~why~~ What should they go back for?

4. In your opinion, why did the Front want to control the going in and our of

of the people?

They kept the people in the center so that they could depend on the people for food and rice, otherwise how could they remain alive? But life with the VC was extremely miserable. I had to listen to the explosions from bombs and bullets so often that I have become deaf now. I was hiding in the trench and yet I was so frightened I couldn't speak. The bombs devastated the land. Now the people didn't believe in the Front cadres anymore when they came to talk to the people. They told the people" If we can live here, so can you." And we replied that" It is too frightening to live with you. How can we stand bombs and bullets all day long?"

35. Have you ever met the Front cadres or troops who weren't Southerners?

I have met people from Quang Nam, from the North, but most of the Front people I met were Montagnards.

36. Were there any conflicts between them?

I found they treat each other as if they were blood brothers. If one of them got sick or was wounded, then the others looked after him.

37. What I wanted to ask you is whether there were any conflicts between the Montagnards and the Northerners?

No, they treated each other as if they were brothers. They came from all over:Binh Dinh, Quang Nam, Quang Tri, Quang Binh. There were many Northerners troops also.

38. How did you know where they came from?

I know where they came from because they came to the house and asked us to cook rice for them so they could have something to eat. And we asked them where they came from

and they told us.

9. Have you ever heard of the defeats of the Front units?

The Front cadres all had radio sets, and all they talked about was their victories. They never mentioned defeats. They told us how many Nationalist companies were killed in this or that battle. In the Khanh Duong battle for example, they said they had captured 26 automatic rifles and cannons. We couldn't make heads or tails out of their talks. All they talked about was their victories.

90. Was there a hospital or a doctor in [redacted]?

No.

91. What did the people do when they got sick?

If the people got sick they could buy medicine from the tradesmen for drinking or for injection.

93. Who gave them the injections?

The VC Montagnard nurse. He told the people that he had been with the VC for 7 or 8 years. Besides that, every few weeks a VC doctor emerged from the wood to give consultations to the people. Each time he came, he was [redacted] by a squad of troops. Whenever many people got sick, they would send word to him and he would come out and [redacted] saw them.

93. How did the people send word to him?

They sent word to him through the inspectors or their liaison agents.

94. After the people had sent word to him, how long did it take him to come out?

If he was then working at the hospital, it would take him about two or three days to get to the land development center. If he was somewhere much further away, then he would arrive three or four days after the people had sent word to him.

95. Was he a good doctor?

He made out the prescriptions and the sick people would ask the tradesmen to go and buy the medicine for them. It cost 5 or 6 piasters for one quinine tablet, 15 for one [redacted] cortal tablet, and a quinine bottle cost 80 piasters.

97. How many people died of plague?

Quite a few, over twenty people.

98. Did any VC die of the plague?

I didn't see any VC die of the plague.

99. Did any VC die of malaria?

They all had medicine, especially those who came from the North. Everyone of them carried mountain fever and malaria medicine.etc...

100. When you were in the land development center, how did you know about what happened in Saigon?

Newspapers couldn't be sneaked in because if the Front cadres found out, they would burn them and send the guilty person away for re-education. Many people who owned radio sets and they listened in secret to the Saigon station, but they didn't dare turn the volume loud. I found that the people out here look bright and happy. They aren't like the people in the center who looked sad and dejected.

101. Did the owners of radio sets who listened in secret to the Saigon station, tell you what they had heard?

They listened to the radio alone, and didn't dare mention what they had heard to anyone. They listened in secret to Cai Luong and Vong Co programs on Saturdays and Sundays. The troops and/the low level cadres listened in secret to the forbidden station just like the people, and when they saw someone coming, they turned off/their radios for fear of being reported to the higher echelon cadres.

102. What did you hear about life in the North?

I didn't hear anything about it.

103. What did you hear about life in Red China?

I didn't hear anything about it.

104. Have you heard of the Chieu Hoi program?

Yes. The airplanes dropped leaflets on the mountainous areas, not on the center. If anyone happened to pick them up, the Front cadres wouldn't permit him to read them. And they cursed, saying " We will never return" when they heard broadcasts from airplanes calling to the VC to return to the National [illegible] with their

weapons.

105. Did the allied troops ever attack the land development center?

Never, the attacks were conducted by the Fulro and Nationalist troops as I told you before.

106. Did you see or heard about the use of chemical sprays to destroy crops and trees?

Before I came out here I had heard other people say that the Nationalists sprayed some kind of whitish poison on the mountain areas and all the crops and trees were killed as the result. I was so frightened when I heard about it. I thought to myself that if the poison fell on the well, and anyone who drank the water from the well would probably die. And so the next day I came out here.

107. Did you take refuge because of the fear of poison?

For I came out here partly because of the fear of poison, partly because of hunger and miseries. When I left the center I was so afraid the VC would capture me. I didn't dare cough.

108. Who told you about the spraying of chemical sprays?

The guerrillas told me about it.

109. Did you hear about the reasons why the spraying of chemical was being carried out?

I didn't hear about the reasons for the spraying. I only heard that this side (the Nationalist side) sprayed poison, and that was all.

110. Were you told who did the spraying?

They said the Nationalists did it, who else?

111. Did you hear about the effects of the spraying on crops?

When I left the rice plants were still green. They hadn't been burned. But according to what I heard, the Nationalists sprayed poison which burned all the rice plants. (paused) I heard people who came out after me say that just recently, the Nationalists conducted their operation in the area, and they were accompanied by over one hundred vehicles and airplanes. It was a huge operations and many people got killed because of bombs and bullets.

112. Many people got killed. What about the VC? Did you hear how many people/and how many VC got killed?

I only heard that the Nationalists came in in great strength, and that many people got killed. But I don't know how many got killed. I didn't hear anything about the VC.

113. What did the Front do to protect the people and its troops from the chemical sprays?

I didn't hear about it.

114. Did you hear about the effects of the chemical sprays on the Front organisations and units?

I didn't hear anything about it. I only heard/that/once/there was spraying of some whitish poison.

115. What effects did the chemical sprays have on the people's health?

I didn't hear about it. As soon as I heards about the spraying of poison, I came out here immediately, and so I did don't know what happened afterwards.

116. Before you came out here, did you see the Americans?

Of course. Each time the Nationalists conducted their operations in my area, they were accompanied by 6 or 7 Americans. Each time the Fulro troops came in, they were also accompanied by 6 or 7 Americans. Each time the Fulro troops came in, they set fire to all the people's homes.

117. When the Fulro troops set fire to the people's homes, were they accompanied by the Americans?

Of course.

118. When you say the Fulro troops, do you mean the Montagnard troops?

Yes, I mean the Montagnard soldiers wearing camouflaged suits.

119./When the Fulro troops stabbed the people? Were the Americans there

Of course. They were there every time.

120. What did you think about these/Americans?

I was only worried about getting away from the place because the fire was too hot. When the people were herded to Hamlet [redacted] I had given birth to my baby only six days before, I couldn't walk. But when the Fulro troops used the bayonnets to push me I was too frightened and I had to move. Then they started to set fire to hamlet [redacted] and the rest. Everything was burned down.

(interviewer's note: this interviewee and other people identified the Montagnard Special Forces as the Fulro troops.

121. Did the Americans set fire to the hamlets also?

Yes, they did it also. In a word, they didn't set fire to Mrs.X's home that time because she cooked for them and sold them tobacco. But when they returned the next time, they set fire to her house too.

122. Did the Americans stab the people?

The Americans didn't stab the people. The stabbing and kicking the people was done by the Montagnards.

123. What did the people think about these Americans?

They complained very much. They said that these Americans took the Fulro troops there to kill the people.

124. What did the Front say about these Americans?

I didn't know what the Front cadres say (seemed reluctant to answer)

125. If the Front cadres said anything, all you do is to repeat it. You don't have to be afraid because you don't make it up yourself.

Whatever I know (smiled) I tell you, if I don't know, then I say so. I am not afraid.

126. Do you think that the Americans are the same as the French before?

I don't know about the French. I was very young during the resistance.

127. What did you think the Americans wanted in Vietnam?

I don't know how to guess (smiled)

128. Have you seen or heard of the gifts which the Americans have sent to the people in the land development center?

I didn't see any gifts being distributed to us since I arrived there because the VC took over the center a few days after I arrived.

129. Did you hear of other countries besides the United States which have sent assistance to the Nationalist Government and troops to South Vietnam?

I haven't seen any of them or heard about them (paused) Hadn't the VC taken over the control of the land development center, and the people were to

remain under the control of the Nationalists only, the people there would have been very rich.

130. In your opinion, which side is stronger?

Life is better ~~in~~ on this side.

131. What I want to ask you is which ~~is~~ side is stronger, the Nationalists or the VC?

I also think that this side is stronger. On the VC side if you want to send word to someone, it will take ~~you~~ a few days for the other party to receive your message. Here, you can jump in a bus and get to the place in a few minutes.

132. Did you hear about the bombing on the North?

No.

133. What were the reasons that made you leave the land development center to come out here?

The reasons were: hunger and miseries, each time the Nationalists conducted their operations, I had to run into hiding, sky shattering ~~&~~ explosions of bombs and ... and also I didn't know when I would get killed. When the operation was over, I returned and found ~~the~~ my home and garden destroyed. This ~~xxxxxxxxxxx~~ made me so discouraged, I didn't feel like working ~~any~~ to better myself any longer. The people fared better when the Nationalists conducted the operations, but when the Fulro troops came in, it was frightening.

134. In your opinion, which was the most ~~important~~ important reason?

Materially speaking, life in the center was too ~~&~~ arduous and miserable.

135. Did you hear broadcasts from the ~~airplanes~~ airplanes calling on you to leave the land ~~&~~ development center?

Of course, there was broadcast calling on the people, but the VC hated it when they heard the word Chieu Hoi was mentioned. They told the people that the people could earn their living there because there was land there, but they would starve if they ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ rallied.

136. Were there any reasons which made you not want to leave the land development center?

I wanted to come out here wholeheartedly. Life is better out ~~here~~ here. To tell you

to escape
the truth I had tried three times since the time I gave birth to my baby, but I was stopped each time. Once when my son had the x fever and was about to die, and I had asked them permission to bring him out here for treatment, but they refused to grant my request. If I get sick now, I can buy medicine to cure myself. But in the center, if you get sick you won't be able to find a pill for days.

137. Before you left the land development center, what did you hear about life in the Nationalist controlled areas?

I was told that life out here was very bad. If anyone rallied he would die of starvation because food was expensive. One kg of rice cost 30 or 40 piasters and one kg of salt cost 40 piasters. They said there was no land to farm out here and people would die of hunger.

138. Did you hear what the Nationalists had done to help you and other refugees?

living
As I told you before, living in the center was like living in a jar. People became stupid, they didn't know a thing. I didn't know about the Government help to the people until I came out here. I felt happy and encouraged
would have known nothing if
when I arrived here. I knew nothing I had remained there. The people felt the same Day in and day out, all they heard was the VC telling them this and that. They knew nothing besides.

139. Could you bring any goods or possessions with you when you came out here?

I had only an outfit I was wearing then, and my baby I was carrying on my arms. At home I had clothes, blankets and mosquito nets, but didn't dare bring them along with me because if I was stopped and if I told them that I wanted to take my baby away for a medical consultation, they would ask me why did I bring my household possessions with me when I took my baby away for a medical consultation. That was why I didn't dare bring anything along.

140. What did you leave behind in the land development center?

Just some clothes, blankets and mosquitos nets, nothing much.

141. Who took refuge at the same time with you?

I left with two other women: one had four children and the other had two. The last woman is giving birth to a child and the woman with four children is very miserable.

142. Why?

Too many children, her situation is very desperate, they don't have enough clothes to wear. These women's husbands were arrested during an operation conducted by the Nationalists. They were simple civilians, but they are being incarcerated in the Re-education Center [illegible] (Translater's note: prison)

143. Why did they chose this place to come?

I told the bus driver to take me to the Government's Chieu Hoi center and he left me off here.

144. How many families have left the land development center?

About 30 families.

145. How many families were left in the land development center?

About 100 families were left there. Many families in Hamlet [redacted] have left--about 10 families have left. Only one family in Hamlet [redacted] has left. Only seven families were left in Hamlet [redacted]. Some few dozens families have left Hamlet [redacted]. Some of these people had owned an entire herd of buffalos. After they left, the VC took the buffalos for themselves.

146. How many families are there is some few dozens families?

About 20 families.

147. Why did these families remain in the land development center?

Because they haven't been able to make the escape. They will leave eventually. Also, people are different. Many women were scared when they heard the VC say that Chieu Hoi was this and that, and so they didn't dare come out here. I took the risk because I had been too miserable.

148. Has any family left the land development center for other VC controlled areas?

In my opinion, no xxx family has gone to the VC controlled areas because xhxy everyone is so frightened of the hardships. No one xx xxxx who has moved out of the center go to the VC controlled areas at all.

149. When did the people begin to leave the land development center?

They x began to move out starting in last March or April.

150. When did most of the people leave the land development center?

They couldn't leave in big groups. Tonight xxxx/families made the escape, tomorrow night two or three other families made the escape. Anyone who wanted to escape two or three left xx his properties behind and moved out. He wouldn't dare discuss it with any other person.

151. Has anyone who came here to take refuge gone back to the land development center?

No. They left the land development center for good. Why should they return to be sent away for re-education? Being out here is like a bird out of xx the cage, who wants to xxxx return for?

152. What has the Government done to help you?

Nothing. I haven't received anything. Since my arrival here, I have lived on the help of my sister-in-law and other people around here.

152. Have you received your identification card?

My old identification card was burned by the Fulro troops in/xhx during one xxx/of their operations. I haven't seen the new xxxx ones being distributed.

154. Are there many xxxxxxxx/people here/who increase their income by working part-time?

Of course, there are quite a few, otherwise how would they have food to eat? They work in the coffee xhxx plantation or in some American companies, I don't know which, but they earn 100 piasters a day.

155. How many refugees are in this camp?

I am a newcomer here, I can't possibly know about it. I only know that there are many people here.

156. Do you feel safe and not afraid of xx being attacked here?

There are many people here and I saw guards around and so I am not afraid of being attacked.

157. How is the leadership of this camp organised?

There are the camp chief and the policeman. This morning the camp chief told me to come and get my share of rice. I am to receive six kgs of rice while other women with many children received over 10 kgs. When I saw you coming, I asked my sister-in-law to go and get the rice for me. This is the first time I receive rice.

158. How often do you meet this leadership committee?

Every day.

159. What do you think of these people?

They are very nice people, especially the camp chief.

160. Are there any refugees in this camp who had been the leaders of the the land development center?

No, I don't know where they are now.

161. Have you seen any foreigner in this camp?

Yes. I have seen the Americans and the Philippines. They came and gave cooking oil rice and manioc etc... I haven't received any of these things, perhaps because I am a newcomer.

162. Who do think is responsible for the hardships you have to bear now?

The VC, who else? Before the VC took over, life was good. If I am to blame anyone I will blame the VC, who else can I blame instead?

163. Where do you want to go when you leave this camp?

Wherever the people go, I will go. In my situation I don't know where to go now.

164. If you are to learn some profession to earn your living, which one do you want to learn?

My baby is too young, I can't do anything at all.

165. This is the picture of a ladder. The last rung is numbered ten and the first rung is numbered 1. Suppose the top rung represents the best life that you can imagine, and the bottom rung the worst life that you can imagine. In your opinion, on which rung were you before the VC took over the land development center?

I was on rung five or six.

166. On which rung were you after the VC took over the land development center?

On rung 10.

167. Where were you when you left the land development center?

On rung ~~xxx~~ 10.

168. How about now? On which rung do you think you are now?

On rung 8.

169. In your ~~xxx~~ opinion, where will you be five years from now?

How can I know where I will be five years from now. I only know what ~~happens~~ is happening now.

170. In your opinion, how bad could your life in the land development center be?

I can't describe it.

171. In your opinion, what is the best life for yourself?

I don't have great ambitions. I only want to be like other people. If the people live, I live, if the people die, I die. That is all.

172. What kind of life do you hope your son will have?

I don't know what to hope for. When he is young & he is my son, but when he is older, he is the Government's son.

173. If you could ask three things of the Nationalist Government, what would they be?

I will take whatever the Government will give me. I don't know what to ask for.

174. How long do you think the war will last?

How can I know? The Front cadres said that reunification was around the corner. I found that life was too arduous, too miserable, and so I ~~knew~~ couldn't believe in their promises. They only told lies, how could anyone believe them?

175. In your opinion, which side is winning?

It is my opinion that this side is winning, is ~~xxxxx~~ stronger. On this side, if anyone wants to go any place, all he has to do is to jump in a bus and go there. On the other side (the VC) it is ~~xxx~~ even difficult to go here and there. As for food, one receives only 4 piasters and 2 cans of rice a day.

176. Are you talking about the Front troops?

Yes. The troops received 4 piasters a day ~~as~~ per person. As for the guerrillas, they received nothing, instead they ate with their families.

177. Do you think the side that is winning now, will win in the end?

I don't know whether this side will win in the end, but the VC side is too much weaker than this side /how can it win?

178. In your opinion, which side do the other refugees think will win?

People have different ideas, I can't answer for them.

179. Did your idea about which side would win have any influence in your decision to take refuge?

I came out partly because of that ~~idea~~ idea. Also, one should side with the side one feels happier with. One can't always bear the hardships.

180. Which side is having the people's support and which side is losing it?

This side is having the people's support more than the other side. The other side can't have the people's support.

181 Why?

The other side only makes the people more miserable, it doesn't help the people at all.

182. In your opinion, what should the Nationalist Government do go get the support of people like you or people you know?

If the Government helps the people more, it will receive more support from the people. That is all to it.

183. If the Front wins, what do you think life in Vietnam will be like?

If the other side wins then ~~whatever~~ I will lead the same kind of life/that other people will lead.

184. If the Nationalist Government wins, what do you think life in Vietnam will be like?

If this side wins the people will feel encouraged and they will continue to live like before.

185. It makes no difference which side will win right?

(smiled) yes.

What did the people hate most in the VC?

What they hated most was their destruction of their homes. They said that when there was no enemy, they (VC) came in great strength, but when the enemy was here, they all disappeared. And yet they said they won this or that battle etc... As for the guerrillas, they fired one or two shots and then ran into hiding causing much damage and many casualties to the people.

When the Front first took over the control of the land development center, did you think that the Front people were peace-loving or danger-loving people?

The Front cadres kept saying that there would be reunification and peace soon, and those who were from Quang Nam could return to Quang Nam and so on. But I haven't found any reunification at all.

Did you find them patriotic or traitorous?

I don't know. I only found them talking about victories and attacks of this or that place.

Did you find them courageous or coward?

I don't know about their being courageous or coward, but they counter attacked when there were few nationalists present in the operations. But they ran into hiding when the Nationalists came in in great strength.

Did you find them sympathetic toward the people?

They lived with the people. They didn't do anything cruel or merciless.

Did you find them well-disciplined or too hard?

They were well-disciplined.

Will you give me an example which shows that they were well disciplined?

(smiles) I don't know (of any example to give you)

Interviewer's comments

The subject was at ease and looked healthy. She seemed intelligent and cooperative during the

interview. There was no interfuptions f during the interview by enyone except by the subject's little xxx child.

The interviewer introduced himself as usual, but the subject seemed to beleive that the interviewer was a member of the Joint Committee for the anti-communist refugees, and that the Americans who accompanied the interviewer was an advisor.

NO. AGR 73

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

1. Name of interviewer [redacted]
2. Name of subject [redacted]
3. Time and date of interview :
   From 10.50 to 11.50 on Dec [redacted] 1966
   From 2.15 to 3.00 on [redacted] 13 66
   From 9.05 to 11.30 on Dec [redacted] 1966
   1.30 3.30
4. Place of interview : Total time - 2 hours hand written [redacted]
5. Sex of subject : Male ( ) Female (*)
6. Age of subject : 23
7. Ethnic background : Viet namese
8. Place of birth :
   hamlet Subject couldn't recall the name
   village [redacted]
   district Tam Ky
   province Quang Nam
9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :
   hamlet Subject couldn't recall
   village [redacted]
   district Dai Loc Thanh
   province Quang Tin
10. (a) Length of residence in last location : 11 months
    (b) Who controlled the place of residence :
    GVN ( ) VC (*) Contested ( ) How long? Feb 1966

NO. AGR_____

11. Number of brothers (/) and sisters (/)

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : 2

13. Marital status : Widow

14. Number of children : 1 (ten months

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age : none

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject( ) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject( ) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion : none

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : Tenant Farmer

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation Very poor
(b) Landowner.[2]

20. Education :
illiterate ( )
literate ( )
schooling completed :

21. Any relatives in VC : no

22. Any relatives in GVN : one brother in ARVN

23. Any relatives (How many.[2] When.[2]) killed by :
(a) French
(b) GVN /none
(c) VC

24. When became a refugee : Sept [redacted] 1961

25. When took refuge [illegible]

26. [illegible]

AGR

INTERVIEW

74

THE RAND CORPORATION

INTERVIEWS CONCERNING THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR-74

Date of Interview : November [redacted], 1966

Subject's Category : Refugee, June 1966

Area of Residence : [redacted] Hamlet
[redacted] Village
Cu Chi District
Hau Nghia Province

This interview is for the information of US and Vietnamese official agencies and personnel on a need-to-know basis. Permission to distribute or show this interview to non-official persons requires the prior approval of The RAND Corporation and the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs.

1. How b[illegible] was your village [redacted]?

It was about seven kilometers long and had six or seven hamlets. Since it was in a remote area, people gathered together to form a small group of houses. Since the arrival of the allies, the situation has become a little more steady. It was a relief not to see them (the VC) spread all over the village any longer. Some of the villagers who had taken refuge in GVN-controlled areas braced themselves to return one after another to the village. Those who haven't guts don't dare come back yet. (Smiled) It was a relief to have the support of the allies. Otherwise, by now the whole village would already be evacuated. Nobody dares stay there, people going on being killed. Thus, because of the position of the village, they (the VC) could withdraw to An Nhon. As I said, this is a remote area. But in regard to the district headquarters, which was well protected, they could not do anything. The villagers took refuge in the district, or here, or in Saigon.

2. How did most of the villagers earn their living?

They grew rice and vegetables. They also worked for the rubber plantations in the past. Now they turn to work for the Americans, and they can earn from seventy to eighty piasters per day. This is very helpful for them because the rubber plantations have ceased their activities. In regard to those who were under thirty years old, they all enlisted in the ARVN, and by now they all established camp in [redacted]. I know four or five youths who were my neighbors' children and who are also in [redacted] now. In the village if the youths didn't enlist in the ARVN, they would be kidnapped by the VC. Many were kidnapped and disappeared forever. Furthermore, once they served in the ARVN, they could raise their families on their salaries. As for the young girls they worked for the Americans. (Paused) The price of rice was very high -- more than one hundred or hundreds of piasters for one can (19 liters). This was because people didn't dare till their land in remote areas. Only a part of the people's land was cultivated. Sometimes, the villagers worked on their ricefields under the protection of the soldiers of this side, and they (the VC) lay in ambush and shot at them. In such a way they brought about an artillery attack or a sweep operation, and they all fled. Therefore, the villagers only tilled the land bordering GVN-controlled areas, within about one kilometer, and they abandoned the rest of their land.

3. Did you own any land?

I inherited land from my father, but I didn't have any ricefields. At plowing-time, with the help of my family I tilled other people's ricefields as a hired laborer. I was paid in kind, that is, in paddy. My land was covered with mounds and only fit to grow vegetables.

4. What religions did the other villagers practice?

They were Catholics and Cao Dai. About eighty Cao Dai people already came here. The Catholics were also very numerous, but when they wanted to celebrate mass, they came here and hid their Holy Crosses and papers.

5. Were the Cao Dai more, or less, numerous than the Catholics?

The Catholics were more numerous.

6. Do you know how many were Cao Dai, and how many were Catholics?

There were about seven or eight hundred people in the village. But there were about one-hundred Catholics and more than fifty Cao Dai. This was because, in 1949 they (the VC) had mopped the area up and killed everybody. By now, people are panic-stricken. They do not dare keep on them any Holy Cross or compromising papers. Those who wanted to go to church or to the pagoda came here. When they returned there, they just earned their living peacefully, not daring to practice anything. Everybody concealed his own religion from others.

7. When you said that, in 1949, they mopped the area up, do you mean that, at that time, your village was swept by the Viet Minh?

Yes, by the Viet Minh, who wanted to wipe out the Cao Dai. You certainly do not know about this, but you can ask people in the Cao Dai temple here. The Cao Dai people were very numerous in that place, and they also had a pagoda. They (the Viet Minh) came to ransack the pagoda, telling the Cao Dai people to cease practicing their religion. The Cao Dai refused to bow to the decision and the Viet Minh mopped up the area. Later on, the survivors (the villagers) all fled for fear of being killed. The elderly people now and then kept coming back to the pagoda, but they hid their papers.

8. Were your parents and relatives killed during that mopping up operation?

Yes, they all were killed during only one night. I escaped to here for one year and a half. Then, thanks to the Government's strong action, they (the Viet Minh) were driven off, and I returned there. I have been living there up to now. Now, because they redouble their activities, I do not dare stay there any longer. The GVN village chief told the villagers to temporarily evacuate the village. One could return there later on. Everybody left the village. Thanks to the Allies who came to fight, now the village is ninety per cent quiet. They (the VC) couldn't resist the Allies because the latter were more numerous and equipped with a lot of weapons. In the past, before the arrival of the Allies, this side couldn't hold them off because the VC were more numerous. GVN soldiers in GVN posts didn't dare get out. When they (the VC) bothered them, the GVN district shot its artillery at the village. The villagers took cover in trenches because they had been told by the district officials to dig trenches. The VC didn't dare follow the villagers, and they hid themselves along the hedges or houses. When these houses caved in because of artillery shells, they were killed. I sometimes saw four or five corpses. The allies' operation and the GVN's activities sort of bound the VC hand and foot. They couldn't do anything.

9. When did the allies start their operation?

Towards February or March. At that time nobody dared stay in the village. Every day, late in the afternoon, the villagers went to spend the night in the District Town. Before that, they (the VC) closed in upon the villagers who fled and the VC fired at them. But since the arrival of the allies, the allies wiped the area out. They (the VC) were no longer in the village. They could only sneak in at night. I know about this because I was on the spot. Now and then I was concerned and took cover in a trench. When I could get out, I took off smartly. Now the Government people can easily tell the difference between the villagers who are on their way to escape and the VC. When the men of the GVN battalion asked us, we told them the truth because, as long as we escaped from their (the VC's) control, there wasn't any reason to be still afraid of them. When the VC came into the trap, they were liquidated. They were only dozens of people. How could they hold off hundreds of people? They were killed all the time but they went on sneaking in.

Anyway, now an area covering three or four kilometers is already wiped out by the allies. Now the villagers can work within the limits of the village. But one or two kilometers outside the village the Government cannot guarantee anything yet.

10. What do you mean by allies?

The Americans. They came here, and they (the VC) all fled.

11. Were there any other troops besides the Americans?

No, there were only the Americans and the GVN forces. Both fought them, they couldn't resist and all fled. Every night, the allies shot their artillery, and the shells could amount to loads of trucks. They (the VC) couldn't endure this. They couldn't stay there any longer. They were driven off by that nightly shelling. Also, it was a relief for the villagers to see the soldiers in GVN posts and the allies patrol at night.

12. In short, after the arrival of the allies, did the villagers all leave the village or were there any of them left in the village?

They all left, but they came back one after another. At the time, there were only a certain number of elderly people who stayed there, and the youths all left. Now, the allies expand their control and the situation grows better.

13. Do you know how many of the villagers came back to the village?

At that time, there were thirty or fifty old people who stayed there. As for those who came back to the village, I don't know how many they were. A great number of people took refuge in Saigon, here in Tay Ninh, and in other places.

14. How many people who live in this refugee-camp came from your village?

Only two. The other people took refuge in [redacted] where they had some relatives, or in [redacted]. They took refuge where they could.

15. When the allies came to sweep the area, did the villagers suffer any damage because of the encounter of both sides?

No, when the allies came to sweep the village, the villagers had already left the village, and when the allies attacked the VC in [redacted], the villagers took cover in trenches. After the sweep operation, the villagers, one after another, came back to the village. By now there might be about six hundred people who already returned there. The remainder are still spread here and there. They (the VC) couldn't resist the allies who drove them off. They ran away with their pants falling down. I am glad to see the situation getting better.

16. Do you intend to go back to the village?

My son is serving in the ARVN in that place. I am waiting for a steadier situation to ask the Government for a piece of land to build a house here. I will ask my son whether or not I can do it, or if he can get a house from the army, whether or not I can follow him. I am too old. I cannot do anything by myself (Laughed). My son is still attending training.

17. How old is your son?

He is thirty years old.

18. Has your village ever been bombed?

No, it was only shelled by the district artillery every time the VC redoubled their activities.

19. Since the VC's occupation, have their troops established camp in the village?

No, they didn't dare stay in the village. They only established camp in remote areas. If they stayed in the village, they would certainly be bombed. The villagers would secretly inform the GVN who would send its aircraft to bomb the village. The villagers couldn't entertain a sincere affection for the VC who caused their houses damage and destruction.

20. The VC troops didn't establish camp in the village. Did the guerrillas live there?

No, they only lived by the edge of the hamlets.

21. In your village were there ever conflicts between Catholics and Cao Dai people?

No, they were on good terms with each other. They attended banquets together and so forth.

22. Among the six hundred people who already went back to the village, were most of them Catholics or Cao Dai

The Catholics all returned there. By the time people left the village, there were forty or fifty houses completely destroyed. More recently, people of the Rural Reconstruction have built many houses for the villagers.

23. Before the arrival of the allies, did the VC install any organizations in the village?

I tell you sincerely that they didn't. They only lived by the edge of the hamlets. In the village, the Cao Dai and the old people didn't like the VC. At night they saw the VC move about but didn't say anything. They shut their doors and ignored the others. The VC wanted to install their organizations, but the people didn't agree because they didn't like them. In the village some old people had worked in the past for the Government. This was also one of the reasons why the VC attempts met with a check. I had three or four friends who are beginning to work again for the Village Council.

24. When they (the VC) first came to occupy the village, did they arrest, punish, or kill any village leaders?

Those who had dealings with the Government all fled in advance. They didn't dare stay there, and all escaped to the district chief town. Only a certain number of villagers stayed behind, but later on, they also fled. A cousin of mine, who had been a hamlet chief, also left the village before their arrival. Therefore, when they came to the village, they only met with women and children. My sister's children had a house in the district chief town, but it was too crowded. Otherwise, I would have taken refuge there instead of coming here. My sister's children told me to leave the village and I didn't want to be killed like my parents in the past. I escaped with them and fled. How could a man with his bare hands resist a weapon?

25. During their occupation, how did they collect taxes?

Those who lived in the remote part of the village, paid, but not those who lived in the other part. Therefore, they (the VC) acted rough, causing people damage, and the trouble originated with this. Some villagers whose children enlisted in the ARVN didn't dare live in the village, others had been GVN villager leaders. This also didn't help them in collecting taxes. Therefore, they (the VC) became nasty, grafted here and there, and thereby, the Government also started to cut up rough. All this caused people damage. If the villagers agreed to contribute, there wouldn't have been any damage.

26. You told me that they established camp by the edge of the hamlets. Can you tell me more precisely about those hamlets: How many hamlets were there in your village? Which ones bordered your village?

The hamlets which bordered the village were [redacted] and [redacted]. They are in a remote area. In their order of remoteness, the remote settlements were [redacted] and [redacted]. From there, the area was safe.

27. Do you mean that they (the VC) settled down in those places?

Yes, they occupied those places.

28. Was your hamlet, [redacted] among those places?

I lived in [redacted], which was near [redacted] the district chief town. About seven hundred meters and a stream separated [redacted] from [redacted], which were about two or three kilometers wide. Then, people could turn to Long Tho and Binh Duong chief town. By now, nobody lives in [redacted]. The allies have leveled the ground. Even the tall trees were uprooted. The ricefields were uncultivated. Nobody lives in my hamlet either. More recently, I heard that those who wanted to come back there to gather firewood could go to the [redacted] crossroad where the Americans stood guard to ask for permission to pass. If the Americans asked where they were going, they had to be precise, that is, if they wanted to go three or four hundred meters farther, they had to tell the Americans the exact distance they would cover. In case the Americans refused to let them go, they had to pull back. But I thought that life was getting better in a way. In the hamlets bordering the village, the trees and the grass are now growing as in the mountains and the ricefield are abandoned.

29. In short, how many hamlets were occupied by the VC?

They lived in [redacted] and [redacted], but there were only five or ten men. Some villagers, now and then, secretly denounced them to the GVN officials.

30. Did you know about the unit designation number of the GVN battalion you told me about?

The 25th Division often passed by. It often raided in Cu Chi District. It assisted the village officials and the Americans, and sometimes when it passed by Cu Chi and [redacted], its troop strength amounted to four or five hundred people.

31. Have there been any big fights between both sides?

None. They (the VC) didn't dare resist this side, which was able to send its vehicles up to the village.

32. How did the Americans who swept the area behave towards the villagers?

The Americans came there and found the extreme poverty of the people. Every day they gave the people medicine and other things. The villagers who worked for them were also well-treated. They helped the villagers in re-building houses and watched over the people's safety. Before their arrival, the area was unsafe.

33. Did they arrest or beat anybody?

No.

34. Did the GVN artillery cause the people any damage?

A family of one mother, two daughters, and a daughter-in-law was killed. It was considered that six persons were killed instead of four, because one daughter and the daughter-in-law were pregnant. The Government has given compensation. Second Lieutenant Hung from the district expressed his regret, saying that it was an accident because the Government never attacks the villagers. He took care that the funeral ceremony was well done.

36. [illegible] cattle?

From time to time, artillery shots also killed the cattle. The district chief reimbursed the price of each head killed, which was 5,000VN$. In regard to pigs, they were also killed very often. But the villagers didn't get any compensation for that. Anyway, they had pork meat to eat on those occasions (laughed).

36. Did the district chief come to give compensation of his own free will, or did he do that after the villagers had asked for it?

The district chief came and sighed a sigh of regret. "This is an accident," he said. "We only shot at the VC. We didn't want to kill your cattle. But don't worry, I'll give you compensation." Five days after that, he sent for the villagers concerned and gave them some money. In 1965, the artillery attacks killed more cattle than this year. Since March, the village has not been attacked by artillery. Therefore the villagers dared to return, one after another, to the village. In 1965, people in the village sometimes had their meals in trenches because of the artillery attacks. To tell the truth, certainly the district chief didn't have any reason to shoot at the cattle, and it was fair enough for him to come to give money to the people.

37. Did the villagers who suffered damage like that make any complaints?

For instance, at the time, the villagers in An Nhon yelled and cried. The GVN officials came and begged to be heard, insisting that it was an accident. "It is not like us," they said, "to shoot at you. The trouble was that the enemy had mingled with you."

38. Did the VC urge the villagers to stage demonstrations against the artillery attacks?

Yes, but half-way there, the villagers all slipped away. I, myself, was asked to go. I agreed with them, but after they had left, I also slipped away. Later on, they asked me whether or not I had participated in the demonstration. I answered in the affirmative. They couldn't check it. They couldn't compel each man to go.

39. Did they often organize meetings in the village?

perhaps in remote areas, but not in my place. Furthermore, four out of ten persons had already enlisted in the ARVN or left for Binh Duong chief town. In regard to those who stayed behind, it was up to them to attend or not. They (the VC) didn't dare compel anybody for fear of being denounced. They knew that "if the pitcher went to the well too often, it would finally break." They left it to the people's good will.

40. Did they send the villagers for re-education?

In remote areas, yes. My place was also a remote area, but they couldn't do it because most of the villagers had their relatives working for the Government, and they (the VC) feared that they would be denounced. For example, my son and my nephew were GVN soldiers, and they (the VC) didn't dare go up against me because they feared that they would be discovered. They were smart, you know! (Laughed)

41. I thought that they had a certain fondness for arresting those who had relatives working for the Government. Didn't they do so?

No, they didn't dare do so. They would compel people living in other remote areas, but not in my place.

42. How far is it from your house to the district chief town?

Three kilometers and a half.

43. Usually, what kind of persons were sent for re-education?

Those who lived in [redacted] and [redacted], which were twice as far as my house was from the district. They only invited those who sympathized with them. Those who didn't like them were left alone.

44. I didn't ask about those who had been invited, but those who had been arrested and sent for re-education.

Those who were forced refused to go by pleading illness and so forth. Two or three times like that, and the VC wouldn't force them any more. But those who agreed to go the very first time would be compelled to go all the time. The way they (the VC) worked was different from ours (the GVN's). The accommodating people were compelled to go all the time. But those who refused a couple of times were tagged with escapism and left alone.

45. Did they force the villagers to join the civilian defense missions?

In other remote villages, but not in mine.

46. How many people in your village have been for the Front?

Thirty-five in all. (Note: See question 50-51).

47. Did they volunteer?

Yes, they volunteered. But only those who were of military age, that is, twenty years old and above, could enlist. Those who were nineteen years old weren't accepted. I had two nephews who, by now, would already be enlisted. I'm sure that there were thirty-five men in all. (Pause).
About eight or nine were drafted.

48. Do you mean those drafted by the GVN?

Yes, by the GVN. There were eight or nine. A son of my sister, who enlisted in the 25th Division, was probably caught by a mine and sent home. He was wounded here and there and particularly in his leg. By now he limps badly. He didn't receive any allowance. He is thirty-eight years old and has four children. He served the 25th Division for two years before getting wounded in March 1966. We thought that he died, but he didn't.

49. Among the thirty-five men who joined them (the VC), did any come back to the village?

Only the wounded stay home now. A distant relation of mine, living in Ban Me Thuot, also had three boys who came back to the village. But now they must already be gone. In short, they were transferred here and there, being scattered around. One I knew was sent somewhere... to Cai Be.

50. In your opinion, why did those thirty-five men join the other side?

No, they joined the ARVN. They didn't join the VC.

51. Do you mean that the thirty-five men you talked about enlisted in the ARVN?

Yes, they all were on the GVN's side.

52. But, my question was: How many people in your village have left for the Front?

Those thirty-five men served for our just cause. (Laughed) The wounded man I told you about, whose leg was broken because of the VC, already came back to the village.

53. Can you tell me how many people in your village have left for the other side?

Nobody joined the VC. (Hesitated).

54. Nobody joined the VC?

(Hesitated) There were some, but I didn't know them. I only saw with my own eyes the thirty-five men who were recruited by the GVN. Also, my nephew has already signed his enlistment and he will certainly join his unit very soon.

55. Yes, you already told me about this. But I would like to know how many people in your village have left for the other side?

I don't know because we lived in different hamlets. Furthermore, they never did it publicly, and I couldn't see them.

56. Every time the VC wanted to recruit people, how did they carry on propaganda for that purpose?

They used honeyed speeches to induce and trick the people. They were very glib of tongue. We couldn't put them off (laughed).

57. Did they induce the people one by one or did they organize meetings?

They chose the youths. They couldn't inveigle the grown-ups. Those who were from fifteen to twenty years old were fascinated, but not the married people of thirty years old who were quite indifferent. The latter even said, "Who will take care of our wives and children if we go?"

58. Were women in your village drafted?

No, I didn't see this.

59. Did you ever see their female cadres come to the village to entice women into joining the Front?

Yes, some of them passed by carrying knapsacks and light guns. I couldn't stand them when they talked. But I thought that it was their own business, and I didn't have to argue with them about what they said.

60. Usually, what did they say?

Oh, they talked and talked. I hated them and didn't pay attention to what they said. Sincerely, I am old and I cannot stand them at any price. I wanted to beat them to death, but I didn't have the right to do it. They were young and they wanted to teach the old people. I couldn't stand those immature youths who wanted to teach the old people. Every time I met them, I just said hello and proceeded on my way without looking back. I hated them very much.

61. So far have they carried out a Land Reform program in your village?

Not yet. They didn't dare do it in my district yet. Everyone tilled his own land.

62. As I told you at the beginning of the conversation, this interview aims at assistance eventually being given to the refugees. Therefore, when I asked you how the VC had carried on propaganda, I knew that you didn't like what the VC had said. But I think it is useful for our research and for the refugees that you report to me what you know. In such a way, you can make a handsome contribution to the assistance given to the refugees. When you tell me what you know, you do nothing but report to me what the VC said and not what you yourself had said. Be at ease and let's turn this interview into a friendly conversation.

To tell the truth, if I paid attention to what they said I would remember, but as I didn't ...

63. I am certain, for instance, that every time they carried on propaganda or came to recruit people, they talked about the assistance against the American and the GVN to get the people to enlist in their forces. Therefore, I rely on you to tell me how they presented their version and so forth.

They certainly talked about the Resistance against the Americans. But as I didn't like them, I didn't stay there long enough to listen to them. I feared that if I stayed there to listen to them, I would argue with and annoy them. There was nothing to be done. In my opinion, I would listen to those who talked to me about useful things. But with regard to those who came to try to draft my children, I would like to beat them to death. Because I was an old and weak man, I couldn't do it and I kept at a distance from them. When I left the meeting or when another man left, they immediately stopped everything and didn't stay there any longer.

64. Were you told about how they collected taxes in the hamlets bordering the village? What did the villagers in those hamlets say?

In those hamlets by the edge of the village each landowner contributed one or two "gia". They didn't collect money. They only collected paddy.

65. How much paddy did a landowner harvest when he had to pay one "gia" of paddy?

Those who harvested seventy, eighty or a hundred "gia" were asked to contribute two "gia". Those who only harvested thirty or fifty "gia" had to contribute one "gia". People living in that area couldn't avoid contributing. To those who refused to contribute, the VC made their lives a burden. People living there had to resign themselves.

66. Did they only collect paddy?

They only collected paddy. Now and then when they needed money, they sold their paddy. They stored the paddy somewhere, and when the price of the paddy increased, they resold their paddy to the villagers. Who knew that the paddy brought to the market in ox carts belonged to the VC?

67. How did they collect taxes from the workers of the rubber-plantation?

I don't know about this. I think, however, that they have certainly collected taxes from those workers because one who had a certain income couldn't spare himself from paying taxes. I don't know how much those workers have paid because I wasn't close to them, and they didn't dare say anything. Anyhow, in those remote areas they always collected taxes from everybody.

68. Did the villagers make any complaints every time they came to collect paddy?

Yes, they were sad and downcast. Some of them had their eyes turn red with tears. But they didn't say anything for fear of the VC's resentment. If at night one were shot at, nobody would know the person who had committed the crime. The villagers were sad, but they didn't dare tell anybody anything. They couldn't do anything but resign themselves.

69. Where did the VJ husk the paddy they collected from the villagers?

First, after having collected the villagers' paddy, they stored and hid it. Then, they re-sold that paddy to the dealers who brought it to the rice-mills to husk it. Before the allies' arrival, the dealers came to the village to buy paddy, and how could they know that this or that paddy belonged to the VC as long as the VC put their paddy beside the villagers' barns? Then, the paddy was brought to the rice-mills by the dealers to be turned into rice, and the people who didn't have rice came there to buy it. In such a way, they (the VC) always had money and rice. By now, nobody tills the ricefields in that area, and they certainly have to search for food in other places. The ricefield stretched from there to [redacted] and covered at least 15,000 hectares. All that land doesn't produce even one grain now, and they (the VC) are really hard up.

70. Did they have any rice caches in the village?

The village is covered with ricefields, but from [redacted] to [redacted] and [redacted] -- [redacted] is near [redacted] -- none was cultivated, and they (the VC) starved to death. Only from [redacted] farther south could people still till their land.

71. My question was: Did the VC set up any rice caches in your village?

No. Perhaps they did in An Nhon but not in my village.

72. Where did the villagers usually sell their produce?

In [redacted] They sold scoops or pails for drawing water, hats, pigs, paddy and rice.

73. Did the VC place any restrictions on selling produce?

No. They didn't dare do it because from Cu Chi District Town to [redacted] there was a GVN post every 500 meters.

74. Did you ever see or hear about any conflicts between the VC cadres?

I didn't see any.

75. Did you hear about any?

They certainly had conflicts between them.

76. In what circumstances?

When the ruthless cadres exploited the people who revolted against them, the sympathetic cadres got after them, and they argued with each other. As a matter of fact, I didn't see them argue with each other, but I heard them criticize each other when one turned his back.

77. Did you hear about different factions among the VC cadres?

Sometimes I heard people say that some of them received bribes and were caught red-handed by others. As a matter of fact, they couldn't avoid insulting each other noisily. As I didn't live with them, I was in no position to witness what they did, but I heard about this through the youths.

78. Did they set up any Combat Hamlet in your village?

No.

79. How did they control the people entering and leaving the village?

Since March, GVN forces and the allies have routed them all. Before that, they had their police and security agents in the village to watch over the villagers. The old people were watched less closely than the youths. But since then, they have been smashed. They had to move farther, to the woods.

80. Did you ever meet a VC cadre who wasn't a South Vietnamese?

There were both North and South Vietnamese.

81. Who were those North Vietnamese? What did they do?

I don't know what they did. I only saw them moving about and having a Northern accent. That's all.

82. What did the villagers think of those North Vietnamese?

I'm an old man, and I tell you what I saw. For instance, in the village the people suffered damage and casualties. They hated them (the VC), but they didn't say anything. Perhaps, one out of ten villagers liked them. How could they avoid hating those who brought about destruction and death? Why did they (the VC) fire one or two shots to provoke an artillery attack which destroyed the people's houses and killed their children? The villagers were sad, but they didn't dare say anything.

83. Lately, you told me about your parents and relatives who had been killed in 1949. Why were they killed?

They were all Cao Dai, and at the time the Viet Minh wanted to annihilate the Cao Dai. The Cao Dai wanted to talk peace, but the Viet Minh were stronger and didn't care a rap. They killed them all.

84. Did it happen when they (the VC) started that campaign of denouncing the landlords at public trials?

Yes, they saw that the Cao Dai were numerous, good-natured, and had won a great number of people over. Therefore, they killed the Cao Dai to scare the people.

85. More recently, have you heard about defeats suffered by Front units?

In the past, a hundred or hundreds out of a thousand people still sympathized with them. But since they have wiped the Cao Dai out, I can say that, of a thousand people, there were a thousand and a hundred (?) who were sad and angry at them. I myself could escape in time. Otherwise, I would have been killed at the same time my parents were.

86. Did they ever set up a school in your village?

Yes, they built thatched schools, and a great number of children attended them.

and since they have acted roughly, the people gradually removed their children from school because they feared that their children would be killed by air-strikes or artillery attacks. Since the arrival of the allies, only in my village have children been able to go on to school. In more remote villages, all schools had been burned by air strafing.

87. Were the schools free?

Each child had to pay the teacher fifteen piasters. The VC didn't gather anything.

88. Did adults go to school?

No. Those who sympathized with them were sent where, I don't know, for almost one month. Those who didn't like them were left alone. They (the villagers) even had words with those who didn't have weapons. They were, of course, afraid of those who were armed. But in regard to those who weren't and who bullied them, they (the villagers) even chopped or beheaded them before running away to hide themselves.

89. What subjects were taught in those schools?

The usual elementary program for children.

90. Did they build any hospital in your village?

No. The GVN has given medicine, but as for them (the VC), I didn't see anybody receive anything from them.

91. While in your village, what had you heard about the present Saigon Government?

We heard that Ngo Dinh Diem's Government got into trouble, and we, the villagers, were very depressed because we only want a dealer -- no matter who he is -- who is a patriot, who loves his country and his countrymen. We heard about that, but we didn't know what to think.

92. In your opinion, is the GVN strong or weak?

I am now fifty two years old. I am living in a GVN-controlled area. I am eating the GVN's rice. To me, I always consider the GVN at its weakest moment as strong as the VC at their strongest.

By now, the GVN has wiped them out, and while the GVN scored nine points, they couldn't score even one. They are in a very precarious position, not having any place to settle down, mostly from [redacted] farther south. For example, on this day, I passed by this way and I saw that the road had been dug up. I knew that it was a VC's recent work. Then, next day I passed by the same way, and the road was already repaired by the allies. I knew that the VC were already far from there. How could they resist? Of course, they had their own weapons. For instance, once a coffee-man passed by a hedge, wearing a Popular Force suit given to him by his brother, and he was shot at by some of them from the hedge. The coffee was spilled all over. Then, a bus came right at that time, and when people in the bus shouted out, the two guys who fired at the poor man ran away. Immediately after that, the artillery shelling started, but I don't know whether or not the murderers were caught by it. Now, I have noticed that that part of the national road has become quiet. The VC all withdrew to remote areas. In 1964 and 1965, people in Du Chi District didn't want to enlist in the ARVN. This year, 1966, nine out of ten people joined the army (the GVN's). People were sad because the VC were bringing about trouble, and as they might get killed on either side, they would rather be killed on the GVN's. Therefore, this year they (the VC) cannot sneak into this side any longer. By now, more of the people in my village, in [redacted] and in [redacted], have all left for the GVN-controlled areas. On their side, they (the VC) do not dare appear any longer. Recently, I was not afraid to go back to my village. A few months before, I would have been very afraid of doing that because they (the VC) were always ready for a sniping attack. I am illiterate and I am old, but I think that the VC strength cannot come up to one tenth of the GVN's. They don't have food caches. They don't have money either. The people certainly prefer the side that is humane and has money. On their side, they don't get paid, and when they were killed, their corpses were buried in the woods. On the GVN's side, people get paid, and when they were killed, their corpses were brought back and decently buried. By now, they (VC) have only a few elements left in the woods in a precarious position while the GVN forces are much more numerous. In every battle where it was supposed that there were many, there were only thirty or forty men, while the GVN soldiers were two or three thousand. How could twenty or thirty men hold off two or three thousand men? At last, one has to return the other his due. (Laughed) Day by day they have to move to the Montagnard or Cambodian areas.

93. Do you know how long in advance the VC came to the places where they laid ambushes?

It is obvious that I am in no position to see this, but I could hear about it even though I am a civilian. Besides, I don't want to conceal anything from you. To my knowledge, every time they laid an ambush, they dug a lot of holes on both sides of the national road. Then they hid themselves in these holes under a kind of grate. They let a couple of men pretend to go for a walk. When our soldiers (the GVN's) came there, the two or three men who were walking gave the signal for attack, and they got out from their holes to open fire. They didn't hide themselves behind the wood or the mounds as in the past. I never ceased to remind my boy, every time he returned home to see me, that he had to pay attention to the open land instead of to the bushes. Of course, at last they (the VC) couldn't do anything but run away because they were twenty or thirty men against two, three, five, or six hundred soldiers on this side. Many times they didn't have time to get out and were killed right in their holes. My son told me that he didn't dream that there were enemies underground, and when a grenade blew up, he found out that they were there. In such a way, he was able to carry off some of their weapons. I couldn't help laughing. I asked him how deep the hole had been dug. He said that they put sort of a grate on the hole, and on the grate they laid a newspaper covered with sand or with grass. It depended on the area. They let the enemy come about one meter from them before opening fire to kill him.

94. I heard that in Ben Cat, Binh Duong Province, they dug a lot of tunnels. But I don't know whether or not they did the same thing in Cu Chi District. Did they?

In [redacted] and [redacted] Hamlets, yes. But the GVN has already destroyed everything and by now they don't even have a place to sit down. In regard to Cu Chi District Town, they certainly didn't dare do it because people and GVN soldiers always moved about. So far, Cu Chi District Town has always been safer than my place. In my place the VC had been about to do so, but thanks to the Government which pushed them back, they didn't have time to dig anything. Now, even if they want to compel the villagers to do so, it won't be easy for them to get what they want. When they had forced the villagers to dig foxholes, the villagers told them they would do that if they (the VC) immediately sat down in them. It would be long before they (the VC) dared do so. The villagers whose sons served in the ARVN would certainly not wait to see their boys fall into the VC's trap set up by themselves. Now, they cannot rely on anybody. They are left to themselves.

95. In your opinion, is the GVN compassionate or cruel?

The GVN is compassionate towards the obedient people, and it punishes the disobedient ones. For instance, according to the Government's rules and regulations, one who wants to give a banquet has to apply for that and to display a flag. I, myself, being fifty-two years old, always got what I wanted every time I submitted an application. I always displayed a flag whenever I gave a banquet to celebrate a memorial day in my family. It was their fault if those who wanted to do the same thing, but didn't apply for that and didn't display the flag as required, were arrested and punished. The Government has its rules and regulations that each man has to obey and respect. It's normal that those who don't are punished.

96. In your opinion is the GVN just or corrupt?

In my opinion, the GVN is just and compassionate, and it's right when it gets after the stubborn elements. I, myself, would disown my son if he refused to obey me.

97. In your opinion is the GVN wise or confused?

The GVN is wise when it lets the people take refuge here. Otherwise, if it bombed the area without any consideration for anyone, the villagers would be killed along with the VC, all at the same time. The Government set the villagers apart from the VC proving that it was compassionate, and the people were touched. If the Government didn't call to the people whenever there was gunfire, everybody would run in confusion, and how could the Government tell the difference between villagers and VC? It would drop bombs on everybody. Therefore, when there is a bombing now, the villagers aren't killed any more, only the VC. The Government has appealed to the people to evacuate that place. Those who persisted in staying there obviously had to suffer the consequences of their mistake. My village, especially [redacted] and [redacted] Hamlets, was attacked by aircraft for one week. It rained small bombs and artillery shells. At the same time, leaflets were dropped from aircraft saying that the villagers had to evacuate the area, and if they went on staying there, they would be killed along with the VC. The Government, the leaflets said, would welcome the refugees and so forth. When the GVN forces and the allies closed in upon the village from several directions, they left a way out for the villagers who ran to the GVN's side. One day, in the thick of the fight, there were more than ten VC killed. How could they hide themselves?

The armored vehicles closed in upon them from all directions. They wanted to mingle with the villagers, but the villagers were already gone. I am now more than fifty years old, I don't tell you a lie. I saw the amphibious vehicles bring back to Cu Chi chief town twelve VC corpses. Those VC were well-dressed and well armed. One lost a leg, another was beheaded. It made me feel dizzy. It was the only one time I saw them killed so clearly. They weren't people of my village. They came from elsewhere. They were beefy and had a suntanned complexion. About three weeks later many bulldozers came to cover up everything.

98. Did they look like Vietnamese or foreigners?

I can't tell. They had a suntanned complexion, but I don't know whether they were Vietnamese or foreigners. They wore tight pants and sandals and it appeared that their legs had a clear complexion, while their faces were sunburnt.

99. Did you see any Chinese among the cadres in your village?

I didn't see any. I only saw that they all wore black pajamas.

100. While in your village, did they forbid certain sources of information, such as Radio Saigon and newspapers?

No, people could freely pick up Radio Saigon and read newspapers. They didn't say anything about this.

101. Which was the more reliable source of information -- the VC or the GVN?

It is not because the VC aren't here now that I praise the GVN. But as a matter of fact, the information given by the GVN was very specific and correct. The VC, to the contrary, did nothing but tell stories. Fortunately, they aren't here; otherwise, they would chop me. The villagers were very sad because they had to listen to their lies while their houses and belongings all were destroyed. They (the VC) did nothing but deceive the people to have money to eat. The villagers hated them very much, but they didn't dare say anything. In regard to the GVN, it always gave medicine to the sick people and even a coffin to the poor dead. They (the VC) only talked on and on, but they didn't do anything for the people's benefit. How could they do anything whatsoever? They didn't have any solid base. How could they defeat the GVN? How could they defeat the population?

The people today realize that even if they died on the GVN's side, they would, at least, be paid for the trouble they had taken. More recently, even the youths of 18 or 19 years old volunteered and were refused by the ARVN. They were from my village, and at last they enlisted in the SDC unit.

102. While in the village did you ever watch a show or a "cai luong" play?

I'm old now. The devil take me if I went to watch their plays. I only heard what people reported to me. Rivers cannot drain my hatred. Without that strong hatred I had for them, I would have joined the villagers who went to watch their plays. But how could I spare myself from hating them? My father who gave himself up to his religion, who observed a diet regime for eighteen years, and who was murdered, would now be seventy years old if he were still living. If you were in my place, you would hate them for thousands of years. You would carry your hatred to the grave. My father had a pagoda, and he refused to pull it down. This was the reason why he was murdered in a cowardly manner. By now, I don't know where his mortal remains are. We had in the past almost twenty grave plots in [redacted] Village when he was arrested and brought away under a blazing sun. On that day he wore nothing but his underwear. They didn't let him put on any other clothes. I am heart-broken every time I think of that moment.
My son and I came here, and I already let my son enlist in the GVN Province Unit that was recently set up. My seven or eight nephews also enlisted in the ARVN, four in [redacted], and two were drafted because they were of military age. I told them, "Now you can go ahead. You can have a salary like everybody else. If you were older you would have been killed long ago. Fortunately, at the time, you were still children." I will always think of my father ...until I die. It certainly happened now and then that the GVN killed civilians during its operations, but this is unavoidable. Nobody was sad because of that, being in war-time. In my family, my son, my nephews and I all left the village. My son and my nephew are now in the army, and I am reassured about them. But my younger sister is still in my village, living under a shed. Everything was destroyed during the GVN's sweep operation because the VC had opened fire. My sister didn't have time to save anything or to move out. Now she stays there to worship our ancestors. In my opinion, if the war lasted for three more years, the VC would starve because nobody would be there to feed them.

In regard to their way of conducting the war, first they used to hide themselves behind the people's houses; second, they hid themselves on both sides of the road or under the bridges to fire at the villager traders. This made the people get mad and side with the GVN. Sometimes, they hid themselves behind a villager's house and fired at the GVN troops. If the troops were understanding, they wouldn't beat the villager. The villagers very often showed the GVN troops the way the VC had taken to escape, and sometimes the VC were caught.

I am sure that from now to Tet there won't be any sound of gunfire from [redacted] to [redacted]. Most of the villagers already enlisted in the ARVN to fight them (the VC). It's impossible for them to stay there any longer. You will see that by Tet the national road from here to Saigon will be entirely safe, and they won't be able to cause the road any damage as they used to do in the past. The allies have widened the national road by clearing 500 meters on each side of it. Also, they stand guard along the road making it impossible for them (the VC) to come there. They (the VC) couldn't do anything but move to the thick of the woods. Once, they hid themselves behind a villager's cow-shed and fired at a GVN vehicle passing by. People on the vehicle fired back and killed two oxen. This kind of action made the people hate them (the VC). A few days later, when they came to ask for food, the villagers told them, "Weren't the two oxen enough to feed you?"

Another time they hid themselves behind my niece's house in [redacted] settlement -- when, we didn't know --, and when the GVN soldiers came by during a patrol, they started firing at them. But their guns jammed and the GVN soldiers knocked them down. Their corpses were dragged to the GVN post and exhibited to the people. If their guns hadn't jammed, and the GVN soldiers were killed, it would have been all done with my niece and me. Therefore, I think that God is very just. The wicked people were always punished. Politically speaking, they cannot come up to the GVN. Once, one of them was wounded, and people in the 25th Division bandaged the man and took care of him very nicely. The population in general hates them now (the VC), and they will certainly starve.

103. Did they say anything about life in the North?

They said that the North is very strong now. They talked a lot about that, but I didn't believe them. The North is too far from here. I only believe what I can see, for instance, what is happening from [redacted] to here (Tay Ninh Town). When they talked, I kept my mouth shut. That's all.

104. Did they say anything about life in China?

For more than ten years, I have only seen the GVN. They talked about the Chinese and the Chinese, but I never saw those guys. At least, I could see the GVN's leaders succeed one after the other. I know that there was Mr. Ngo Dinh Diem and others who have replaced him now. As for them (the VC), they just told stories to extort money from the people.

105. What did they say about the Chinese?

They said that the Chinese fought the GVN. I thought that the Chinese were in China, and the GVN was here, and what business was it of theirs to come here to fight the GVN? But I let them talk because I couldn't say anything. Those who -- no matter which side it concerns -- are compassionate, who help the people, who build roads and bridges for the people's benefit, are certainly in a more steady position, but those who destroy roads and houses are nothing in the sight of the people. The people dare not express loudly their thoughts, but they are actually very sad.

106. While in the village, did you hear about the Chieu Hoi program of the Government?

Yes, in the village there were posters on the walls and leaflets were scattered. It was said that the Government appealed to the people who joined the VC by mistake, that those who returned to the GVN's side with weapons or documents would receive a reward, and those who didn't bring anything along would be protected by the Government too. I heard that in Tan Phu there were eleven VC. Ten of them wanted to rally while the eleventh refused to join the group. The ten others killed him and rallied to the allies who welcomed them. Those ten were beefy and sunburned. I thought that they were the last ones in the village.
I think that all the trouble originated with the Northerners. The country is split up into two parts. If only they were pleased with their share, there wouldn't be any trouble.

107. So far, have there been any ralliers who came back to the village?

Yes, once the GVN village representative showed us a man on a bicycle and told us that he had been a higher cadre who rallied to the Government and who was appointed company leader. In other places, I think that the VC who wanted to rally joined the refugees to spare themselves from being shot at by the allies. (Paused).

[illegible] the last year [illegible] the [illegible] year the Government had to draft the youths of military age. But this year it didn't have to do it. People all volunteered. There were some who were [illegible] one years old, who had seven or eight children, and they also volunteered.

108. Have you seen or heard about the use of chemicals to destroy vegetation or crops?

To tell the truth, the GVN dropped chemicals onto the VC areas but the wind carried it up to the villagers' settlements. The place where I lived was also affected, though chemicals were dropped ten kilometers from there. The leaves of the jack-trees all fell, and those of the green beans curled up. I've also heard that the trees in the forest were killed. The allies' medical section gave us some medicine, and people of the Rural Reconstruction also told us the names of the antidotes against chemicals. These last four months, it (the spraying) didn't happen any more. It seems to me that the Government sprayed an area in the woods, thirty or so kilometers away from there.

109. What did you hear about the reasons for the spraying?

I heard the people of the Rural Reconstruction say that it was to kill the VC, to destroy the woods and dislodge the VC from their positions. Only the VC areas were sprayed.

110. Who was said to be doing the spraying?

The GVN did it to kill the VC. How could the VC have aircraft to drop chemicals?

111. What effects were you told the spraying had on crops?

The GVN sprayed more than ten kilometers from my place, but chemicals were brought to my village by the wind. The fruit trees were killed, and the people got sick. As a matter of fact, the GVN didn't have any intention to spray my village.

112. What was done to protect the people from chemical spray?

People of the Rural Reconstruction told us that in case we were affected by chemical spray we should rub our faces with and drink vinegar to keep us from becoming swollen. After the spraying many people were affected, and they looked like people who had beri-beri.

The villagers were very afraid and came to the district to ask for help. We were then advised to use vinegar which was actually very effective. Now, everybody has some vinegar in his own house.

113. What did the Front cadres say about how to protect yourself against chemical spray?

I heard according to what they said, one had to cover his hand with a nylon sack. I wondered how people could breathe with it. This was only because they (the VC) saw that the people of the GVN Rural Reconstruction took care of the villagers affected by the spraying, and they couldn't help themselves from saying or recommending something. If the villagers affected by the spraying waited for their advice, they would have died a long time ago. These past four months there weren't any (VC) left. It's impossible now for a VC cadre to sneak in because the villagers have been divided into groups of ten families, and people of each group had to report to the GVN officials the presence of any stranger. Many times when we heard the sound of people moving by at night, the next day we reported to the soldiers in the GVN post. We asked them whether or not they had been on patrol last night because we had heard the sound of five or six people passing by, and we didn't know if they were VC or GVN soldiers. The soldiers told us to forget about that. Well, then we forgot about that.

114. Could you tell the difference between a VC's and a GVN soldier's foot-print?

Yes, because the VC wore sandals, and the GVN soldiers wore boots. But sometimes the VC dressed themselves up as GVN soldiers. They wore GVN uniforms, stripes and hands, and bats-shoes, and if the GVN soldiers took them for their fellow fighters, they would be easily killed. (Interviewer's note: Bata is a local trade mark of sport shoes.) I never ceased to remind my son and my nephews that they had to be careful, that they shouldn't trust the uniforms, that they had to look at everybody's face, and so forth.

115. Have you heard of the spraying doing damage to the Front organizations or units?

Yes, there were a lot of VC killed in [redacted] I didn't see but I have heard about this. They (the VC) actually concealed this from everybody.

116. Do you know how many VC were killed?

I don't know. I only know that they were killed, but I don't know how many.

117. When did that spraying in [redacted] take place?

More than one month ago. Those who followed them were also killed.

118. Who told you about this?

I heard about this from the youths. It was transmitted by the way of mouth, one whispering to another.

119. How could you hear about this if you took refuge here five months ago?

I returned to the village and heard them whisper to each other.

120. So, you have returned to your village.

Yes, as the situation became steady, I went back there many times to visit my nephews. In such a way, I heard them whisper that the VC were killed in [redacted].

121. Did that spraying cause the villagers any damage?

The villagers weren't killed, but their beans and paddy which were three or five kilometers from there were damaged. Those who were affected drank vinegar as I told you and got over it. Five kilometers from the place sprayed, chemicals carried by the wind affected all vegetation and crops. Paddy and potatoes remained hard after cooking. The leaves of green beans and bindweed all curled up. These past five months I learned that my village became safe, and I returned there many times to visit my nephews, each time for only one day.

122. Did the villagers who suffered damage say anything?

Only a few drunkards talked at random. Most of the villagers only said that it was ill-luck that the wind had carried chemicals there to destroy their crops.

My nephews told me that some villagers who had suffered too much damage made a petition certified by the village and district officials, and they were given a small compensation by the province chief who explained that the Government didn't do it purposely, that the wind had carried those chemicals, and so forth.

123. Did any of the villagers go hungry because of the spraying?

No, I didn't see any.

124. Did the VC help the villagers who had suffered damage?

No. They all ran away. They didn't have enough to feed themselves, how could they help the villagers? Now, the allies are there, and the villagers are happier.

125. Did the villagers stage demonstrations against the spraying?

No. They only asked the GVN officials to spray farther away. I think that they want the GVN to spray the woods to kill the vegetation * to make their life easier, but they didn't dare express loudly their thoughts. * (Interviewer's note: By this, the subject meant to dislodge the VC from the woods to make the people's lives easier.)

126. Did any VC production areas suffer damage because of the spray?

They suffered a lot of damage that they tried to conceal from everybody. From [redacted] to the Cambodian border there was great damage. The paddy was as if somebody had poured boiling water on it. The leaves of the trees dried up and fell. Now, my place is safe. Twenty kilometers from there the area is a remote one where they (the VC) settle down.

127. In your opinion, how does chemical spraying compare with aerial bombing or artillery shelling?

Chemical spraying is more frightening than bombs and shells because people could protect themselves against aerial bombing and artillery shelling by taking cover in trenches, while they couldn't do so with chemical spraying which looked like fog and which infiltrated into the soil. Even the worms and crickets were killed. (Paused).

Recently another refugee, during a little chat between us, reported that once he had gone to [redacted] with other men to cut wood. When they saw a cardboard box, one of them, thinking that it was a box forgotten by the Americans, opened it, and his face became swollen. Thanks to the GVN's medical section, which advised him to rub his face with and to drink vinegar, the swelling subsided after a while. Then, he was given medicine and got over it. We all laughed over the story, and one said, "Poor man probably thought there was money in the box, and he very nearly died for nothing."

128. Do you think chemical spray is a weapon directed against the VC?

I often heard the Rural Reconstruction cadres say that whenever there was an encounter where we couldn't hold them off, we should send for aircraft to drop chemical spray. Then, the VC wouldn't be able to escape. If an area of five kilometers around the battlefield was sprayed, they all would be killed. In regard to bullets and shells, they could avoid these by rolling or crawling. The Rural Reconstruction cadres said that the VC who were tired by running strongly breathed in the poisonous air and died.

129. Do you think it is an important factor in defeating the Front?

Yes, because they (the VC) cannot escape from chemical spraying. On the contrary, when they were shot at, they could lay down to avoid bullets. In my opinion, if there was an encounter here, we should drop chemicals three kilometers ahead of them so that they wouldn't be able to keep themselves from breathing in the poisonous air when they ran away. When people run, they have to breathe in strongly, and in such a way they must inhale the poisonous air.

130. How does the damage done by the spray compare with bombing and shelling?

In fighting with the VC, if the GVN used chemical spraying, the VC would suffer more casualties because they couldn't run through chemicals. If the GVN attacked them by using ordinary weapons and ground forces, the troops would be exhausted by the time they ran to meet the VC who were in a more advantageous position and were already installed in their gunpits. But, if the VC had to run to meet chemicals, they would be worn out before getting killed. In my opinion, if they weren't killed, they would get intoxicated. When the GVN sprayed more than ten kilometers from my place, we were also almost intoxicated.

131. Which did the VC cadres fear most?

They feared chemicals most. Every time they heard the sound of aircraft, they all fled because so many of them had already been killed. I was in no position to know that they were afraid of chemicals, but there was a rumor about that. They dread chemicals, but they didn't dread weapons. Both intoxication and hunger could already kill them. Living in the woods, they only feared chemicals. In some places the villagers would like to help them by telling them to rally, but they didn't dare return here because of their burdened conscience. Only those who chanced it returned here. The smart ones returned, the stupid ones stayed in the woods. Many of them had a skin eruption which broke out.

132. Which weapons did the villagers fear more?

The villagers feared any kind, but the VC feared chemicals most. The villagers feared weapons because they didn't know how to avoid bullets. The VC feared chemicals more because when the wells and streams were spoiled, they didn't have water, and [redacted] and [redacted] were too far to reach to get water. They were cornered and dreaded chemicals very much. Even fish in the streams were killed.

133. What did the VC cadres say about the Americans?

They criticized the Americans, saying that the Americans came here to dispute with them about this country. I myself didn't see the Americans dispute about anything except that they came here to help the GVN. I don't see the Americans dispute with them about North Vietnam. They (the VC) stayed here in the hope of winning the population over. The people didn't agree with them, and thanks to the Americans, they might be pushed back. The people are already fed up with them. When they saw the VC, they were much more afraid than when they saw the weapons. They feared that the VC would hide in their houses and fire at random, and on this side, people would fire back killing everybody. When the villagers met the VC, they were very sad but they didn't dare say anything. When I returned to my village to visit my family, my nephews told me that now, they can sleep at night in their houses and not in trenches, that every night the GVN forces and the allies went on patrol, and the VC do not dare return there any more. The villagers who had taken refuge in Saigon also returned home. Some of them, whose houses had been destroyed, had to temporarily live in the theater or the village school.

The district chief, seeing that there were children who got wet and cold because of the rain, gave them mosquito nets and blankets. The villagers, one after another, have returned to the village to rebuild their houses.

134. Do you think the Americans are like the French, or are they different?

The Americans support the Vietnamese much better. They are compassionate and give to the poor people medicine and many other things. The French, in the past, didn't come up to the Americans in bringing gifts to the people. The Americans who come here miss their families and children. Therefore, they love Vietnamese children very much. When I recently returned to my village I saw many of them about forty years old who were sweetly called "Daddies" by children of 14 or 15 years old. They gave those children a lot of money. One even bought a boy a gold bracelet of two "chi" (about 10 grams), and said, "If your mother agreed to let me adopt you, I would bring you to United States, and I would give your mother a hundred thousand piasters". The boy answered, "If you have sincere affection for me, stay here. I cannot leave my country. I will be very sad to be far from home. When you have to leave give me a little money, but I can't leave my family." The American then told him that life in America is even more happy than here. In my settlement four or five children were given money, and they brought bananas and papayas to the Americans. My nephews told me that one American who stayed there for eight months gave each of three children he knew two thousand piasters before he left. "I will come back", he said, in ten months. If you get married send me a letter through my postal sector." The foster-father and the three children all cried.

135. Have you seen any American gifts to the villagers?

The Americans gave the people vegetable oils, rice, and clothes -- a few suits for each one. Each family received one can of vegetable oil and a sack of crushed rice once every month or every two months because there were too many refugees. Last Tet we received more gifts to celebrate it. Now, thousands of people were working for the Americans, both old men and youths, and each one is paid seventy piasters per day.

136. What did the villagers say about those gifts?

They didn't say anything except that they were happy and grateful. They told each other that the war is none of their business, and they only had affection for those who are compassionate to them. Thousands of people are now employed by the Americans and can earn their living.

137. Have you seen or heard about other foreign countries assisting the GVN and sending troops to South Vietnam?

I didn't see or hear about this. (Paused).
I heard people whisper to each other, but I didn't see any. I think, however, this side has never ceased to build up its forces. As for the VC, they always deceived the people, and it led to nothing. The GVN, with aircraft and armored vehicles supplied by the allies, is capable of facing the enemy, no matter who he is and where he comes from. This year I've seen that most of the people have already enlisted in the ARVN. They weren't drafted, but volunteered when there was a GVN recruitment. So, you can see that no matter where the enemy comes from, he will meet his match. The people were very sad and all enlisted in the ARVN. They didn't fear the VC any more. In the past the VC could sneak into the village, and the villagers feared that they would bear a grudge against them if they sided with the GVN. Now, the villagers are no longer afraid of them. I myself told my son to enlist in the GVN province unit which was being set up. The province needed about two thousand soldiers to guard the towers from here to Duc Hoa, Duc Hue, and [redacted]. Now, it should be at full strength. Last year the youths hid themselves from the draft. This year they all volunteered because the VC made them feel afraid. For instance, the VC drafted a man who had four children. How could they be decently fed? Therefore, people enlisted in the ARVN where they could get at least a thousand piasters to raise their families. If they were killed, they would be decently buried. If they joined the VC and if they were killed, they would be buried in the woods. They wouldn't get any salary. They would suffer hunger and cold. Even if they were arrested and brought to the woods by the VC, they would flee. Therefore, the youths all enlisted in the ARVN. In the Quang Trung military training camp, if there were five hundred youths drafted, there were one thousand volunteers. I dropped by the camp once to visit my nephew who was drafted, but he had been transferred to [redacted]. At the time I saw that in the camp the youths were split up into two groups. I counted them up and I found that there were 1,447 youths in the group of volunteers and only 500 in the group of draftees. The volunteers were from 19 to 33 years old. The drafted were of military age (20). I was in the camp for two hours to try to search for my nephew, and at last I was told that he had been transferred to [redacted].

138. Have you heard about the air attacks on North Vietnam?

I read the newspapers and learned that the GVN actually dropped a few bombs onto the North and caused it damage. By now, our troops are already numerous. Let's move to the North in a body to fight them until their death. It will be a relief to destroy the root of the evil. Otherwise, the VC will go on sending supplies here, and what would we do? Should we always stay here to intercept them all the time? Death for death, let's go to the North and wipe them out once and for all. The VC won't be able to rely on any assistance, and this will put an end to everything.

139. What were the reasons that made you leave your village and come here?

The VC. Without their presence, I wouldn't be in such a sorry plight, and I wouldn't have to take refuge here. I would have started if I hadn't received the Government's assistance in time. Some GVN soldiers, who were acquaintances of mine, asked me whether I was sad or not. I answered them if without any reason the GVN burned my house, I would be sad. But I had to leave my place because of the VC, and the only one thing I have in mind is to try to start life anew. From now to Tet they (the VC) will certainly be forced to move farther and farther, from An Thanh to An Dien, Rach Bap and so forth.

140. Did you ever hear broadcasts from planes or read leaflets asking you to leave?

Yes, the Government dropped leaflets asking the villagers to leave the village. Therefore, those who have guts only moved near the village office. Those who were less courageous went to the district chief town. Thanks to the GVN which appealed to the people in time, there were not many villagers killed. One day after I left, the VC came to lay an ambush in my house, and when both sides were fighting, my house was completely burned. The allies got mad and leveled the ground. There wasn't any house left in my hamlet after that.

141. Have you ever taken refuge before?

No, this is the first time.

142. Before you left your hamlet, what had you heard about present conditions here?

The Government and the Cao Dai mission urged us to come here long ago. But at the time we thought that nothing would happen to us. Only when the situation grew worse did we come here in a body. The Cao Dai mission appealed to us last year by telling those who had adopted the Cao Dai religion to take refuge in Long Hoa (Tay Ninh Town). Because we were poor, we first stuck to our land to earn our living. But when the situation became too tense, we had to leave our ancestors' graves.

143. Were you told what the GVN would do for you and other refugees?

When we came here, the Government actually gave us rice and money. Each of us received six or seven hundred piasters and a can of vegetable oil. The GVN officials also told us that because we were too many, they couldn't afford to give us more than that, and they would take care that proper assistance would be done. I think that even if the Government gave us a grain of salt or a drop of "nuoc-mam", we would be very grateful because one had to search for a job to earn his living.

144. Did the VC in the village try to stop you from leaving?

If they stopped the villagers, the villagers would certainly behead them fearlessly. When the villagers left the village, they cried bitterly, and they were ready to meet the VC's shooting calmly. They even threatened a few VC, who stood too close to them, that if the VC didn't move away, they would chop them. The villagers were ready to do away with the VC if they couldn't leave. They told the VC, "You burned our houses, and now do you really want to block our way? Stay away from us, please!"

145. What property did you bring along with you?

Only a bamboo bench and a few cooking pots. I left behind everything else. When both sides were fighting, everything was burned. If I had left last year, I would have been able to save everything. It's obvious that I regret having lost my house, my land, and my belongings, but it's also obvious that my life is more precious.

146. Who came with you?

My son and my daughter-in-law. Last night my daughter-in-law, who is pregnant was sick. She coughed and this morning she went to [redacted] to get medical advice because her parents are living in [redacted].

147. How far is it from your village to here?

Cu Chi District Town is 64 kilometers from here, and my village is [redacted] kilometers from Cu Chi District Town.

148. When you left your village to take refuge here, did you take a bus to come here?

I went to Cu Chi District Town where I took a bus to come here. Now, on both sides of the national road, there are houses every three or four kilometers and the allies settle down everywhere.

149. Why did you choose this place to come?

Because I know that I would receive assistance from the Government and the Cao Dai mission here. Also, this place is safe. Twenty years ago, there wasn't any sound of gunfire. If I went to Saigon, how could I earn my living? Here I can make pails for drawing water or grow vegetables. I can get seventy piasters per day by digging manioc or get a little money by gathering firewood. In Saigon I would only have to spend money, and nobody would hire me. Only the rich people could take refuge there. As for me, I'm poor and I had to come here. Most of the people in my village have taken refuge in [redacted] and [redacted]. They were scattered around and took refuge where they had relatives. One weaves bamboo blinds, another weaves bamboo baskets. You can see them work in [redacted]. They mostly sell their produce in [redacted]. As for me, I weave pails for drawing water.

150. What have the G/N authorities here done for you?

They gave me a can of vegetable oil, one sack of crushed rice, one sack of corn, and 630 piasters.

151. Did you receive assistance only once or many times?

Only once, I didn't make any request because I saw that the Government was busy helping so many people. I thought that it would be better for me to try to earn my living by myself. My family composed of three persons only received $50.

152. Do you still have your identification card?

Yes.

153. Didn't the VC tear it up when they occupied your village?

I told them if they wanted to tear it up, they should kill me at the same time.

154. Are you being given any education or training here?

Not yet. But we, the refugees, are making hats, bamboo baskets, pails, closely-woven baskets, and grass mats. Some are tailors, others are carpenters. Recently, the GVN officials came to visit us. They were very pleased to see that we are capable of earning our living, and they encourage us to continue. With our work, we don't grow rich, but we have enough to eat.

155. How many refugees are in your camp now?

By now, there are forty or fifty people left. Last year there were hundreds of people, but as most of us didn't have an occupation, many asked for money and left for other places to live with their parents or relatives.

156. What do the children of the refugees do here?

Nothing because they all are small children. The refugees who are left in this camp didn't receive any money from the Government and they are still waiting for it.

157. When you leave here, where would you like to go?

I will follow my son and go on making hats and pails to sell in [redacted]. My son enlisted in the province unit, and he can certainly rent a small house.

158. Here is a picture of a ladder. The bottom rung is numbered ten, and the top rung is numbered one.

Now, let's say that the top rung represents the best life you can imagine, and the bottom rung represents the worst life you can imagine. Where on this ladder would you say that your life was before the VC came to your village?

The fifth rung.

159. After they came to your village?

The tenth rung.

160. At the time you left your village?

Also the tenth rung.

161. How about right now? Where on the ladder would you put your life now?

The first rung. Here I can eat and sleep peacefully.

162. Where do you think your life will be five years from now?

I don't know. (Laughed) I think that the VC won't be able to do anything against the GVN.

163. What kind of life do you hope your son will have?

I have only one son who is now more than thirty years old. I think that the more GVN soldiers there are, the more they have a chance to win. Therefore, I advised my son to enlist in the ARVN. I am sure that as long as there is God, the GVN and the Vietnamese people can survive. I think that my son has more chance of surviving by enlisting in the ARVN than by staying home to wait for the VC to come to kill him.

164. If you could ask three things of any Vietnamese Government, what would they be?

I only want to see my son enlist in the ARVN. Also, I am glad to see the situation become more quiet. When we left the village, we couldn't help each other. Everyone minded his own business. Though I am old, I also fear that the VC will defeat us. This is why I want to see many more GVN soldiers to have control over the country.

165. How long do you think the war will last?

I think that if there are many GVN soldiers, the VC will be annihilated from now to Tet. At least, they will have to move to Cambodia or Laos to live. They will certainly not be able to go on living in this province and in Hau Nghia Province. Day by day the GVN soldiers become more and more numerous, and there are more and more VC killed. They will certainly be defeated.

166. Which side do you think is winning now?

The GVN is winning. The VC don't have aircraft and vehicles. They only fire a few shots and run away. They cannot resist the GVN.

167. In your opinion, will the GVN finally win a complete victory?

I think that the GVN will certainly defeat the VC this year. We will certainly have a big celebration at Tet. In the past GVN forces repaired roads in day time, and at night the VC dug them up again. Now, they can no longer do that, and the allies' bulldozers work noisily everyday. How can they go on fighting? Without rice, they will certainly starve. Now, in the [redacted] area, there is no more paddy or rice. Everything dried up, and they are starving. They cannot rely on the villagers any more because most of them have their sons in the ARVN.

168. In your opinion, is either side now winning the support of the people away from the other side?

Yes, the GVN is winning the support of the people because, while last year people hid themselves from the draft, this year even those who are thirty years old volunteer. A few youths of military age still avoid doing their bit, but most of the people voluntarily enlist in the Civil Guard units and others. Therefore, I can say that the people are supporting the GVN. Even those who stay home also eagerly gave the Government a hand in repairing roads or in not deserting the markets. By now, there are certainly a few VC left scattered around in remote areas. They certainly want to rally to the Government too, but they are still afraid and hide themselves. They might be numerous elsewhere, but not in this province and in Hau Nghia.

169. If the VC win the war, what do you think life in Vietnam will be like?

If they win the war, the Vietnamese people will endure a lot of hardships. I heard that with them four or five families only have one knife (Laughed). With the GVN one can have four or five knives as he likes. Everyone is free to do what he pleases. The Government allows people to deal with each other to build houses. I heard that with the VC, everybody had to give them his produce, and only after having gathered everything did they distribute to each one what they wanted. This is certainly very hard for the people to endure. On the GVN side, if I were rich, I would be able to buy two or three cars as I liked.

170. If the GVN wins the war, what do you think life in Vietnam will be like?

If the GVN wins the war, the people will lead a happy life. If the GVN is defeated, the people will endure hardships. The people hope that the GVN will annihilate the VC soon so that people can lead a happy life. If the GVN takes time to do that, the people will endure hardships.

171. Have you heard about American offers to negotiate about the war?

I didn't hear about this.

172. Do you think the war could be settled by negotiations?

In my opinion, I would agree to the GVN negotiating with the VC if the VC withdrew to the North and the GVN and the Americans went on staying here. I wouldn't like peace if the VC were in power. The GVN and the Americans are compassionate. I noticed that when there were VC among the villagers, the GVN-Americans never opened fire. If they killed everybody, who would prosecute them? In regard to the VC, when there were a few Americans standing beside the villagers, they launched grenades to kill everybody. How could we like the VC?

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

The subject seemed at ease, intelligent, and cooperative. As a Cao Dai, and also because his relatives had been killed by the Viet Minh in the past, he has a strong hatred for the VC.

The interview improved with time, and it was conducted in privacy. As usual, the interviewer presented himself as a member of a Social Science Research Group.

The subject did see the American team leader. No reaction.

No. AGR 74

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

1. Name of Interviewer: [redacted]
2. Name of Subject : [redacted]
3. Time and Date of Interview:

   From 9:15 AM to 11:45 AM on Nov. [redacted] 1966

   From 1:30 PM to 4:45 PM on Nov. [redacted] 1966

   From _____ to _____ on _____ 1966

   From _____ to _____ on _____ 1966

   Total time: 5 hours 40'

   Interview based on: tape (X) hand written notes ( )
4. Place of Interview: Tay Ninh
5. Sex of subject: Male (X) Female ( )
6. Age of subject: 52
7. Ethnic background: Vietnamese
8. Place of birth:

   hamlet [redacted]

   village [redacted]

   district Cu Chi

   province Hau Nghia
9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee:

   hamlet [redacted]

   village [redacted]

   district Cu Chi

   province Hau Nghia
10. (a) Length of residence in last location: 52 years

    (b) Who controlled the place of residence:

    GVN ( ) VC ( ) Contested (X)

    (c) Since when controlled or contested? 1960

11. Number of brothers (X) and sisters (1)

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age: _____

13. Marital status: Married (widow - 15 years ago)

14. Number of children: One son

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age: One

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion: Cao Dai

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge: Weaver of buckets and
Farmer growing vegetab

19. Economic status:
(a) VC designation Poor
(b) Landowner? _____ How much land One hectare

20. Education:
Illiterate ( )
Literate ( )
Schooling completed: Can read and write

21. Any relatives in VC: _____

22. Any relatives in GVN: One son - civil guard

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by:
(a) French
(b) GVN
(c) VC Father, aunt, grandfather cousin in 1949

24. When became a refugee: Five months ago

25. Where took refuge first: A friend's house in Long Hoa
(Tay Ninh)

26. Parent residence: [redacted] refugees' camp 4 months ago
(Tay Ninh)

INTERVIEW #AGR-75 MISSING—

INTERVIEW NOT COMPLETED

INTERVIEW #AGR-76 MISSING—

INTERVIEW NOT COMPLETED

AGR

INTERVIEW

77

[redacted]

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THE RAND CORPORATION

INTERVIEWS CONCERNING THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR - 77

Date of Interview : November [redacted] 1966

Subject's Category : Refugee, October 1966

Former Residence : [redacted] Hamlet, [redacted] Village, Tuy Hoa District, Phu Yen Province.

This interview is for the information of US and Vietnamese official agencies and personnel on a need-to-know basis. Permission to distribute or show this interview to non-official persons requires the prior approval of The RAND Corporation and the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs.

1. How long had you and your family lived in your village before you became a refugee?

   I had lived in my village since I was born.

2. How big was your village?

   My village was very big. It had [redacted] hamlets with a population of [redacted] persons.

3. How did you earn your living there?

   I was a farmer.

4. How did most of the villagers earn their living?

   Most of the villagers were farmers. A number of them were tobacco-growers.

5. Were most of them well-off or poor? Did they have enough to eat?

   While the village was still under GVN control, many villagers were fairly well-off. The others had enough to eat. Very few people were poor.

6. Did you own any land?

   I had four hectares of land.

7. How did you get it?

   It was given to me by my parents.

8. How many of the other villagers owned land?

   Seven of every ten families had land.

9. Normally, how much paddy did you get per crop?

   I usually got 350 buckets of paddy per crop from cultivating 4 hectares of land.

10. How many crops a year?

[illegible] crop a year.

11. How many members are there in your family?

My family has 7 persons altogether. My wife, five children, and myself.

12. What did they do in the village?

My wife and children helped me to farm when we were still living in the village.

13. What is your religion?

I'm Buddhist.

14. What religions did the other villagers practice?

Approximately 70% of the population are Buddhist. The other 30% are Catholic.

15. Were there ever conflicts between members of different religions?

No, never. We were united.

16. What is your ethnic background?

I'm Vietnamese.

17. Were other villagers different from you?

No. They are Vietnamese.

18. What education have you had?

I didn't attend the school.

19. What education did the other villagers have?

A number of the villagers know how to read and write. Most of them are illiterate.

20. Was there a school in your village?

Yes. A school was built by the GVN in the village.

21. Did all the children go to school?

Yes. Almost all the village children went to school.

22. Did the children have to pay school fees?

No, they didn't. That school was a public school; the teacher was assigned by the government.

23. Who were your best friends in your village?

I didn't have any close friend.

24. Which people in your village were the most important?

[redacted] was the most important person in the village.

25. Which people in your village were the most respected?

[redacted] was also the most respected person in my village. Formerly, he used to work for the **French.** Recently, he was elected by the people of this province to be a member of the Provincial Council in Phu Yen Province. When the Front first came to the village, he left for the GVN area. He is very nice and kind. He was one of the richest persons in the village and he never showed off. He is very compassionate. While he was still in the village, he used to visit poor people who were sick; he gave them money and medicine.

26. Which people in your village were the best informed about what was happening in the district? About what was happening in the province and in Saigon?

[redacted] was the only one who knew about what was going on in the GVN areas.

27. How was life in your village before 1954?

Before 1954, during the French Resistance, life in my village was relatively easy. The villagers were able to farm in order

to get supplies, although we had to run away from the village sometimes when the French troops landed. At those times, we used to take cover in the jungle for a short while or for several days when the French troops came to the village.

28. Did any people in your village fight against the French?

A number of them joined the Viet Minh to fight the French. They are now with the front.

29. Did life in your village improve after 1954?

Life in my village was much better than it was before 1954. The National Government helped the villagers in many ways. The poor people were given support; they frequently received clothes, rice, etc.

30. How did the local officials behave?

They were nice.

31. Were they local people or strangers?

They were local people.

32. Were they elected or appointed?

They were elected by the villagers.

33. Describe how the election was conducted. Did everyone vote?

Several years ago, the Village Council election was conducted in my village. Every villager, men and women, over 18 years old, was allowed to vote.

34. How many candidates were there?

I forgot.

35. What qualifications did one have to have in order to vote?

Regardless of the religion or profession, every person above 18 years old was a voter.

36. What qualifications did one have to have in order to be a candidate?

[redacted] to be a candidate, one had to be a local person or a person who has been living in the village not less than 4 years before the election was conducted. A person didn't have to be rich, but should have had a good reputation

37. Was the election honest?

Yes, it was. Everybody was satisfied with the result of that election. [redacted] was elected as Chairman of the Village Council. [redacted] was very kind person; he was good to all of the villagers. We liked him, therefore we were happy to elect him to be the Chief of the village.

38. Did the elected officials promise any social improvements?

They promised to help poor people to improve their lives. They promised to provide people with enough food and cloths.

39. Did they keep their promises?

Yes, they did. Many poor homeless people were given money to build their own houses.

40. What did you think about the Diem Government?

I think the Diem Government had done many good things for people. Under that government, people were free to travel from one area to another. Everybody made good profits and they didn't have to pay high taxes for the government. Especially in the first several years after Mr. Diem became President, people lived peacefully; they didn't have to worry about bombings or taking refuge.

41. What did you and the other villagers think about the fall of that government?

We heard that Diem was overthrown because of his sister-in-law. Diem was a Catholic, and he was pushed by his sister-in-law to discriminate against Buddhists. At least 70% of the population in Vietnam are Buddhists, and even if he could mobilize all the Catholic people of this country to support him, he couldn't avoid being overthrown.

42. Were there any GVN military forces near your hamlet?

[redacted] outpost was formerly occupied by a Regional Force company. Since the end of 1963, I didn't know why, the Regional Force soldiers were withdrawn. As replacements, a Popular Force company was assigned to that outpost.

43. How did they behave?

They were all right. They didn't do anything harmful to the people, but they weren't able to prevent the Front people from coming to the village.

44. How did the villagers feel about them?

Most of them were nice. They came to people's houses quite often; they were very friendly. Sometimes they came to people's houses during eating time, and they were invited by some people to eat together. There had been no trouble caused among the villagers by the soldiers.

45. Did other GVN soldiers ever pass through your village?

No.

46. Did you ever live in a Strategic Hamlet?

I had lived in a Strategic Hamlet one and half years.

47. When was that Strategic Hamlet built?

I forgot.

48. How much labor and money did you have to contribute to it?

We didn't have to contribute money. We had to contribute labor only. Each man had to contribute 7 man-working days.

49. What did you have to do?

We had to make fences.

50. What [illegible] think about it?

[illegible] Strategic Hamlets because the government [illegible] villages for people living there. Before [illegible] Hamlets were built, we had to drink river water. [illegible] the people in the Strategic Hamlets didn't have to get water from the river anymore, as the government had dug 10 wells for each hamlet; after that, people got the drinking water from the wells with pumps. The first thing we liked the Strategic Hamlets was to have dug wells. The second thing was that people living in Strategic Hamlets were given priority in receiving gifts, such as clothing materials, etc. by the government.

51. What did you and others dislike about it?

We liked most of the things in the Strategic Hamlets.

52. What happened to it?

Early in 1964, I forget the date, the Front people came to my hamlet at 6:00 in the evening; they burned and destroyed everything there. All of the wells and water pumps were also completely destroyed.

53. How do you feel about it now?

I think the government would be wise if it would carry out the Strategic Hamlet program again. I, as well as the others whom I know, would prefer to stay in Strategic Hamlets because we hope to receive support from the government, as we did bef[illegible]

54. In those days, before the Front came, how did you feel about your life and future?

I wouldn't have thought about leaving the village if the Front people hadn't come there. If the GVN still controlled that village, I would keep on farming my land. I didn't dream of being rich, but at least I didn't have to worry about every meal.

55. What things dissatisfied you most?

Nothing dissatisfied me. Before the Front people came to my village, I was an inter-family chief. I had had many contacts with the GVN local officials, and they didn't do anything to dissatisfy me.

56. What did you think about the chances of your children having a better life?

I wished that my children would have jobs in order to earn their living and support us when we are at the old age. First of all, I would let them study how to read and write, and they can do any kind of work that they like to.

57. When did you first hear of the Front?

Early in 1964, the Front people started to come to my village. They said that the Vietnamese people have been enduring the slave yoke for many years. Vietnamese people have been holding the bitterness in their mouths for years and years, the cadres said, but the people didn't dare to stand up together to destroy the slave chains. According to what we were told, the Front was the people's representative organization, and was made up of people who dared to fight against the GVN and the Americans.

58. What kinds of people belonged to the Front in those days?

They were poor and illiterate people. I was poor, but I still had land and a couple of buffaloes for cultivating. They didn't have a meter of land.

59. What activities did they engage in?

When they first came to the village, they only carried on propaganda.

60. Did some first come to your village secretly?

A group of Front people came to the village first. They gradually contacted some well-known villagers, such as Mr. [redacted] etc. These persons immediately shook hands with the Front people at the first moment after their arrival in the village. Mr. [redacted] have been serving in the Front since 1964. Presently, these two men are living and working in the mountain near my village.

61. How many of the villagers knew who the Front people were?

Many villagers knew, because the cadres used to come to people's houses to whisper to the villagers.

62. When the Front people first came to your village, what did the GVN officials do?

Some of them left the village soon after the Front people came, as they were afraid of being liquidated by the Front. The other village officials remained in the village for a while. When [redacted] outpost was abandoned, they also left for the GVN area. Some of them are now living in the refugee camp here in [redacted]

63. What propaganda did the Front make?

When the Front people decided to organize a propaganda meeting their liaison man went to every house to invite the villagers to attend. They used to borrow one of the people's houses to use as a meeting room. In the meetings, the cadres said that the Front people were fighting against the enemies in order to bring freedom for the people. The Front people were also trying to bring sufficient food and clothes for the people, they said. They also didn't forget to demand people's contributions at every meeting. When they first came to the village, in several meetings attended by many villagers, they advised the villagers to support the Front as much as they could with man-power or materials, because the Front was trying to liberate [redacted] within the first 6 months of 1964.

64. Did many villagers attend the meetings?

All of the villagers had to attend. People who refused to attend the meetings were sent to the mountain or jungle for re-education.

65. How many villagers were sent out for re-education?

I don't know how many, but I was one of those people who had been re-educated.

66. What did you do to make the Front people send you out of the village for re-education?

When they first came to the village, I was invited by them to attend the meetings. I didn't like the Front, and I didn't believe their propaganda; therefore, I didn't attend the meetings. The cadres came to my house and asked me why

I didn't attend the meetings. I was very angry with them and, since I didn't like them, I didn't want to talk to them. However, they came to ask me my reason for not having attended the meetings, and I was rough- mannered in telling them, "what are you Front people here in this village for? I was free to work to earn my living before you came. I was free to eat when I wanted to eat, and I was free to buy something I wanted to buy if I had money. I have lived under the GVN control for many years. I didn't have to attend meetings, and now, you arrived here in the village just 12 days ago and you asked me to attend meetings, contribute money, dig trenches, etc. And what else are you going to ask me to do? You can go ahead to do to me whatever you want to, but I'm not going to do what you asked me to." The cadres were very angry with me. They took me away from home for re-education for 3 times: the first time, they kept me for ten days; the second time eight days; the third time, seven days.

67. Where did the cadres take you to?

The first and the second times I was brought to [redacted] jungle. The third time, I was brought to a mountainous area, but I didn't know what that area was called.

68. What did you have to do during the re-education periods?

During the re-education periods, at daytime, I had to grow crops - such as sweet potatoes, manioc, and corn -- for the Front. At nighttime, I had to study about "How to build a nation and how to make the country become strong". During the re-education session, the cadres explained that in order to liberate people from the American slave yoke, the Front needed everybody's support. They said that if I didn't have money, I would have to contribute labor for the Front, or if I had paddy or anything else, I should contribute as much as I could for feeding Front troops. I was told that the Front is fighting for people's benefits, and that they aren't fighting for themselves. The cadres also said that we would not have to work for the Front or contribute to the Front for ever. Some day, they said, the war would be over, and people would enjoy freedom and happiness.

69. Did the Front feed you or you have to bring food with you during your re-education periods?

I had to bring food with me.

70. [illegible] after being re-educated?

[illegible] released after a certain period of time. [illegible] persons were liquidated by the Front. At my [illegible] session, 3 persons were liquidated by the cadres. These three persons had argued with the cadres during the meeting. They said that the GVN had never asked people to contribute or to work for them, but the Front asked for many things. The cadres thought that if these hard-headed people stayed alive, it would be difficult for them to convince the others to follow the Front. Therefore, they brought 3 persons to an area in the jungle to chop off their heads. After the liquidation of those three victims, every one of us was very scared, and we didn't say anything against them. We all promised to contribute for the Front and would do things that they asked us to.

71. When did your village first become controlled by the Front?

It has been almost three years by now.

72. Were there battles in or near your village at that time between the Front and ARVN?

No.

73. Why couldn't the GVN forces control your village?

When the Regional force soldiers were still in [redacted] outpost, the villagers made very good profits, and they were free to travel here and there to carry on business. In the early/of 1964, all of the villagers didn't understand why the GVN suddenly withdrew the troops from [redacted] outpost. Since then, the security of [redacted] hamlet and other neighbor hamlets became worse and worse. Since there were no GVN troops in the village, the Front people didn't have trouble in coming over there and carrying out activities. If the government didn't withdraw the troops, I don't think that my village would have become controlled by the Front, as it is now.

74. What did the Front people do to the people's GVN identification cards?

Most of the villagers' identification cards were confiscated and burned by the Front people when they first came. I still

[illegible] them by saying that I hit my card [illegible] in front of the house. When the guerrillas came to my house, they burned the straw and thought my identification card was also burned.

75. How did the [illegible] guerrillas behave?

They talked a lot, but did nothing. If they just only carried on propaganda, that was all right, but the thing that bothered me was that they came to my house very often at eating time, and they watched us eat. They wanted to know what kind of food we ate, how many meals we had every day. If we ate white rice with fish or meat, they would criticize me as being capitalist. Since I had to work to earn my living and I didn't rob people's property, I should enjoy my profit. But the cadres asked people not to eat more than two meals a day, and at the same time, we were asked by them not to eat white rice with good food. We should eat sweet potato and rice without fish or meat. The cadres said, we should share the food with Front people.

76. How did the villagers feel about them?

Almost all of the villagers didn't like them, but they didn't dare to show their attitude. When the village was still under GVN control, many of the villagers grew tobacco on their land. They were able to collect at least several ten thousand piasters each year from growing a hectare of tobacco. After the Front people came to the village, those tobacco growers weren't allowed to grow tobacco anymore; the Front forced them to grow sweet potato, beans, corn, etc. A great part of the villagers' crops reached Front people's hands, and the most they could have was just enough to eat.

77. What did you know about the aims of the Front?

The cadres always said that the Front people were fighting for the people's freedom and happiness. I couldn't understand, although I tried to. We were free and happy before the Front people came to the village. When they came, we couldn't even eat what we wanted to. I don't know what kind of freedom the Front is fighting for.

78. What are the names of the leaders of the Front?

[redacted] names of the Central Front leaders. Mr. [redacted] is a member of the Front village committee of my village. Mr. [redacted] is the security man of my village. The village's activities were held by this security man. He could kill or arrest any person whenever he wanted to.

79. When the Front first controlled your village, which of these words would you have used to describe the Front:

Peace-loving/dangerous? Patriotic/treasonous?
Brave/cowardly? Sympathetic/ruthless?

I couldn't describe the Front literally. I only can say that Front people are robbers. Before they controlled the village, I had land, paddy, and a couple of buffaloes, but by the day I left the village, I didn't have more than 5$ in my pocket. If they hadn't come to the village, I would never have left my village with empty hands.

80. Did the Front hold meetings in your village?

The cadres held meetings once every month.

81. What did the cadres say in the meetings?

The meetings were mainly aiming at appealing for people's support. The cadres said that the Front people were fighting for the freedom and happiness of people, therefore, everyone would have to provide the Front with all they can. Rich people should contribute money or materials, while the poor would have to contribute labor for the Front's works.

82. Did you attend the meetings?

At the beginning, after the Front people came to the village, I didn't attend. After being arrested by the Front several times, I was afraid that they would kill me if I still was hard-headed. Therefore, I had to attend the meetings.

83. What did the cadres say about the GVN? About the Americans?

In the meetings, the cadres said our people are suffering miseries caused by the American-Diem Government. Formerly, the cadres said, Diem was an American's adopted son. He did whatever the Americans asked him to do. The present

[illegible] follows Diem's way. The GVN has let the Americans come the country and kill the people. The cadres [illegible] GVN is doing is the action of a person who [illegible] dead rats, and the snakes will bite his children. [illegible] to help the people to get out of miserable life, the Front has been fighting against the Americans. As soon as the Americans are kicked out of the country, people wouldn't have to suffer the war anymore. In order to succeed, the cadres said, the people shouldn't hesitate to do what they can for the Front.

84. What did they say about the future of the war?

They said the war is being fought fiercely, and it will be more fierce in the future before it is going to be over. I don't know how and when, but the Front cadres always said that they were going to win the war.

85. How many young men over 16 were in your village?

There were many.

86. How many joined the Front?

Most of the young men in my village joined the Front. They were guerrillas.

87. Did they join the Front voluntarily?

Almost all of them were forced to join the Front. For example, I have one son, who is over 16. I don't want him to join the Front, and he doesn't like it either. The cadres would come to my house to take my son away. Not only that, after taking my son away, they would come to arrest me for re-education. The young men who didn't want to join the Front were charged with thinking of following the enemies.

88. How many joined the ARVN?

There were a few young men in my village who joined the ARVN, but I don't know how many. A number of young men who were formerly forced to join the Front have escaped from the Front unit to join the GVN popular force.

89. What kind of young men joined the Front?

Most of them were poor. They didn't have enough to eat.

90. What kind of young men joined the ARVN?

Most of young men in my village desired to join the ARVN, but very few of them were able to escape from the Front area to join the ARVN. People who wanted to join the ARVN were from middle or rich families. They didn't believe the Front's propaganda.

91. What recruiting propaganda did the Front use?

The cadres used to gather young men together in some place to carry on propaganda. The cadres said all young men should understand their great obligation to the country and their people. The destiny of the nation, the cadres said, depends on the fighting spirit of young men and the contributions of all people. The cadres always talked first about how great the men would be if they joined the Front and later on, they scared young men by saying that whoever wanted to join the ARVN would be considered followers of the enemy. They would be liquidated immediately.

92. Did the young men believe what the cadres said?

Only several of them did, and they joined the Front voluntarily. Those were from poor families. They were very proud of being Front elements, or as the cadres said, men who carry out great obligations. Most of the others didn't believe, and they didn't want to join the Front. But they were forced to.

93. How did the cadres force the young men to join them?

The cadres and several guerrillas came to those young men's houses to tie them up and take them away. The cadres even put rags into some young men's mouths in order to stop them from shouting.

94. How did the villagers feel about the young men joining the Front?

The villagers didn't want their sons to join the Front, but they could do nothing to keep their sons. Many families

had only one son, and after their sons joined the Front, they didn't have anyone else to help them to cultivate or to do home work. People were very dissatisfied with the way that the Front used to force young men to join them. At the end of 1964, many young men were forced to join the Front. The families of those young men were very angry with the cadres when their sons were tied up and taken away from home. Some of the villagers even shouted at the cadres. They said: "You Front people said that you were people's representatives; you said that you help us to improve our living standards, and yet, you didn't refrain from taking away even my broom, and now, you want to kill my son by forcing him to join you."

95. What did the cadres do to those villagers?

Those villagers were sent to the jungle for re-education for two months. Some of them were very sick after they were released by the Front.

96. How did the villagers feel about young men joining the ARVN?

The villagers had lived under the GVN control for many years before the Front people came to the village. They could well understand what the GVN troops did for people. After the Front people came to the village, they have also learned about their true faces. The villagers who have sons in the Front all wished that their sons would be able to escape from the front area and join the ARVN. They said that their sons would receive good salary from being ARVN troops. If they die, their families would be given support by the government. One of my neighbors' sons, who was a popular force soldier, was killed in an ambush last May. His parents were given an amount of money and a lot of foodstuffs. Some young men who joined the Front were also killed in action, but their families didn't even know where the Front buried their men. The Front cadres just simply said that those men died for the country and for the people.

97. Were families with sons in the Front treated differently in your village?

In the meetings, the cadres usually showed their admiration towards people who have sons in the Front before many others. The cadres said those who have sons serving in the Front were very understanding people. The cadres said they had very high fighting spirit, and also they wanted their country

to be independent. In order to flatter those people, the cadres said in the meetings that people who had sons in the Front were good examples for others to follow. I don't know whether those who had been flattered by the cadres were happy or not, but I think their stomachs would be empty if they only listened to the cadres' talk. The Front would attract others to join them if they provided people with rice, rather than by flattering them.

98. More families with sons in the ARVN treated differently?

People who had sons in the ARVN were charged with being opposed to the Front and the people. The cadres criticized those people for having sons serving the enemy side. The cadres asked several people in my hamlet who had sons in the ARVN to call their sons back. These people went away from the village for a while and pretended to look for their sons. When they came back to the village, they told the cadres that they didn't know where their sons are now. In the meetings, the cadres insulted these people by saying that they were greedy, and that they asked their sons to join the ARVN in order to get something to eat without thinking of the country and people.

99. What effect did the joining of the Front by young men have on the economic life of the village?

Many families suffered miserable lives after their sons joined the Front. The cadres promised to support those families who had sons joining the Front. After their sons left home, many families didn't even have enough corn or sweet potatoes to eat. They came to ask the cadres for help, but they received nothing and were told by the cadres that, "Joining the Front was the young men's obligation, and feeding the Front troops was every person's obligation. What made you think that the Front would have to support you?" Many people wanted to curse when they were told that, but they didn't dare to because if they did, the cadres would arrest them and would probably liquidate them.

100. Did those people who had sons in the Front receive news from their people after they had joined the Front?

No, they didn't even know whether their sons were still alive or dead. If they were dead, their corpses wouldn't be sent back to their families, as the Front would bury them somewhere in the jungle.

101. Did any guerrilla men ever escape from their units after being forced to join the Front?

Several did, but they were taken away by the cadres for re-education immediately after returning to the village. Three men from my hamlet were forced to join the Front in August 1965, and were sent to another area for training. During the training period, these people couldn't suffer hardships in the front training course; therefore, they tried to escape. Two days after their return home, the cadres came to their houses to arrest them. Their parents and wives were told by the cadres that these men were hard-headed and had intention to follow the enemies. Since then, these three men didn't come back to the village, and their families didn't receive any news from them either. I think many people wanted to run away from the Front units, but they were afraid that the Front would do harm to them.

102. How many Front guerrillas were in your village?

There/were approximately 40 guerrillas in my village.

103. What did they do?

They were armed guerrillas in charge of guarding the hamlets and village. Their main job was to inform other Front organizations if the GVN troops were going to conduct operations in the village. They should also inform people so that they could run away, but they used to run away before the villagers.

104. Did the Front ever promise to take away land from any villagers and give it to others?

They had promised to do that a long time ago, but they haven't realized their promise yet.

105. How was your family classified by the Front?

My family was classified by the Front as middle farmer.

106. What taxes did you and others have to pay to the Front when it first controlled your village?

For the first year after the Front people came to my village, I had to pay agricultural tax. If I collected [illegible] buckets

of paddy from cultivating, I had to pay the Front 900 kilos of paddy (one hectare = 20 kilos). That meant that we had to pay 90% agriculture tax for the Front when it first controlled the village. Recently the agriculture tax has been increased to 40%. Additional, we had to contribute additional paddy and money whenever the cadres came to ask for it.

107. Who collected the taxes?

The cadres usually came to every house to remind people to pay taxes. They didn't remind any family more than twice. If one didn't pay taxes on time, he would be brought to the meeting for criticizing.

108. Did you pay in money or in rice?

Basically, I had to pay in paddy. Sometimes, I had to contribute money when the cadres came to ask for it.

109. What did the Front cadres say about the taxes?

They said that the rice and money were being used to feed troops. If the troops were strong, the cadres said, the victory would be obtained by the Front, and people would enjoy the freedom.

110. What did the villagers say?

The villagers complained very much about having to pay high taxes to the Front. They said that formerly, when the GVN still controlled the village, people had to pay not more than several tens of piasters as land tax for the GVN per year. Very high
Now the Front forced people to pay taxes, how could they have enough to feed their children? The villagers just talked to each other, they didn't dare to say anything to the cadres or other Front people. If they complained to the cadres about having high taxes, they would be criticized in the meetings or taken to the jungle for re-education.

111. Were any villagers taken to the jungle for re-education because they refused to pay taxes?

No one dared to refuse to pay taxes. Several villagers, myself included, complained about the high taxes. We were sent to the re-education session for more than [illegible]

Before releasing us, the cadres made us promise that we would never complain again about having to pay high taxes.

112. Where did the villagers usually sell their produce?

The villagers were allowed to sell their produce to the Trading Branch only. No one was allowed to sell anything to the outsiders. Especially, no one could take produce to the GVN area for sale.

113. At what prices did the villagers sell their produce to the Trading Branch?

The villagers had to sell their produce to the Trading Branch at very low prices. For example, I was able to collect 150$ from selling 1 bucket of paddy in the GVN area, but the Front didn't pay me more than 80$ for each bucket of paddy.

114. What did the villagers say about having to sell their produce to the Front and low prices?

They were very displeased, but no one dared to say things against the Front. They said that they had to work very hard to get something to eat, and yet they didn't enjoy anything from working. They had to pay taxes for the Front. They had to sell the rest of their produce to the Front at low prices. If they didn't sell their produce at the low prices, later on they would be forced to contribute to the Front because no one was allowed to keep extra rice or paddy at home.

115. Were the villagers allowed to go to GVN markets?

Only those who had sons in the Front were allowed to go to the GVN markets.

116. What kinds of goods did the villagers usually buy from GVN markets?

They usually brought Kerosene, dried fish, red pepper, etc. These things were mostly re-sold to the Front people.

117. Did the Front set up any organizations in your village?

The Women's Association, Youth Group, and Farmers' Association were set up in the village.

118. What did those organizations do?

Members of the Youth Group had to assist the village and hamlet guerrillas to guard the hamlets. Members of the Women's Association had to pound rice for the Front. They also had to organize meetings to convince people to pay taxes. Members of the Farmers' Association had to study how to increase the production rate and compete to contribute for the Front. Occasionally, members of all these three organisations had to carry out the same job. I remember the end of last year, on December 28 of Lunar calendar, we were preparing to celebrate New Year's day. All of the villagers were ordered to dig trenches for the Front. We had to work day and night in order to complete the work before New Year's Eve. Many persons weren't used to such hard work, and they fell sick.

119. What kinds of persons joined those organizations?

All young boys from 12 to 16 had to join the Youth Group. When the boys are over 16, they have to be guerrillas or join the other Front units. All of the women had to join the Women's Association. The old men had to join Farmers' Association. Most of the villagers didn't want to join, but they had to.

120. Were the people who joined ever given any special privileges?

No, we didn't enjoy any privilege, but we had to work very hard.

121. Were the people in the village better-off because of those organizations?

The villagers became miserable about those organizations. When the village was still under GVN control, we didn't have to work for the government, we didn't have to pay high taxes for the government. Since the village has been controlled by the Front, we had to pay high taxes, we couldn't do what we wanted to. We had to work for the Front without earning anything from working. How could we have a better life, since we have no time to work for ourselves. For example, I intended to grow several "sao" of sweet potatoes, but today I have to work for the Front the whole day. Tomorrow I have to attend a meeting, and if I say something to the cadres, they will send me to the jungle for re-education. So who is going to grow sweet potatoes for me, and where can I get something to eat?

122. Tell me about the Front cadres in your village. What sort of persons were they?

I didn't have contact with them very often, so I don't know them well, but I think they weren't well-trained. They didn't treat people nicely.

123. Where did they come from?

Most of them were from other areas. Several were local people. They were from this village before; when the GVN still control the village, they joined the Front and stayed in the jungle.

124. What was the most important cadre position in your village?

I think Mr. [redacted] is the most important cadre in my village. He is the Front village chief of my village. The second most important person is [redacted] He is Mr. [redacted] assistant.

125. What did you think of the highest cadre?

Front people, low and high cadres, are all liars. It seemed to me that they forgot everything that they had told the people. When they talked to people, everything was good, but they didn't do what they had said they were going to do.

126. What did the other villagers say?

They didn't dare to say anything, but we all thought the same way.

127. Which cadres or groups had most influence on Front administration and policies in your village?

We used to call Mr. [redacted] and Mr. [redacted] the "Two Grey Tigers". These two people had the most influence on Front policies in the village. No one dared to do or say anything against these two persons' orders. They could kill any person when they wanted.

128. Were there any women cadres in your village?

Yes, there were a number of women cadres. They were local people.

129. What [illegible] they hold?

They were village cadres. I don't know everyone's positions.

130. How did they behave?

They came to people's houses quite often. They used to convince people to contribute to the Front as much as people can. They also said that we are Vietnamese, and we shouldn't have American brains. That meant that we shouldn't eat good food. Money used to buy meat or other good food, the cadres said, should be given to the Front to buy food for feeding troops.

131. What did you and other villagers think of them?

We didn't like them at all. When they came to our houses, we didn't dare to ask them to get out, but we didn't welcome them warmly. When they left our houses, we blamed them secretly. We wondered how the Front cadres could tell us that they were fighting for our freedom and happiness. We couldn't even eat the food that we made by our own hands. We couldn't understand the meaning of the word "freedom" as used by the cadres.

132. Was there a Party Chapter in your village?

Yes, my village had one Party Chapter.

133. Who belonged to the Party Chapter?

I don't know how many members there were. I only know that Mr. [redacted] Mr. [redacted] and Mr. [redacted] were members of Party Chapter.

134. What did the Party Chapter do?

They usually held meetings once every month. I had nothing to do with the Party Chapter, so I didn't ask any member what they discussed or did in the meetings.

135. What were the relationships between the Party members and the other cadres?

As I told you, I had nothing to do with them, so I didn't ask, and I don't know exactly how many members there were and what they did.

136. What do you think is the relationship between the Party and the Front?

I think the Party and the Front people have been following the same purposes. They carried out the same kinds of activities.

137. What do you think is the relationship between the Party and Hanoi?

I really don't know much about that, but I think both the Front and the Party in South Vietnam are under Hanoi's control.

138. What did you and the villagers think about the way the Front cadres acted in your village?

The cadres did nothing for the people, but they robbed people's property. They tried to take everything from the people.

139. Did the villagers like the Front cadres?

I can say 70% of the villagers were Front's enemies. When I say that, it wouldn't mean that the other 30% were Front's sympathizers; although most of them already had sons in the Front, a number of them remained neutral. How could we like the people who did nothing for us and took away everything we had.

140. Have the cadres in your village changed?

Several cadres who were local people were transferred to other areas. These cadres came back to see their families very often. Their supervisors were afraid that if they saw their families too often, they would be reluctant to carry out their activities. Moreover, the higher cadres were afraid that their families would convince them to leave the Front. Therefore, they were changed to other areas, and they weren't allowed to bring their families along.

141. Did you ever see or hear about any conflicts between the cadres?

I knew that the conflicts sometimes happened between the cadres, but they didn't let any civilians know about that. In order to solve any problem, they used to gather together in some place away from the people, where they were free to argue with each

They never showed people that they were having conflicts. If I had ever known about their conflicts, I wouldn't dare talk to anyone else, because if I did, they would liquidate me or, at least, send me out of the village.

142. Were there different factions among the cadres?

The cadres always advised people to unite, but they themselves didn't. They were divided into groups.

143. What caused the different factions?

The cadres usually disagreed with each other's activities. For example, a cadre might come to my house to take away my buffaloes and take them to his house. If he did that, he might tell me that he was going to sell the buffaloes in order to get money to buy food for the Front troops. I wouldn't know the truth, but the other cadres would. The other cadres would then report to the high ranking cadres. A meeting would be held to criticize the cadre who took my buffaloes away. Of course, this cadre would become very angry with those who had reported his activities. They would become enemies.

144. Has there been any change in the attitudes of the villagers toward the Front cadres?

There had been no change. The villagers still hated the Front cadres as they did before. I don't think the people are going to change their attitudes towards the cadres. How could people be kind to them since they have miserable lives. If they got nothing to eat because they didn't work, that would be another thing. But here, people worked very hard, they didn't enjoy their profits. People cultivated on their own land, they couldn't have more than two meals a day, they also couldn't eat pure rice, they had to cook rice together with potatoes. They raised chickens but they weren't allowed to eat chickens. They had to sell them to Front people at very low prices; otherwise the Front people could take them away at anytime they wanted to.

145. Did the Front ever arrest, punish, or kill any villagers?

A number of people were killed by the Front. I know two persons, Mr. [redacted] and Mr. [redacted] were killed by the Front in [redacted].

146. Why did the Front kill those two people?

I don't know why those people did before, but the cadres said that they were CIA spies. The Front people didn't like them, so they killed them.

147. What did you think about it?

I was one of the villagers who was arrested by the Front several times. I didn't do anything wrong, I just didn't attend the meetings, and I said that I was living happily while the GVN had control of the village. They brought me to the jungle three times. During that time, I had to grow manioc and sweet potato for the Front during the daytime; at night, I had to listen to their lectures. I had seen that some persons were killed by the Front because they were hard-headed; therefore, I didn't dare say things against them again. There is no other word to describe Front people. I only can say that they were very cruel.

148. Were you or other villagers ever made to perform work without pay?

We had to work as civilian laborers for the Front.

149. What did you do?

We had to shoulder rice and carry wounded soldiers for the Front.

150. Where did you perform such works?

We had to carry rice from our village to [redacted] and [redacted] They were about [redacted] kilometers away from my village.

151. Did you ever have to carry wounded soldiers?

The end of 1965, I had to carry dead and wounded soldiers from [redacted] Village to the Front hospital in the mountain.

152. How many villagers worked as civilian laborers at the same time as you?

There were about 40 persons altogether. Two persons carried one wounded soldier with a hammock.

153. Where was the front hospital located?

It was called the Hospital, but it was small thatch house. We didn't stay there. All we had to do was leave the wounded soldier there and then walk out immediately.

154. Did you count how many front soldiers were wounded in that battle?

There were many, but I didn't count. I heard that many front soldiers were killed, but what the GVN troops took away those heads.

155. What did you and other villagers think about having to work as civilian laborers?

We were very unhappy about that, but we didn't dare complain. By that time, we only hoped that the GVN would conduct an operation, so that we would be able to escape from the front control.

156. Did any people get sick while working as civilian laborers?

Most of us got malaria. This kind of sickness didn't kill a person quickly, but several persons died after coming back to the village when they finished their work.

157. Was your hamlet a "combat hamlet"?

No, it wasn't.

158. What control/the Front had over people entering and leaving the village?

The Front has control all over the village. When each person from other areas arrives in the village, he has to report his presence to the Front local authority. He has to report his time of arrival, and his purpose for being in the village. All of the villagers have to obtain an outgoing authorization if they wanted to travel outside of the village. The travellers have to show their authorization to every Front check point along their way of travel. No person can pass the check point without showing authorization.

159. How does [illegible] that people leaving the village will return?

In order to [illegible] that people will return to the village, the [illegible] never allowed people to go to the GVN area with their families. For example, if I request permission to go to the GVN area for 3 days, when I receive permission, the cadres would ask me to return to the village within three days and they also would ask me to call my son back. They would believe I would be back because my wife and the other children would still be in the village.

160. Why, in your opinion, does the Front control the villagers' movements?

They had to control and to keep people in the village because they rely on the people for support. If all the villagers left the village, who could they live with, and who could they get support from. If all of the villagers left the village, I think the Front people would do nothing but clasp the trees in their arms to wait for death.

161. In your village, what had you heard about conditions of life in the Front forces?

I had occasionally talked to several Front regular force soldiers who came from the North. They said that "Uncle Ho was a liar" when he told them that Phu Yen Province had been liberated. They said they thought they were sent over here to guard this area only. They said that if they had known that they were sent to the South for fighting, they would have escaped. They told me that they had to suffer many hardships on their way to the South. They are now suffering sickness and shortage of food and clothes, and they miss their families, their wives and children.

162. When did you meet those North Vietnamese troops?

The last time I met them was in June 1966. They passed through the village very often, once every week or ten days.

163. How were they dressed?

They wore khaki suits; many of them wore tiger suits like GVN troops.

164. What [illegible] they carry?

They had many heavy weapons. Some very heavy weapons had two wheels and a beam, and were pushed by two or three persons.

165. Did the Front troops ever buy things from people when they passed through the village?

Sometimes they bought, but most of the time they asked people to give them free. When they asked people for something, they didn't wait for people to agree; they asked with their mouths and took away things with their hands at the same time. I remember last time, when the Front troops passed through my house while we were celebrating my father's anniversary of death. My wife killed a chicken, firstly for worshiping my father and later on we were going to eat that chicken. When the Front troops came, they looked at my father's altar and asked me "Do you mind if we take away this chicken?". They asked and took away the chicken very quickly before I even had time to say yes or no, the chicken already had disappeared. Actually what I wanted to do was to chop the chicken into two pieces. I would give them one piece and keep one piece, because we hadn't eaten chicken in a long time. There was nothing I could do since the troops already had the chicken. If I said something, they would charge me with doing things against the Front.

166. How old were most of the Front troops?

Most of them were from 18 to 24. A number of them were 34 to 40.

167. Did any of the young men in your village who had joined the Front return to the village?

Yes, some of them returned to the village to visit their families. They were very proud. They didn't talk to people whom they had known before.

168. Had any crippled Front soldiers returned home?

Several ones who had lost a hand or a leg returned to the village.

169. [illegible] to help them?

[illegible] front didn't help them with anything, they had to live with their parents. Many women cadres who came back from the battle also got sick, they couldn't do anything. I don't know what kind of sickness the women cadres had, but they were very pale, and their stomachs were very big like pregnant women.

170. Did you think a soldier's chances of surviving were better in the Front or the GVN forces?

I think it is better in the GVN forces. To me, a GVN soldier has a much better life than a Front soldier does. A GVN soldier can enjoy good pay from serving for the government, and if he dies, his family would be supported by the government. A Front soldier earns nothing from serving in the Front. His body wouldn't be buried properly if he dies.

171. Which did you think suffered more casualties: the GVN or the Front?

I think the Front suffered more casualties than the GVN side.

172. Which side did you think was better armed and stronger?

Of course the GVN forces were better armed and stronger than the Front forces were. Each Front company didn't have more than one 60mm artillery piece. The Front didn't have airplanes and other means of transportation.

173. Had the Front activities in your village changed in any way in the last year or so?

When the Front first came to the village, they seemed to be very active, because there had been no GVN troops to attack that area. Since the end of 1965, the Korean troops started to conduct operations in their areas, their activities have decreased remarkably. When the Front people first came to the village, they told people that [redacted] and [redacted] would be liberated within 6 months. Many people believed that, until the Korean troops landed in the village and the Front people all ran away.

174. Have you ever heard about casualties suffered by Front units?

The cadres never told us about their defeats. They always said that the Front was winning the war. I don't know about other areas, but from the Son Binh battle, I could say that the Front suffered heavy losses. In that battle, they didn't have many troops, and they loudly shouted "Go ahead! Volunteer!", but actually they were very weak. The results of that battle, as I told you, were that many of them were killed, and many others were wounded.

175. Did the Front ever set up a school in your village?

A small thatch house was made by the villagers for use as an evening popular class. A Front teacher was assigned to teach people how to read and write. All of the illiterate villagers were forced to go to the evening popular class.

176. Did the village children go to school?

Yes, they did. Each one of them had to pay 5 kilos of rice per month for the teacher as school fees.

177. Did you have a hospital or doctors in your village?

No.

178. While in your village, what had you heard about the present Saigon Government?

The cadres told me that Saigon has been taken over by the Americans. The Front people were trying to liberate it.

179. Do you know the names of any of its leaders?

I don't know the names of the present government's leaders but I know General Duong Van Minh was a former government leader.

180. What are the aims of the GVN?

I think the government is trying to help people in many ways. So far, I haven't received support from the government, but I have seen many ralliers who were given support by the

governments. Each soldier was given one bag of rice, one bicycle and 2000$. To me, the GVN is very generous, they didn't even punish those people who had been their enemies before. To those soldiers, the government had given much support, so I think that the government will also support the refugees in re-establishing their lives. According to what I have seen and heard, I think the government is trying to help people to improve their living standards and to help people who have chosen wrong ways to come back to the just cause and their families.

181. Which of these words do you think best describe the GVN: Strong/weak? Compassionate/cruel? Just/corrupt? Wise/confused? Dedicated/lazy?

I think the GVN is strong and wise. They have many airplanes, tanks, modern weapons, and the support of other countries. The GVN is wise because it has helped many ralliers and refugees to have a place to stay and food to eat. Since people understand that they would have better lives if they moved to the GVN areas, they will run away from the Front control. When people have all left the Front areas, who will be providing facilities for the Front?

182. What do you know about the more recent behavior of local, district, and provincial GVN officials?

I didn't have contact with the district and provincial GVN officials, so I don't know about their behavior. The Village Chief of my village, Mr. [redacted] is a very nice person. He likes everyone, and he never did or said anything to hurt people's feelings. He was the Village Chief of [redacted] Village before. When the Front took control over the village, he followed the villagers to take refuge in [redacted] refugee camp, where I am living now. Most of the refugees in this camp are from my village; therefore, Mr. [redacted] continued to work as the Village Chief of [redacted] Village. The only difference is that he isn't working in [redacted] and we aren't living in [redacted] anymore.

183. How did you get information in your village on what was happening in Saigon?

The only information we heard from the cadres; a long time ago, was that the Diem Government had been overthrown. The cadres said that Saigon and the 1st and 2nd Regions were going to be liberated in the next few months.

184. Did you get mail in your village?

No, I never got mail because I only have my son-in-law and [illegible] living in the GVN area. But they never wrote to me.

185. Did you or the other villagers ever listen to Radio Saigon?

All of the villagers were allowed to listen to Front Radio only. We were strictly prohibited from listening to the GVN Radio stations.

186. What were your favorite programs?

I used to listen to the news. Recently, I hated to listen to Front Radio because they always talked nonsense. According to the Front Radio, people in the North are enjoying happy lives. They also said that the North Vietnamese Government is sending plenty of foodstuffs to help people in the South. It is ridiculous if we continue to listen to such news. We are here in the South, and we have met people who came from the North. If the North Vietnamese Government is sending support to the South, why should the cadres rob our property?

187. Did you or others read newspapers?

No, there was no newspaper in the village.

188. Did you ever see or hear entertainment, such as "cai luong" or "vong co"?

The Front entertainment group came to my village once every fifteen days or once in every month for a performance.

189. What was the subject matter?

The entertainment group used to perform dances, "hat boi", and play guitars. When the entertainment group came to the village for a performance, many villagers, adults, and children went to see it, but I didn't because I didn't like the Front people. I didn't want to attend the meetings or enjoy performances unless I had to. Moreover, I am an old man, and I don't enjoy dances, singing, and plays.

190. Where did the entertainment group perform plays?

They used to borrow some people's house for the performance. They usually performed at night, but not very late. It usually started at 7:00 in the evening and lasted for 1½ hours. They didn't dare perform plays late at night because they were afraid of being discovered by the GVN observation planes

191. Did the GVN planes ever fly to your village while the plays were being performed?

No. If it happens, many people would be killed.

192. Did you ever hear about the Chieu Hoi program?

Yes, I understand that the Chieu Hoi program is a GVN program to appeal to Front people to leave their ranks and return to the government.

193. How did you hear about this program?

I heard about the Chieu Hoi program from airplane broadcasting and from some people who read Chieu Hoi leaflets.

194. Did you and the other villagers believe what you heard?

We were prohibited from reading Chieu Hoi leaflets, but some people read them secretly. According to the leaflets, the returnees will not be punished by the government; on the other hand, they will be supported by the government to have their own house to stay in, a job to earn their living, etc. Having lived under the GVN control before, many villagers, as well as myself, believed that the government wouldn't tell people lies. Especially, after arriving here in a GVN area, I myself have witnessed the distribution of foodstuffs, money, and bicycles for the Quy Chanh. There is no doubt in my mind, the government is realizing its promises properly.

195. What did the cadres say to the villagers about the Chieu Hoi program?

The cadres came to see the families who had sons in the Front and told them that the GVN were trying to dupe Front people by their Chieu Hoi program. They told the villagers that

many returnees have been beaten to death by the GVN when they rallied to the government. I think that was the way they used to threaten people who were suspected of having intentions to advise their sons to rally.

196. Did the villagers believe them?

Most of the villagers didn't. They asked their sons to rally to the government. As a matter of fact, I know about seven short guerrillas who rallied to the government who now are working for the GVN as popular force soldiers.

197. Did any Ap Chanh ever return to your village?

No, they wouldn't be able to save their heads if they return to the village.

198. What did the cadres do to stop their people from leaving?

They threatened their people by saying that the ralliers would be tortured very badly by the GVN. No matter what the cadres said, the villagers didn't believe them at all. Some villagers even pretended to bring foodstuffs for their sons in the jungle in order to meet them and ask them to rally.

199. Was your village ever attacked by the ARVN or by its allies?

The GVN troops and allied troops came to the village many times, and the front people all ran away from the village. They didn't stay there to resist. Thanks to the coming of the ARVN and its allies, many villagers were able to get out of the village. If the ARVN and its allies didn't come to the village, the front people wouldn't let us leave the village so easily.

200. What did the ARVN and its allied troops do to the villagers when all of the front cadres ran away from the village?

They didn't cause any harm to the villagers. They gathered the villagers together and took them to [redacted] refugee camp. All of the men in the village were taken over here by helicopters; women and children were taken by tanks and military trucks. The ARVN and American troops were very nice. They

[illegible] anything of the villagers. Many villagers [illegible] their buffaloes and cows along by the military [illegible], but the Americans stopped them from doing that. At first some of the villagers were upset about that, but [illegible] understood that the troops wanted to keep space for other people to get in, instead of the animals.

201. Was your village ever bombed by the airplanes?

Yes, it was bombed in June and July 1965.

202. Did the Front suffer casualties?

No Front people were killed. The Front cadres had known ahead of time that the village was going to be bombed, and they all left the village. At the time it happened, I remember that 5 persons were killed, many people's buffaloes and cows were killed, and people's houses were burned by bombs.

203. Were you in the village when it happened?

Yes, I was hiding in the trench.

204. Why did you think your village was bombed?

My village was bombed because it was controlled by the Front. The Front people were the GVN's enemies, and in order to kill the enemies, the GVN had to bomb the village. Unfortunately, the GVN couldn't get the accurate target. Therefore, some civilians were killed unintentionally.

205. Before the attacks, was your village given any warning?

No.

206. Would such a warning have been useful to the villagers?

In some way the warning would be useful to the villagers. The villagers would have time to move their property out of their houses and run away. If the villagers still have their buffaloes, paddy, and other things, they wouldn't want to leave the village very quickly. If they don't leave the village for GVN areas, they would have to suffer hardships in the Front area longer.

207. Was your village ever attacked by artillery?

Yes, it was attacked by the GVN artillery once in August 1965. I forget the day in August 1965, two rounds of mortars were dropped right at the place where the Front cadres were holding meetings. There were only two armed guerrillas killed. The others ran away.

208. How did these attacks make you feel about the GVN and its allies?

I think the GVN is very powerful. I thought that if I didn't try to leave the village, some day I would be killed by the GVN bombs or artillery. However, I understand that the GVN attacked my village in order to kill their enemies.

209. How did these attacks make you feel about the Front?

The Front people were very cowardly. They couldn't do anything else but run away from the village.

210. Who do you blame for the attacks?

Of course, we blamed the Front people for it. If the Front people didn't come to the village to rob people's property and to carry out activities, the GVN wouldn't have dropped bombs or attacked the village.

211. Did the attacks make anyone join the Front?

No.

212. Have you seen or heard about the use of chemicals to destroy vegetation or crops?

About 50% of the crops in my village were destroyed by the spray of chemicals. Most of the crops were paddy, beans, corn, etc. Jack-fruit trees, mango trees, and other sappy trees were destroyed very quickly after the chemicals were sprayed.

213. Who do you think did the spraying?

It was done by the GVN.

214. Why do you think the GVN sprayed the chemicals?

The GVN used the chemicals for spraying in the ricefields in order to push people to leave the village and to kill the Front's crops. If the crops are destroyed, the Front people will have to deal with the shortage of food. People will have nothing to eat, so they will have to leave for the GVN areas.

215. Whom did the villagers blame for the crop destruction?

People blamed the Front very much for having come to the village. They just talked to each other secretly. If the cadres know that, people would be sent out of the village for re-education. The villagers said that if the Front people didn't come to the village, if they didn't grow crops, the GVN wouldn't have destroyed people's crops.

216. What effects did the spray have on the health of the people?

Although the cadres told us to use a plastic bag to cover our heads when the chemicals were being sprayed, so far I haven't seen any person fall sick because of the spray.

217. Before you came here, had you seen any Americans in Vietnam?

Yes, the American troops came to my village to conduct a sweep operation. That's why I'm here now. If the Americans hadn't come to my village, I don't know how and when I could have left there.

218. How did the American troops behave?

They were nice. They didn't take anything away from people. They didn't speak Vietnamese, but they looked very friendly.

219. What did you think they were doing in Vietnam?

The Americans are in Vietnam to help our government fight the Communists. They are also helping people to have better lives. They tried to bring people to the place where they can have better clothing and better food.

220. What [illegible] about the Americans?

[illegible] told people that the Americans came to Vietnam to exploit [illegible] property. They said our people worked hard, but that we didn't enjoy benefits because the Americans [illegible] from the people indirectly through the GVN. I wanted to ask the cadres "what did the Americans rob from our people, and did the Americans or the Front people rob the people's property?" I knew what they could do to me.

221. Did you or other villagers believe what the cadres said about the Americans?

They didn't. They were also afraid of being re-educated. Therefore they just swallowed what they were told by the cadres about the Americans.

222. What is the relationship between the GVN and the Americans?

The Americans are working together with the GVN officials as advisors. About two or three weeks ago, at the inauguration of [redacted] New Life Hamlet, I saw several American advisors riding in the same vehicle with the district chief and other local officials. They seemed to have close cooperation.

223. Do you think the Americans are like the French, or are they different?

They are quite different. The French were formerly in Vietnam to colonize our people. They were colonialists. When the country was still under French domination, I wasn't allowed to wear nice cloths even if I had my own money to buy them. The only person in the village who was allowed to wear nice cloths was the village chief. On the contrary, the Americans now are very kind. They haven't given me anything directly, but they looked friendly with their smiles when they came to the village. They didn't shout at the people as the French troops used to do formerly. People are free to wear any kind of cloths they want. The Americans never said a word.

224. Have you seen or heard about American gifts to the villagers?

Many refugees and ralliers in [redacted] Village were given American foodstuff such as cooking oil, bulger wheat, etc. Each family was given a bag of bulgur, one can of cooking oil, and some money.

225. What did you and others think or say about these gifts?

People who received those things were very happy. We people of other refugee camps are hoping that the government and the Americans will give us the same things as they gave to the others.

226. Have you seen or heard about other foreign countries assisting the GVN and sending troops to South Vietnam?

Besides Americans, I understand that the Australian and Korean troops are present in Vietnam battlefields to fight the Communist enemies.

227. Have you ever seen Australian and Korean troops?

I haven't met any Australian. I have seen many Koreans.

228. How did the Korean troops behave?

Oh!, they are terrible. I have eye-witnessed one case of a Korean soldier raping a Vietnamese girl in [redacted] Village. After acting like an animal, this Korean soldier turned his gun to shoot the girl. Sometimes, when the Korean troops were riding in military trucks, no one dared to look at them. If people look at them, they will use their gun stocks to knock on people's heads. On the public roads, they drove their trucks like crazy. They didn't care about others, and no cars dared to pass theirs. When they wanted to pass others, they just didn't care about other cars in front. If they caused accidents, no matter whether they were right or wrong, they drove straight on. In some cases, when they were wrong, they stopped the other cars and blamed the drivers.

229. Did other people complain about the behavior of the Korean troops?

Many people complained about their bad manners. Luckily, those Koreans I'm talking about are no longer in [redacted]. They have gone back to their country. Presently, the Korean troops of the "White Horse" Division are nice. They aren't friendly, but they don't hurt people as the old Koreans did.

230. What did you think about their being in your country?

As an anti-Communist person, I appreciate any people who come over here to help our people to fight the enemies. However, it would make Vietnamese people feel much better if the Koreans behaved themselves. We Vietnamese people already have Viet Cong enemies, and we don't like to consider Koreans as our second enemies.

231. Which do you think is stronger: the GVN with its allies, or the Front with its allies?

The GVN with its allies is very strong. They have modern weapons, many airplanes, trucks, tanks and they have the people's support.

232. Have you heard about the air bombardment of North Vietnam?

No.

233. What were the reasons that made you leave your village and come here?

The main reason that made me leave the village was that I have lost freedom since the Front people came to the village. Secondly, I couldn't stand many hardships. As a human being, I have to work in order to get something to eat and to feed my family. I have tried and tried to work very hard, and what did I earn from working like a buffalo?

234. What reasons made you not want to leave your village?

I had thought about leaving the village from a very long time ago until I had the opportunity to get out of it. Nothing made me want to remain there. Even though I didn't have money to bring with me when I left the village, I had convinced myself that I would have a job to earn my living as soon as I arrived here in the GVN area.

235. Why didn't you leave earlier?

Not only me, but many other villagers also wanted to leave the village a long time ago. We didn't have any opportunity until the GVN and its allies conducted a sweep operation in

my village. At that time, the Front people all left the village in order to take cover in the jungle. We were brought over here by the GVN military trucks and helicopters.

236. Have you ever taken refuge before?

No.

237. Before you left your village, what had you heard about present conditions in GVN areas?

We were told by the cadres that the refugees were ill-treated by the GVN. They said many refugees died of starvation in the refugee camp because the GVN didn't give them anything to eat and beat them up.

238. Did you and other villagers believe what the cadres said?

No. If we did, we wouldn't have left the village. We believed that the government would help people to have place to live and food to eat.

239. Were you told what the GVN would do for you and other refugees?

So far, I haven't received support from the government, but I have seen many other refugees in other camps and many Quy Chanh who received money and foodstuffs from the government. We hope that the government will help people in this camp as they helped the others.

240. Did anyone in your village try to stop you from leaving?

Who would want to do that, since all the Front people had left the village? The other villagers wanted to leave there as I did, so no one stopped me from leaving.

241. What preparations for leaving did you and your family make?

We didn't prepare anything because we didn't have time. Each one of us didn't have more than one suit of clothes. My whole family didn't have more than 5$ when we left the village. Fortunately, my wife had a half ounce of gold, which she had hidden in her hair. When we arrived in the GVN area, we sold that gold to get the money to buy food while we were waiting for the GVN's support.

242. What did you leave behind?

When I left, I still had a lot of paddy, some beans, 2 buffaloes, and 4 cows.

243. What will happen to those things?

Several villagers arrived here after I did. They told me that after the GVN troops left the village, the Front people came back to take away everything which belonged to people who had left the village and had taken refuge.

244. Who came with you?

There were about 40 persons who left the village at the same time I did.

245. Describe your trip here.

As I told you, a combined ARVN and American operation was conducted in early October in my village. We didn't have any better chance than this. When the ARVN troops arrived in the village, the Front people all had left. The American and ARVN troops gathered people together near the market place, and then asked all of the men to get into their helicopters. Women and children took military trucks after the men had all left. While waiting for the trucks to leave the village, some women and children intended to go back to their houses to pick up somethings. When they returned to the market place, the trucks were already gone. These people were left behind in the village. Three or four men in my camp have no wives and children with them. They are worrying about their people, but they don't dare go back to the village to pick them up. They don't have contact with them.

246. Why did you choose to come [redacted] refugee camp?

I have chosen this place because many other villagers from my village are also living here. I like to live in a place where I have friends or relatives.

247. Did you expect to leave your village for a long or short time?

I don't know how long I will be away from my village. However, I won't return there unless the GVN sets up an outpost and has troops to secure the village.

248. How long do you think you'll be here now?

I don't know. I will be leaving this camp for some relocation area if the government distributes money to build a house.

249. How many families have left your village?

Approximately 70% of the population has left the village.

250. How many remained are still there?

There were about 30% of the villagers still in the village. These people don't want to remain there, but they didn't catch the trucks on time. They were left behind. They wanted to leave the village, but they still are waiting for another sweep operation.

251. What kinds of people left the village, and what kinds stayed?

The rich and middle families left first. The poor and the people who have sons in the Front left later, but no one wants to stay. Some families wanted to leave later because they still hoped to get in touch with their sons and ask them to leave the Front. Those people would also leave the village if their sons aren't able to escape from their units.

252. Did any families leave your village for other Front controlled areas?

No. If they left, they came to the GVN areas.

253. When did people first start leaving your village?

Not long after the Front people came to the village, people started to leave the village. They are rich people, and they knew before hand what would happen to them if they stay there.

254. When did most of the refugees leave?

From the end of 1965, most of the villagers left for GVN areas. They wanted to leave a long time ago, but they didn't have any opportunity until the ARVN and its allied troops conducted a sweep operation in the village.

255. Have [illegible] village to come here now gone back?

[illegible] some people have wives and children left [illegible] in the village, but they also didn't dare to return [illegible] the village.

256. What would happen to you if you went back now?

No, I don't dare to go back. They would kill me very quickly.

257. Has anyone asked you to go back?

No.

258. What have the GVN authorities here done for you?

I haven't been given any support by the government other than a place to stay in this camp. The camp leader has told me that we are going to receive rice and some money in the next few days.

259. Have you enough food, money, or medicine? Good enough shelter, sanitation?

I still have to buy rice with my own money. The camp is very small, as you have seen this morning, and yet, it is occupied by 50 families. Many families have 9 or 10 children. There is no kitchen, we have to cook our meals at the open place.

260. Are you being given any education or training here?

No.

261. Would you or the other refugees like to receive training?

I don't know about others. I myself would rather work as a hired laborer than receive training.

262. How many of the people here earn money with part-time jobs?

About 30 men of this camp are working for the American construction company as hired laborers. They carried reinforcing steel and lumber for the construction site.

263. How much does/can one get from working like that in a day?

One can get 140$ if he works from 5:30 PM to 4:00 AM or he can get 130$ if he works from 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

264. Do you feel safe here from military attacks?

This area is very secure. Many Koreans and Americans pass through here quite often. In the case the GVN lets the Front people take over this area, I have promised myself that I would leave here immediately. I wouldn't wait until the GVN withdraws the troops like it did in my village before.

265. How is the leadership of this camp organized?

The head of this camp is the camp leader, the man you talked to this morning. He is terrible. We didn't do anything wrong, but he blamed us like he would blame a dog. I remember, last week, a delegation in charge of refugees was going to visit this camp. The camp leader was informed two days before the delegation was going to visit. He ran back and forth, and I agreed with him that we should sweep the camp and to arrange the beds in the camp. But why did he stop us from cooking? My wife was cooking rice, and he came over and asked her to stop. She said that she had to wait for the rice to be cooked. He jumped up and kicked the caudron of rice into the sand. He turned to me and said: "You people have thick faces, that's why you are so stupid". My wife couldn't say even one word; she swallowed the tears and took the caudron away. We ran away from cruel people, and we understood that the government is willing to help us. This man didn't have money or rice to give us. He didn't have to make this camp by his own money for us to stay in. How could he act like that to us? I still have confidence in the government, and I understand what the Front is. I am not going to change my attitude towards the government, but it would be much better if this kind of man were punished or warned, especially if the government wants to win people's hearts and minds.

266. Are there any leaders here from your own village?

[redacted] the former village chief of my village, is also living here now, but he doesn't work with the camp leader. Under the camp leader, there are two other men; one is the deputy camp leader, the other one is the security officer. Both of these two men are nice. They never blamed the refugees as the camp leader used to.

267. Do you ever get information or rumors or instructions from your village?

No.

268. Have you been any foreigners here?

The Americans came to this camp very often. They were military officers. Every time they visited the camp, they gave the children candies, milk, and clothes.

269. How do they behave?

They are very friendly. They came to the camp to joke with the children. They carried the children on their shoulders and shook hands with many people.

270. What do the children of the refugees do here?

They do nothing. They just play around.

271. What suggestions about the children would you make to the authorities?

We hope to receive relocation money as soon as possible, so that we can have money to make our own houses. When we are relocated in an area, we would like our children to go to school. I would suggest that a school be built by the government at the relocation area for the children of relocatees. I will be very disappointed if my children are illiterate like I am.

272. Who do you blame for your troubles?

I blame the Front. I wasn't rich when I was in the village, but before the Front people arrived there, I was very satisfied with my conditions of life. If the Front people hadn't come to the village, I wouldn't have left there. However, I don't feel very sorry for having lost property, because many others also live in the same situation.

273. When you leave here, where would you like to go?

If the GVN regains control of the village, I would prefer to go back there.

274. Why do you want to go back to the village?

If the FUNK can take care of the security for my village, so as, there would be no other better place to go. In the village, I have my own land for cultivating. If I don't want to grow paddy, I can grow tobacco. At least I will be able to collect 30,000$ per year from selling tobacco. I wouldn't have to buy food. I raise chickens, pigs, and have a fish pond. The food here is very expensive. For more than a week, I didn't even eat a piece of meat.

275. If you were given land, would you be happy living somewhere else?

I would like to be relocated in [redacted] Village because many other villagers from my village are living here also. I just don't want to stay in a place where I feel that I am a stranger.

276. What did you do there to earn your living?

I was a farmer. I can grow crops if I have land. I know how to raise livestock and I also know carpentry. I would like to be a livestock dealer or a farmer rather than a carpenter because I am old; I cannot be a good carpenter when I am old and weak.

277. Here is a picture of a ladder. The bottom rung is numbered ten, and the top rung is numbered one. Now, let's say that the top rung represents the best life you can imagine. Where on this ladder would you say that your life was before the Front came to your village? After it came to your village? At the time you left your village? How about right now?

Before the Front came to my village, I had money to spend, good food to eat, and I had many chickens, pigs and paddy. My life was at the 3rd rung of this ladder. After the Front came to the village, I still had somethings to eat. I wasn't very poor, but I had lost freedom. I didn't rob any people's food, but I had to eat secretly. My life was at the 5th rung. It was miserable. As for now, I have no house, no land, no buffaloes, nothing. Even though I have to drive a horse cart in order to get some money to feed my family, I feel that my life is at the 1st rung or the 2nd rung of this ladder. I don't feel unhappy during the daytime. I work hard, but at night I sleep very soundly. I don't worry about anything.

You can look at my new suit of poplin cloth which I am wearing now. How would I dare wear these kinds of clothes if I was still in the front controlled area. What I am trying to say is that I love to have freedom. Here, now, I have it, so my life is at number 1 of the ladder.

278. How would you describe the worst life you can imagine for yourself living back in your village?

It would be miserable. I cannot say what I want to say. I cannot eat the food that I want to. Not only that, I have to work for the enjoyment of the Front people. I raise the chickens, for example, but if I kill the chickens to eat, the cadres would blame me, and yet they would come and take it away. I would never think about going back to the village to live with the Front people.

279. Now try to describe the best life you can imagine for yourself.

I would have a wonderfull life, if I had a piece of land, and my own house. My wife and my eldest daughter would stay home to grow some vegetables. I go out to work to earn some money. My children would be sent to school.

280. What kind of life do you hope your son will have?

He is still very small. This year, he is 6, I am going to send him to school to study after I move out of this camp. I hope that he will be working for the government in the future. I don't know whether I will still be alive or not when my son can earn money, but I hope that he can do something to feed himself.

281. If you could ask three things of any Vietnamese government, what would they be?

The first thing I would wish for is to have money to make my house. The second thing I would wish would be to have a piece of land for cultivation. The third thing is that the government would take care of the security at the place where it is going to relocate the refugees.

282. What kind of government do you think would be most likely to give you those three things?

I think any national government can give me those three things.

284. Which side do you think is winning now?

The GVN is winning the war. The Front is faced with many difficulties, such as a shortage of food, weapons, etc. They don't have the people's support like the GVN has. Since the Front is only carrying out activities secretly in the jungle, they don't have people's support. How could they win the war?

285. Will the GVN side finally win a complete victory?

I think it will. The GVN is supported in many ways by many other countries, such as America, Korea, the Philippines, and Australia. The Front will never win this war, as they don't have enough to eat, they stayed in the jungle and don't have people to stay with their side. Right now, no one knows when and how the war will end, but many people believe that the GVN will finally win the complete victory.

286. How do you think the GVN could gain more support from people like yourself and others you know?

In order to gain more support from people, the first thing the government has to do is to help all of the people who are still left behind in the front areas to get out of there. Besides that, the government should take good care of the refugees by giving them enough food to eat and by providing them with a proper place to stay.

287. If the Front wins the war, what do you think life in Vietnam will be like?

The Front would never be able to win the war. If they win this war, life in Vietnam would be extremely miserable. I tell you, a dog in the GVN area has a better life than a person in the Front area.

-268. If the GVN wins the war, what do you think life in Vietnam will be like?

If the GVN wins the war, life will be wonderful. People will be free to do what they want to. We can eat whatever we want to eat, and no one will blame us for having good food and nice clothes.

The refugee camp where the subject is living is located very close to the Recreation Center. The following questions were asked by the interviewer in order to know what the subject's opinions are about the activities of this center as well as about the influence this center has on the life of people in this area.

1. How do you feel about the Recreation Center organized near the refugee camp?

Well, I wouldn't have dared to complain if you hadn't asked me about that. The scenes which happen every day are very unpleasant to the people's eyes. If you were a refugee living in this area, how would you feel if you had to witness the unpleasant scenes all the time. Especially from noon to 2:00 PM, many Americans come to this center to drink. People wouldn't mind if they came into the bars and did what they wanted to. The thing that bothers people is that when the Americans come, many bar girls, who are just about 14 or 15 years old, come out to greet them. They just don't care about others, they hold and kiss the Americans in front of many people's eyes. They weren't only kissing each other, they were kissing and touching. After they stopped kissing, the pocket book was gone away from the American's pocket. You know what happened. The girls used to have many kids around, and when they kissed and touched the customers, they tried to touch the pockets first. When they took the wallets out of the customers' pockets, they threw them on the floor, where the kids could rush over to pick them up. They will share with each other.

2. Did the formation of this center have any effects on the economic condition in this area?

It is another reason to make us feel bad about this center.

Before the ban was put up here, people were able to buy fish or meat to eat sometimes; but they cannot now, as it is too expensive. You just imagine formerly people didn't pay more than 5¢ for a very fish. Since the bars were set up, people have to pay 30¢ for the same kind and same size of fish. It is easy to know why, because those bar girls earn money so easy from kissing and touching the Americans. They don't have to work hard, they get a lot of money, so why should they care about the prices of food. We poor people have to work hard every day, and we aren't able to earn 1/10 as much as those girls do. You just think, I earn 100$ from working the whole day; even if I close my eyes, I don't dare to buy 2 small fishes for my family, as it would cost me 60$.

3. Are there any refugees of this camp working for the bars here?

No. We would rather work as laborers than work for the bars. I am poor, I would like to stay the way I am. If my daughter wants to be a bar girl to make money, I would beat her to death.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

The subject wasn't very intelligent. However, he was very cooperative and sincere.

No. AGR - 77

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

1. Name of interviewer [redacted]

2. Name of subject [redacted]

3. Time and date of interview :

From 10:00 AM to 12:00 AM on November [redacted] 1966

From 14:00 PM to 18:00 PM on November [redacted] 1966

From 8:30 AM to 11:00 AM on November [redacted] 1966

Total time 8½ hours

Interview based on : tape (X) hand written notes ( ).

4. Place of interview :

Tuy Hoa District, Phu Yen Province

5. Sex of subject : Male (X) Female ( )

6. Age of subject : 51

7. Ethnic background : Vietnamese

8. Place of birth :

hamlet [redacted]

village [redacted]

district Tuy Hoa

province Phu Yen

9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :

hamlet [redacted]

village [redacted]

district Tuy Hoa

province Phu Yen

10. (a) Length of residence in last location : 51 years

(b) Who controlled the place of residence:

GVN [illegible] VC (X) Contested ( )

[illegible] controlled or contested ?

11. Number of brothers ( ) and sisters (1)

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : _____

13. Marital status : Married

14. Number of children : 5

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age : _____

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject( ) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject (X) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject(X) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion : Buddhist

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : Farmer

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation _____
(b) Landowner ? X How much land 4 mau

20. Education :
illiterate (X)
literate ( )
Schooling completed : _____

21. Any relatives in VC : None

22. Any relatives in GVN : Brother-in-law and Son-in-law are P.F soldiers

23. Any relatives (how many? When?) killed by :
(a) French
(b) GVN
(c) VC

24. When became a refugee : October, 1966

25. Where took refuge first [redacted] Refugee Camp

26. Present residence [redacted] RefugeeCamp

INTERVIEW #AGR-78 MISSING—

INTERVIEW NOT COMPLETED

INTERVIEW #AGR-79 MISSING—

INTERVIEW NOT COMPLETED

AGR

INTERVIEW

80

80

1. How long had you and your family lived in your village before you became a refugee?

I had lived in my village since I was very young.

2. How big was your village? How many people lived in there?

There were about [redacted] hamlets in my village, and about [redacted] people lived there.

3. How did you earn your living? Did you have enough to eat?

I was a farmer. I owned no land but farmed 9 sao of land as a sharecroper. I lacked rice somewhat and had to eat it mixed with potato and manioc. There were two harvests a year and I produced about 500 gia of paddy in all. I had to pay the landowner half of the paddy I produced. After the VC took over the village, they permitted the landowners to collect only 30% of the harvest. But the land I farmed had been rented to my parents to work on. When my parents didn't need it anymore, the landowner let me have it. I was grateful to the landowner for that. And so when the VC forced the landowners to collect only 30% of the harvest, I still paid my landowner 50% of the harvest. That meant that I had only half of the harvest left for my own use. But I still had to pay to the VC and that was why I lacked food to eat. My parents owned one mau one sao of ricefield, and 4 sao of land where they grew sugar cane and corn, and so they had enough to eat.

4. How did most of the people in your village earn their living? Did they have enough to eat?

They farmed and grew sugar cane. Only about 40% of the people had enough rice to eat. The rest had to eat rice mixed with potato and manioc.

5. How many members were in your family?

I have a wife and four small children. My parents are still healthy, they could still work, and so they live by themselves.

6. What is your religion?

I am a Buddhist.

7. What religon did the other villagers practice?

About 40% of them were Buddhists, 30% Catholics, and the rest were either CaoDaists Protestants or practiced no religion at all.

8. Was there any conflict between people of different religious affiliations?

Never.

9. Were there anyone in your village who belonged to ethnic background other than Vietnamese?

They were all Vietnamese.

10. Did you go to school when you were young?

I had two years of schooling when I was young.

11. Was there a school in your village?

When the Nationalists were still in control of the village, there were three schools in the village. One school had all fives grades, the other two schools had only up to the third grade. After the VC took over the village, these schools were closed down. The VC only taught popular courses to illiterate adults and children. They were held in the people's houses. Very few people attended them.

12. Were there anyone in your village with good education background?

There were some Junior High students in the village. But they have moved out with their families and are attending schools in Tuy Hoa. As for the other children who had attended the village schools, they had to stay home to help their families farming, since the VC took over the village.

13. Did you have any intimate friends in the village?

When the Nationalists were still in control of the village, I had two intimate friends. But they all left when the VC took over the village.

14. Since the VC took over the village, was there anyone in the village you could talk with freely?

I couldn't talk to anyone freely at all.

14. Who was the most important and respected person in your village?

I don't know who was the most important person in my village, but I know that Mr [redacted] enjoyed the most affection and respect from the people in my hamlet. He was an honest person. He always tried to help the people when the Nationalists were still in control as well as after the VC took over the village.

16. How did the VC cadres ~~xxxxxxxx~~ treat ~~xxxx~~ him?

He has
~~xxxxx~~/four children, three of them joined the Nationalist army. That was why
~~x~~ he was by the VC
~~xxxxx~~/forced/to attend a six months course of ~~xxxx~~ reeducation in the mountain

~~xxxxxxxxx~~

17. What has happened to him?

He is till living in the hamlet. I heard that he was sick, couldn't get up, couldn't do anything to earn his living, and was extremely miserable.

18. Who was the most informed person in your village?

When the Nationalists were still in the village, there was a man who was the most informed person in the village; he was the Youth Village Unit Leader. He left when the VC took over.

19. After the VC took over the village, who was the most ~~xx~~ informed person?

After the VC took over ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~, no one in the village was well informed about what happened in other places.

20. How was the people's conditions of life before 1954?

Before 1954, when the Vietminh were still in the village, the people were extremely miserable. They ~~people~~ had to pay heavy agricultural tax, and ~~they~~ didn't have enough rice left to eat. Everyone in the village had to eat manioc and potato. They also had to do corvee labors which made life extremely hard for them.

20. Did many people in your village work for the Vietminh that time?

Quite of few of the villagers worked for ~~xx~~ the Vietminh as cadres.

22. What happened to these people after 1954?

In 1954, all those who worked as cadres for the Vietminh went North to regroupe. I don't know the total number in the village, but there were about 11 people in my hamlet alone who went North to regroupe. When the Nationalists came to take over, there wasn't one cadre left.

23. Did life in your village ~~xxxxxx~~ improve after 1954?

After 1954, after the Nationalists took over, there was a marked ~~xxxxxx~~

improvement in the people's conditions of life as if they had been eating rice with salt and was given a meal of rice with fish. No one had to pay heavy agricultural tax any longer, through they had to pay land tax, but it was very light. No one in the village lacked food to eat. Except for the very few people who were extremely poor, but they were taken to the land development centers to earn their living there. The village began to repair the roads, the people their houses and many of them could afford bicycles.

24. How did the village officials treat the people?

Most of the village officials treated the people very nicely. Many of them still enjoyed the people's affection even after their term of service was over. Except for one person who was in charge of the security in the village when Mr. Diem was still in power, he used to take bribe, oppressed and beat the people. After two years of suffering under him, the people reported him to the higher authorities. The higher authorities made an investigation and put him in prison. He hasn't been released yet. I heard he was sentenced to capital punishment.

25. Where did the officials come from?

They were all from the village.

26. Were they all elected by the people?

They were all appointed by the Government.

27. Was there any election organized in your village?

Only once. It was the National Assembly election.

28. How was the election organized? Did the right man got elected?

The people could cast their votes freely. I don't remember who was elected that time. The elected man never visited the village, and the people didn't know whether he had done anything that benefited the peoople or not, and so I don't know if he was the right man or not.

29. Do you know anything about the Government of Mr. Ngo Dinh Diem?

I know nothing about that Government.

30. Did the people say anything about the overthrow of Mr. Diem?

The people learned of Mr. Diem's overthrow, but they didn't know why it happened. I didn't hear any comments from the people about that. I don't know if anyone missed him or not.

31. What do you think about the overthrow of Mr. Diem?

I don't know much about Mr. Diem. I don't like or dislike him. I don't think anything about him at all.

32. Before the VC took over your village, were there any Nationalist forces in your village?

When the Nationalists still controlled the village, there were 3 SDC platoons in the village. In 1964, they were stationed in two hamlets only because the VC often came and gave them troubles. In January 1965, they were stationed in [redacted] Church and a little while later, withdrew completely.

33. How did the SDC behave towards the people when Mr. Diem was still in power? How did they behave after Mr. Diem had been overthrown?

Before withdrawing to [redacted] Church, the SDC behaved very nicely towards the people. They never oppressed anyone or caused troubles to anyone. After they came to stay in [redacted] Church, they would visit the hamlets every now and then, and their behavior changed completely. They suspected everyone of being communists and beat them up. When they passed through the hamlets, they always stole the people's chicken and ducks. The people complained very much.

34. Did the Nationalist forces ever pass through your village?

Last April the Special Forces came to my village.

35. What did the Special Forces do in your village? How did they behave towards the people?

I don't know what they came to the village for. When they came, the VC all ran away. They said that they came to the village to capture the VC, that was all. Anyone who wasn't a VC, could stay home and earn his living as usual. He didn't need to run anywhere. They treated the people nicely, honestly and didn't cause trouble to anyone.

36. Did you have anyone dissatisfactions before the VC took over your village?

I had no dissatisfactions at all.

17. Did you think that the Government should do something to help you?

I was earning my living comfortably then. I felt fine then and I didn't need the Government's help.

38. Did you think you could improve your future?

I had opportunities to improve my future, but I didn't have time to take advantage of these opportunities. I had decided to go to Nha Trang to make firewood for the railroad department or find some other things to do. I decided to go to Nha Trang when the farming season was over and returned for the harvesting. It was easy to come and go then. If I could carry out my decision, my income would raise. But soon after I made my decisions, the VC took over the village, and so I couldn't leave the village.

39. Did you ever live in a strategic hamlet?

Before the VC took over the village, I lived in a strategic hamlet.

40. How many strategic hamlets were there in your village? When were they organized?

In my village, the people in one hamlet were moved into one strategic hamlet. That means my village had [redacted] strategic hamlets. They were all organized in March 1963.

41. Did the people in your village have to contribute anything to the building of the strategic hamlets?

All the people—men and women— had to contribute their labors and money to the building of the strategic hamlets. Each person had to contribute 10 piasters for the purchase of steel wire, and 60 trees as big as my wrist, about 1.50m long with one end pointed. The people themselves cut down the trees in the woods. Besides that, each person had to contribute 15 days of labors. The women had to contribute money and labors about half of what the men had to contribute. The sick and those with child were exempted. My wife was with child then and so she was exempted.

42. What did you like most in the strategic hamlet?

What I liked most in the strategic hamlet was that the strategic hamlet helped to lessen the VC chances of infiltration and to cause troubles. Also we weren't afraid of artillery attacks when we lived in the strategic hamlet. The village council told us that anyone who refused to move into the strategic hamlet should accept the consequences if there was an artillery attack.

43. Was there anything you didn't like in the strategic hamlet?

No.

44. What do you think about the strategic hamlet?

I liked to lived in the strategic hamlet. Living in the strategic hamlet, we weren't afraid of the VC infiltration to make propaganda. Each time the VC came to make propaganda, the people were forced to listen to them. Those who came and listened to the VC propaganda were suspected of working for the VC. And the Government sometimes arrested, beat and tortured them.

45. Did the people in your hamlet like to live in the strategic hamlet like you?

I guess the people liked to live in the strategic hamlet, through some of them complained when it was being built.

46. What did they complained about?

Those who had to take down their homes and move them to another place complaine They didn't complained because they had to take down their house. They complained not only because they had to take down their houses, they had to rebuild them in another place. This would cost them much money and time. But when there was a distribution of labors in the building of the fence, those who had to take down their homes and move them to another place received the same amount of labor as those who didn't have to take down their homes and move them to another place. And so these men thought they were being treated unfairly.

47. What happened to these strategic hamlets?

Beginning in August 1964, the VC from the mountains came and destroyed the strategic hamlets. They destroyed them one by one and completed their destruction of all 10 of the strategic hamlets in the village within the month of August.

48. How did they destroy the strategic hamlets?

There were [redacted] hamlets in the village. There was one SDC squad in each hamlet. But the SDC stood guard only during day time. At night, about 10 or 11 oclock, all the SDC from all the hamlets withdrew to their the village council headquarter which was located in hamlet [redacted] That was why when the VC came to the hamlets, they didn't meet the SDC. The first hamlet that was being destroyed was hamlet [redacted] The 8 VC came with their weapons. They destroyed the fence, entered the hamlet and called a meeting with the people and told the people that the Liberation Front had come to liberate them. Then they asked the people to bring their picks and axes to destroy the fence. They said anyone who refused to go and destroy the fence were against the Front and would be shot. They people were frightened and so they all went out and destroyed the fence. The destruction went one for one hour and about 50 or 60 meters of the fence were destroyed. Before withdrawing, they told the people that the next morning they should go and report to the the village council that the communists had come and destroy the strategic hamlet. The next morning, the people made their reports to the village council and the village council sent the SDCs to the hamlet, but the VC were no longer there. The village council forced the people in that hamlet and the people in other hamlets to repair the fence within that day. About five or six days later, the VC returned and carried out their destruction as before. The VC carried out the same destruction in hamlets [redacted] At night the VC came and destroyed the hamlet, and the next morning the village council forced the people to repair the fence. This went on and on for many times. The administrative committees of these [redacted] hamlets had to move to the village council headquarter which was located in hamlet [redacted]. At the end of August 1965, the VC attacked hamlet [redacted]. The VC strength was about one platoon, but all three SDC pla[illegible]

who were in hamlet [redacted] at that time
/ran into hiding. All the fortifications were [redacted] blown up. The village council and all [redacted] hamlet administrative committees went with the SDCs to be stationed [redacted] in the [redacted] Church which was located in [redacted] and the next one. The Civil Guards had been stationed in the church. And so all [redacted] strategic hamlets were destroyed in August, And from then on, no Nationalist officials was left in the hamlets, and the VC took over the entire the village. Also from then on, the people's lives became miserable. During the day the SDCs and the Civil Guards went around searching the hamlets. They said they were looking for the VC, but they couldn't find one VC to account for their effort, and the [redacted] truth was they went around oppressing and causing damage to the people. And so the people were extremely miserable, they had to endure two sides at the same time. They were mistreated by the Nationalists because the Nationalists suspected them of working for the VC. They were forced to attend re-education courses by the VC, had to contribute money to the VC and do corvee labors for the VC. This situation lasted until last October (1965) when the VC attacked and took over [redacted]

49. When was the first time [redacted] you heard of the Front?

I don't remember when I first heard of the Front. I only remember that in March 1964 the mountain near the village was attacked by artillery from the district. The SDCs said that the reason the district shelled the mountain was there were VC in the mountain. That was the first time I knew that the VC had come close to my village.

50. Did anyone from the village join the VC before the VC took over your village?

No one in the village escaped to join the VC when the Nationalists were still in [redacted] control of the village.

51. How did the VC cadres behave towards the people?

At first the cadres were [redacted] very subtle, spoke very nicely. They always said that they liberated the people to bring about comfort for the people. But in the [redacted] end the people received nothing at all. On the contrary they forced the people to pay heavy taxes, to attend re-education courses, to do corvee labors, and they [redacted] always threatened this [redacted] or that person.

52. Did many people sympathize with them?

When they first took over the village, about 40% of the people sympathized with them. But as time passed this percentage went down lower and lower. And when I left the village, about one or two out of every 10 people, still sympathize with them.

53. Why did these people sympathize with the VC? Who were they in the village?

They were the very poor and they were in the minority. They sympathized with the VC because the VC gave them land to work on.

54. Do you know about the aims of the Front?

According to the cadres the aims of the Front were to drive the Americans out, to liberate the people, to destroy the landowner class so that the people could live in equality and everyone would have land to work on.

55. Which of these aims do you like most?

I don't like any of them.

56. Do you think these aims are justified?

To make it so that everyone will have land to work on, is a good thing to do. But in order to acheive it, the landowner class has to be destroyed, and I think that that isn't justified at all. As for the aim to drive out the Americans I don't beleive it at all. To drive out the Americans means that the Americans have taken over Vietnam, that they are oppressing the people. But the people don't feel that they are being oppressed. The Nationalist Government and the Americans reconstruct the hamlets and villages, help the people, let the people borrow money so that they could farm their land, and tax them very lightly. And so it can't be said that the people are being oppressed and that the Americans have taken over Vietnam.

57. Do you know the names of the Front leaders?

The leader of the Front is Mr. Ho Chi Minh.

58. Who told you about that?

On my transportation missions I met many Northern soldiers. Mr. Ho Chi Minh is the leader of the North but the Liberation forces are composed mainly of Northerners. And so I think that Mr. Ho Chi Minh must be the leader of the Front.

59. In your opinion, are the Front people peace loving people?

According to the cadres, the Front also wanted peace, but there would be peace only when all the Americans have left the country. As long as the Americans were in the country, the fighting should continue.

60. In your opinon, are the VC courageous?

I am not sure about that.

61. In your opinion, are the VC patriotic?

The Front isn't patriotic because to be patriotic means to love the people. The VC don't love the people because they forced the people to work toohard, to go without rice and eat patato and manioc instead so that they would have rice to eat, and they oppressed the people in every thing possible. The VC don't love the people at all, and so they can't be patriotic.

62. Did the cadres often hold meetings in the village?

Usually there was one meeting a month.

63. What did the cadres say during these meetings?

They usually talked about the Front victories. I don't remember all the details According to the cadres, the Front always won.

64. When the cadres talked about the Front victories, did the people believe them?

No one belaived them because they knew the results of many of the battles and yet the VC told them differently. Take the battle at [redacted] for example which occurred in January 1966 for example. The cadres forced some women in the village to go with the Front troops and cook for them. One woman I know came back and told me that [redacted] about one battalion of the Front forces was wiped out. These dead people lay at the foot of the trees in the jungle. two or three cadavers

huddled at the foot of one tree, and there were so many of them. They were all Northern youths around 17 or 18 years of age. The cadres forbade all those who went on transportation missions to talk about what they had done or seen. I know this woman very well and that was why she told me of what she had seen. And yet in one of the meeting, the cadres said that the Front had won that battle and the damage suffered by the Front in that battle was insignificant. As for the Americans, many of them got killed so much so that they had to throw their cadavers into the sea.

65. Did the cadres ever mentioned the North, Red China and Russia in these meetings?

They only mentioned the North. They said that in the North the people lived in equality, no one was richer than the next, everyone ate the same kindof food, had a job to do, and they were all very happy. The old people were supported by the Government.

66. Did the cadres say what would happen to this war?

They only said that the Front would surely win this war, but they didn't say when and how could it win.

67. Did the cadres force anyone in the village to attend a re-education course in another place?

In my hamlet, 12 persons in all were forced to attend a re-education course in the mountain for half a month. They were all former inter families groups chiefs and inter families bloc (translator's note: four or five families form an inter-families group; four or five inter families groups form a bloc(?). The VC also forced one another person who enjoyed the most respect from the people to attend the re-education course. This man had three sons in the Nationalist army. He was kept in the mountain for six months.

68. What did these people do in the mountains?

When the man whose sons were in the Nationalist army was released, I went to see him— If the cadres knew that I had gone to visit this man, they would arrest me also— They told me that the people had to work all day long for the VC

the strong ones plowed the land, the weaker ones made baskets and

Everyone had to work, even the sick. There was no [illegible]

of any kind, through the cadres said they would be re-educated when they took these people

away. He said that life in the mountain was extremely miserable and he was

lucky to be alive when they released him.

69. Where did he get food to eat when he was in the mountain? Did the cadres distribute rice to him?

Those who were sent to the mountain for re-education had to bring their rice along

to eat.

70. How could he have enough rice to eat since he was kept in the mountain for six months?

The cadres permitted the family to bring rice and medicine to the mountain. I don't

know where the VC kept these men--somewhere in the mountain. I only know that it

was very far away. If one started out early in the morning, one could arrive

at that place around midnight.

71. What did the people say about the VC forcing the people to attend re-education courses?

The people were all afraid of having to go to the mountain for re-education. When

they heard that the man with sons in the Nationalist army had been sent to the

mountain for re-education, the people felt very sorry for him and angry at the

VC. But no one dared say anything.

72. How many young men over 16 years were old/in your hamlet?

There were many of them, but I don't know their number.

73. How many young men in the hamlet have joined the Nationalist army?

Many young men in my hamlet were drafted and many enlisted in the Nationalist army

The number of volunteers was higher than that of the

draftees. I don't know their number. I only know that five young men in my

sub-hamlet (xom) joined the Nationalist army, including my younger brother.

74. Did many young men in your village join the VC forces?

No one joined the VC main force. Some of them joined the guerrillas. Only five

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persons in my hamlet joined the guerrillas, and about three or five people from the entire village joined the VC district force.

75. Those who joined the guerrilla and district force, did they volunteer or were forced to join?

They volunteered. But the truth was they were forced. Every month, the VC cadres made appeals to the youths to join their forces, but no one wanted to, except a few who had joined the district force. Then the cadres ordered all men between 18 and 35 to go on transportation missions following the Northern troops for six months a every year. They were frightened of the transportation missions and so they had to volunteer for the guerrilla because if they joined the guerrilla, they wouldn't have to do corvee labors. As of now, besides the guerrillas, there was no other youth left in the village.

76. What kind of people were those who volunteered for the district force?

They belonged to the very poor families. These families sympathized with the VC.

77. Did the families who had sons joined the district force, receive any privileges?

They received no privilege at all.

78. How did the cadres treat the families who had sons in the Nationalist army?

They were often criticized by the cadres. Every three or five months, the cadres would come to these families and told them to call on their sons to come back. But no one could get anyone back. And so these families were often criticized. There were times when the VC forced all the families who had sons in the Nationalist army to go to the district to call on their sons to come back and to ask the Government to stop shelling their village. My younger brother was in the Nationalist forces ,and so my father had to go too. When these people arrived at the district, they were beaten up and sent back to their village by the district soldiers. Fortunately, my father met the former hamlet chief and so he hid in the hamlet chief's house, and he wasn't beaten up by the soldiers. Once the cadres forced them to go to the province (Tuy Hoa) to get their children back. The cadres made people go in groups of two or three persons so that they could infiltrate Tuy Hoa easier. They all had to go, but when they arrived near Tuy Hoa, they

all found some place to stay so that they could return the next day. No one dared enter Tuy Hoa at all. It was the same with my x father. He xxxx found the house x of some xxxxxx acquaintance near the air base and remained there for two days before he returned to the village. When the cadres asked my father, he told them that he got sick when he arrived at Tuy Hoa, and so he couldn't do a thing. In a word, the x families who had xx sons in the Nationalist army were often mistreated by the VC.

79. What did the people say about the VC forcing these families to call on their sons to come back?

No one dared say anything.

80. How many guerrillas were there in your village?

I don't know. I only know that there was one guerrilla squad in my hamlet.

81. What did the guerrillas do?

I didn't see them do anything at all, except forcing the people to work for the cadres such as digging xxxx trenches and sharpening spikes. They walked to and fro with their weapons all day long. Whenever the Civil Guards came, they fired a few shot and then ran into hiding. Some of them ran before firing any shot at all.

82. Did the cadres redistribute the land in the village?

They began the land distribution ~~of xxxxxxxxx~~ last April. But this wasn't to distribute the land equally to everyone. The cadres only took the land from other people and gave xxxx it to those who had no land at all or those who had little land of their own.

83. Who were those whose land were confiscated by the VC?

~~Those who left their village, their land confiscated~~ The VC confiscated the land of those who have moved out of their village whether the land belonged to them or they had rent it from other landowners. The xxxxxxxx landowners who didn't farm their land, that meant they rent out their land to the sharecropers If these landowners moved out of their village, the cadres made the sharecropers shared the land with those who had little land of their own. Last April, some

people left their village before the harvest season. After the harvest the cadres confiscated all the peddy that belonged to those who had moved out. They kept all that paddy for themselves and didn't give to anyone anything.

84. Did those who received land have to pay rent to anyone?

Those who received land had to pay the tax like every body else.

85. Did those who receivedland believe that the land would belong to them permanently?

Some of those who received land beleived that the land would belong to them permanently. They are still living in the VC controlled area. Other people, throughout had no land of their own and had to work as hired laborers for others, yet refused the land when it was given to them. Their excuse was they were too poor they wouldn't be able to farm the land, they wouldn't have money to buy seeds, to rent cows to do the ploughing, and to pay people to do the weeding. They said they could earn their living by working as hired laborers for others.

86. Do you think these people were telling the truth? or did they refuse to accept the land because of other reasons?

I think that when they refused to accept the land on the excuse that they were too poor, they were telling the truth. They had no other reasons for doing so.

87. Did the VC take away your land and give to others?

The VC didn't take away my land because the landowner who rent out his land to me was still in the village.

88. Did the VC take away your father's land?

No, they didn't take away my father's land because they said that they wouldn't touch the land of these landowners who were still in the village.

89. How much tax did the people have to pay to the VC?

All the farmers had to pay tax to the VC in paddy. The VC cadres allotted 60 kg of rice a year per person--adult as well as children--That meant that each person was allotted 30 kg of paddy per season. The VC substracted all the paddy earned by the family from all the paddy produced by that family. The cadres took

90. Did you have enough food left to eat after you paid tax to the VC?

On the average, each adult ate 400kg of paddy a year. The cadres left us only 60kg. Even in those households with many young children, there wasn't enough rice left to eat. Each year I produced about 1000kg of paddy. If we didn't have to pay tax to the VC, that amount of paddy would be enough for me, my wife and our four children. But the cadres left us only half of what we produced and so our food situation was very tight. We always had to eat rice mixed with potato and manioc to make ends meet.

91. Did many people lack food like you?

Most of us lacked food to eat, and so we all had to grow other crops such as potato and manioc so that we would have something else to eat with rice. And also, we might be able to buy sauce and salt. The people complained very much.

92. What did the cadres explain about the heavy taxes?

They said that the people stayed home and were comfortable while the Front soldiers led a hard life in the woods, made sacrifices to liberate the people. The people should abstain from eating rice so that the soldiers would have food to eat to fight the enemy. They said if the people wanted to have enough food to eat, they should grow more potao and manioc. The cadres also made propaganda and mobilized a movement in which the people only ate one rice meal a week, on Saturday, in order to save food.

93. Do you think the taxes were justly applied?

Everyone had to pay the same percentage for tax. To the people, the taxes were fairly applied. But it seems to me that the cadres and the guerrillas didn't have to pay the same percentage as did the people. Through on principle, they should pay the same. I found that many cadres and guerrillas had been destitute, never had enough food to eat before the VC came.

But after the VC took over the village, they became better off. Through they received land to farm, but considering the amount of tax they should have paid to the VC and the amount of paddy they produce, they shouldn't have much of it left. But they all had enough food to eat. Many of them had had to eat potato all the time before, but after the VC took over, they could buy watches and radio sets.

94. Did the people say anything about that injustice?

Everyone knew about that, but no one dared say anything.

95. Were the taxes higher at the time you left your village?

The taxes weren't higher or lower.

96. What kind of produce did your village have? Where did the people sell them?

The produces in the village were as follows: rice, pig, duck and chicken eggs manioc, corn and sugar. The villagers grew plenty of sugar cane in the village and they made sugar out of it. The cadres only permitted the people to sell sugar and duck eggs at [redacted]

97. Why did the cadres only permit the people to sell only these two produces?

There wasn't enough rice to eat. Manioc and potato were needed food. The cadres said that pork and chicken eggs were nourrishing food and to sell them outside the village would mean to give the Nationalist troops more strenght to fight against the VC. That was why the VC forbade the people to sell these produces outside of the village. The VC said sugar was secondary food, it couldn't keep a person alive, and duck eggs weren't nourrishing. And so they permitted the people to sell these two produces.

98. Did anyone can bring these two produces to sell at [redacted]

Not everyone could bring these two produces to sell them outside of the village. Only the women were permitted to go. But those who had any connections with families who had sons joined the Nationalist army, or had served with the Nationalists, were never permitted to go. Usually they permitted only

tradeswomen and members of the guerrillas' families to go. Each time, they had to ask for permission from the cadres and reported to them exactly what they were going to sell so that the cadres could tax them in advance.

99. Where did the people buy the things they needed which weren't sold in the village?

The things the people needed most were sauce and salt. Hamlet [redacted] of the village was located near the sea and the people in that hamlet could make sauce and salt so the people in the village didn't have to buy them at other places.

100. Did the cadres set up any organizations in your village?

The cadres set up organizations to control the village and the hamlets which they called the Village Front and the Hamlet Front. Each hamlet had a Hamlet Front A Hamlet Front was composed of five persons. All these people came from the hamlet Most of them belonged to the very poor class, they had had to work as hired laborers to earn their living. When the VC came, they joined the VC and were given such positions. As for the Village Front, it was composed of 7 members. All these members came from the village. They had gone North to regroupez, now returned and were given such positions.

101. Did the cadres organized any associations?

There were associations such as Old Farmers', Young Farmers', Women Farmers' and Children Farmers' Associations.

102. What were the requirements for joining these Associations?

There were no requirements at all. You joined the associations of your age group Everyone had to join.

103. What was the purpose of joining these associations? Were the people who joined them given any special privileges?

The VC forced the people to join these associations in order to get them to work for the VC. The members of the Old Farmers' Association had to make sacks and rice bags. The members of the Women's Association had to mobilize the young men to join the Front forces, to do corvee labors. Besides that there were the

Ploughing's, the planting's and the Harvesting's Associations. The VC [illegible] these associations so that the members of these associations could do the ploughing, the planting and the harvesting for those who went on missions or [illegible] transportation missions for the VC and didn't have time to do their own work. In a word, joining these associations meant slaving for the VC, no one received any special privilege at all.

104. Were the people in the village better off because of these organizations?

On the contrary, these organizations and associations only made life harder and more miserable for the people.

105. Was there any secret organization in the village?

I don't know.

106. Who was the highest cadre in your village?

He was the chairman of the Village Front.

107. How did the cadres behave towards the people?

That cadre, like any other cadres outwardly seemed very nice to the people because they used sweet talk. But the truth was they weren't nice to anyone. They used sweet talk in order to get the people to contribute more to them, and to do more work for them. Anyone who seemed reluctant to carry out their orders, they would send to re-education immediately. The people were all frightened of having to attend re-education course, and so when the VC told them to do something, they obeyed immediately.

108. Were there female cadres in the village?

There were women cadres on the village and hamlet levels.

109. What did the women cadres do? What did the people say about them?

I only know that there were women cadres, but I don't know what they did. No one said anything about them.

110. Was there a Party Chapter in the village?

I don't know. I only know that four people in my sub-hamlet have been accepted as Party members. They were all guerrillas.

111. Who told you about that?

I heard the people in my sub-hamlet told me that. I don't know anything more about it.

112. Were there any conflicts among the cadres?

I have never seen the cadres quarreled among themselves. On the contrary, I found them very united.

113. Did the cadres ever kill anyone in the village?

Before the VC took over the village, while they were in the process of destroying the strategic hamlets, they killed three men: one was the interfamilies bloc chief, the second one was a hamlet chief and the third one was the assistant hamlet chief. They came to these people's homes to kill them. Furthermore, they captured five SDCs when they attacked the [redacted] Church. They took all five of these SDCs to the hamlet and shot them all in front of the people.

114. What kind of people were those who had been killed by the VC?

I don't know very much about the five SDCs, but I know the other three persons very well. They were all very nice people, especially the Hamlet Chief [redacted] everyone liked him. When he wanted to resign from his hamlet chief position, all the people in the hamlet asked him to remain. That was why when the people heard that he had been killed by the VC, they got extremely angry. But everyone was too frightened of the VC, and no one dared say anything.

115. What kind of people in the village had to do corvee labors for the VC?

All the people in the village between 18 and 45 years old had to do corvee labors. The cadres separated those who had to do corvee labors into two categories A and B. Category A was composed of people from 18 to 35 years old. The members of this category had to accompany the troops to carry ammunition and the wounded. On principle, each year, they had to go on mission for six months a year. Each mission lasted from 15 days to 3 month

Category B was composed of people between 36 to 45 years old. The members of this category had to transport rice, but they had to carry the wounded sometimes.

116. Which category did you belong to?

Through I am only 35 years old, but I was afraid I might be classified in category A, and so I said I was 37 years old. And I was classified in category B.

117. How many transportation missions have you participated in? What did you do in these missions?

I had to participate in two transportation missions. The first time I had to carry the wounded from the attack of the [redacted]. This attack was carried out at the same time with the attack of the [redacted] Church. The VC took over the post that time. I don't know how many casualties were suffered by the Nationalists. I only found that there were many wounded on the VC side. The wounded were separated into many groups and each groups were being carried to a different place. The group that was under our charge had 12 wounded. The VC themselves carried and burried their dead. They didn't let the people carry their dead, and so no one knew how many were killed. The second mission took place in December 1965. About 300 people in the village had to go this time, and the cadres told us that we were to carry the wounded. The VC were about to attack Tuy An District. We started out at 6PM and arrived at [redacted] Village at midnight. We entered the people's houses, carried out 12 empty caskets which had been left ready in the people's house, to a jongle section belonging to [redacted] Village. We arrived there at about 1AM and stopped there. Before we left our village, the cadres told us that the mission would last for 12 days and we had to bring seven days ration of rice and enough dry food for 15 days. Each one of us had to buy a nylon sheet and a cotton hammock. At [redacted] jungle, the cadres made the people dig 12 holes so that the 12 caskets could be buried there later. We all had to hang our hammocks and lay there waiting in the jungle. It rained without ceasing, and we were cold and wet and extremely miserable. After seven days of waiting and with no rice left, the VC cadres told us that we had to wait some more. From then on, each day each of us

was given 600gr of rice which wasn't enough for us. As for cooking, we could only cook once a day and at night. On the 11th day, the VC took some of the men to another jungle section about 3 hours' walk from there. There were many shacks in this jungle section, and there were five Northern soldiers in these shacks who had come down with malaria. The cadres told the men to carry these soldiers to a first-aid station located in the mountain belonging to [redacted] village. They started out at 6AM and didn't arrive there until 2PM. the men left the soldiers at the station and returned to their former jungle section. And all the men continued their waiting. Nothing happened on the 14th day. Because of the rain, the cold, the hunger and the miseries, we all decided to escape and go home. And so we all left. We were away from home for 15 days.

118. How was the first-aid station of [redacted] Village?

It was composed of [redacted] built in the mountain. When I arrived there I saw 15 or 16 patients who were already there. They were all Northerners. I didn't see any physicians or nurses, but about 10 women who were taking care of these patients.

119. What did the people say about these transportation missions?

The people suffered much on these transportation missions. They blamed the VC, some of them even cursed the VC. But, they could only talk among themselves, no one dared say anything to the cadres.

120. After the VC took over your hamlet, did they turn it into a combat hamlet?

The cadres turned my hamlet into a combat hamlet. The cadres started out by fencing in sub hamlets by sub hamlet instead of the entire hamlet as it was done for the strategic hamlet. They planted spikes at the foot of the fence. Everywhere there were camouflaged spikes pits. They also dug an underground tunnel. It was a secret tunnel about 60cm wide, 1.20m high, deep in the ground, about 1.50m from the ground and about 250m long. The underground tunnel was dug underneath a big bamboo bush, and

thanks to the meaty soil and the bamboo roots, the underground tunnel would never cave in. When the underground tunnel was being dug, at every 5m interval an opening was tunnelled from the surface to the underground passage so that the earth could be carried out. and when the passage was dug, all the openings were filled up. The earth taken out from the underground passage was piled up at the bamboo bushes. In the end another passage that led from the underground passage to the outside had to be dug. The cadres dug this passage themselves, they wouldn't let the people do it, so no one knew where that passage was located.

121. What did you like about the combat hamlet?

Everyone had to go and dig the underground tunnel including men, women, old and young, except for the sick and women with child. Since I was young until now, I have never had to do anything as strenuous as the digging of the underground tunnel. The people had to bear so many hardships while they built the combat hamlet, but they received no benefits in return instead they had to be always on the alert to sidestep the camouflaged spikes pits.

122. How was the combat hamlet compared with the strategic hamlet?

The combat hamlet was nothing compared with the strategic hamlet. The fence was done very superficially. The fence and the spikes pits only caused troubles to the people in the hamlet. There were no advantages at all because they couldn't stop the Nationalist troops from coming in.

123. Do you know anything about life in the Front forces?

The VC soldiers led very arduous lives. They ate two meals a day, but they were never full. The rice was always mixed with potato and manioc.

124. Who told you that?

I heard the cadres said so. They said the VC soldiers had to lead such an arduous life, the people should abstain from eating rice so that the soldiers would have something to eat.

125. In your opinion, are the lives of the Nationalist soldiers as arduous as those of the VC?

Life in the Nationalist army is ~~xxxx~~ much ~~happx~~ happier. When ~~the~~ a Nationalist soldier is alive, he received salary and is able to support his wife and children. If he dies, he ~~xxix~~ receives compensation. The VC soldiers receive nothing.

126. In your opinion, which side gives the soldier more chances of surviving?

The soldier will have more chances of surviving with the Nationalist side. The Nationalist troops are stronger, have more weapons ~~xxx~~, and each time they go on operation they ~~are~~ supported by airplanes and artillery.

127. In your opinion, which side is stronger?

The Nationalists are stronger because they not only have more troops, they also have more weapons and the support of their allies.

128. Did you meet Northern cadres?

I only met regroupee cadres.

129. You said you met many Northern soldiers on your transportation missions. Did you ~~xxxxxx~~ meet any Southern unit?

I met many Northern soldiers. I was told that they were "military duty ~~xxxxxx~~

I also met Southern soldiers, but they ~~xxxxxxx~~ belonged to ~~xxxxxx~~ the district forces.

130. Did you hear about the ~~Xxxxxxxxxx~~ defeats of the VC units?

I never heard of the VC defeats. The cadres only talked about VC victories.

131. Was there a doctor or hospital in your village?

There was no doctor nor hospital in the village. Anyone who was sick had to content with his sickness because no one would give him any medicine.

132. Had it been the same before the VC took over ~~xx~~ your village?

Before the VC took over the village, there had been a hospital and the sick could go there and ask for medicine. There was also a nurse to give shots to the sick. But when the VC took over the village, all the personnel in the hospital moved to the district.

133. Did you hear anything about the Government in Saigon when you were still in your village?

I didn't hear anything about the Government. I was only concerned about earning my living.

134. Do you know who are the leaders of the Nationalist Government now?

I only know that before, the Government was led by Mr. Ngo Dinh Diem. I don't know who replaced him after he was overthrown.

135. Do you know the aims of the Nationalist Government?

The aims of the Government are to help the people, especially the anti-communist refugees. Anyone who leaves the VC controlled areas and moves to the Government controlled areas, receives help from the Government.

136. In your opinion, is the Nationalist Government compassionate toward the people?

I found that the Government is compassionate toward the people. The fact is many people who could no longer live in the VC controlled areas because of the hardships, moved to the Nationalists controlled areas and received food and were given jobs to earn their living by the Government.

137. In your opinion, is the Government wise?

The Government is wise. The fact is the Government sent people to the refugee camps to take down the names of unemployed people so that they could be employed by the Americans. The Government didn't give jobs to the local people, instead it gave them to the refugees because the Government knew that the refugees were in worse situation than the local people. This shows that the Government is wise.

138. In your opinion, is the Government dedicated to the welfare of the people?

I found that the officials in charge of the refugees are all dedicated.

139. In your opinion, is the behavior of the district and province officials better than before?

The district officials treated the people very nicely before. They are nice now also. If they were 7 times as nice before, they are 10 times as nice now.

140. How do you know this?

The people didn't have such a hard life before the VC took over. And so the people didn't find it remarquable the help they received from the officials. Now that they have moved to the Government controlled areas because of the miseries caused by the VC, they appreciate more the kindness and the help they receive from the Government officials.

141. Did you hear of what happened in other places when you were in your village?

There were no ways for us to find out what had happened in other places.

142. Were there radio sets in your village?

Only the cadres had radio sets. The people didn't have any. And very few cadres had them.

143. Did the people ever listen to the broadcast on the radio?

Now and then the cadres would let the people listen to the music or singing, but they never let them p listen to the news.

144. Were there newspapers in the village?

There was never a newspaper in the village.

145. Did those who went to the Nationalist markets ever tell about what they had heard at the [illegible]

I don't know if they had heard anything. If they had, they only talked to their parents or members of their families. They never talked about it to people out side of their families. I never heard any news from them.

146. Did the cadres organize entertainment in the village for the people's benefits?

Every two or three months, the cadres organized some dancing and singing for the people in the village. I know there was such entertainment because I heard others mention it. As for me, I have never attended these shows.

147. Did many people attend these shows?

The older people didn't like to attend these shows. They had to work hard during the day, and so wanted to go to sleep at night. Only children between 7 or 8 and 15 or 16 years old liked to watch these shows.

148. Did you hear of the Chieu Hoi program when you were still in your village?

I know about the Chieu Hoi program. I learned about it through the leaflets dropped by the Nationalist soldiers. According to these leaflets, any VC soldier who wanted to return to the Nationalist just cause could use these leaflets as safe conduct. They could go to any Government controlled areas and would be welcome. Also according to the leaflets, if the VC refused to return to the Nationalists, then they shouldn't complain if they were killed by the allied forces.

149. Did you hear from others about the content of the leaflets, or did you read the leaflets yourself?

I read the leaflets myself. The leaflets were dropped every half a month.

150. What did the cadres say about the dropping of leaflets?

They picked up all the leaflets and burned them all up. They wouldn't let the people read them. Those who picked up the leaflets to read had to do so secretely. If the cadres happened to know about it, they would be sent to re-education immediately. The cadres said no matter how many leaflets were being dropped, they would never side with the vicious people. They called the Nationalists vicious.

151. Did the airplanes make broadcasts over your village?

The airplanes came often to make broadcasts. They did it every 7 or 10 days, sometimes in the morning, sometimes in the afternoon.

152. What did the broadcasts say?

I could never hear it clearly. I have tried many times to listen to the broadcasts but could never hear anything at all.

153. You said when the SDCs and the Civil Guards were stationed in [redacted] they used to come to your village. After [redacted] came under the control of the VC, did the Nationalist soldiers come to your village again?

After [redacted] came under the control of the VC, the district soldiers

154. Did the fighting erupt each time the Nationalist soldiers came to your village?

The fighting erupted a xxx few times at hamlet [redacted].

155. Were these fighting occurred between the Nationalist soldiers and the Northern soldiers or between the Nationalist soldiers and the guerrillas?

There were xxxx only the guerrillas and the VC district forces. Each time there was an exchange of firing, some VC got wounded. Sometimes some of them got killed. The xix people there saw it with their own eyes. And yet, after xxxx each engagement, the cadres told the people that xxx many Nationalist soldiers had been killed and wounded. They said if one VC had been killed, then 10 Nationalist soldiers had been killed xxxx also. The people never saw any Nationalist soldier got killed at all. Usually, after a short exchange of fire, the VC soldiers and guerrillas all ran into hiding.

156. Was there any damage caused to the people by these xx exchanges of fire?

Usually nox one got killed or wounded. But after each exchange of fire, when the VC had run into hiding, the Nationalist soldiers would arrest some people and beat them up accusing them of working for the VC. The Nationalist soldiers used to tell the people not to go any place, but when there was gunfire, the people all went to their trenches.

157. Was your village attacked by artillery?

After each engagement, when the VC had all left, the Nationalist soldiers would leave also. And when the Nationalist soldiers left, there was always artillery attacks on the hamlets.

158. Was there any damage caused to the people by these artillery attacks?

Wherever the shells fell, the houses that happened to be there caved in or were burned down. Some people got wounded, a few got killed. I don't know exactly the number. I don't know the details.

159. Did the people make any xxxxx complaints?

They complained very much. Some said that if the VC wanted to fight against

the Nationalists, why didn't they go and fight against each other in some opening why did the VC hide in the hamlets to snipe at the Nationalists. And it was because of that, that the Nationalists shelled the village causing damage to the people. When the VC cadres heard that, they replied that if they fought against the Nationalists in some opening, they would be shelled and unable to fight back. They said in order to fight against the Nationalists, they had to lean on the people.

160. Did the people blame the Nationalists for the artillery attacks?

As far as I know, no one blamed the Nationalists, they only blamed the VC. They all said that if the VC wanted to fight against the Nationalists, why didn't they stop the Nationalists in some opening and fight them there, where there were no houses, no nothing, why did they have to prowl around the village and hamlets, snipedat the Nationalists, and then ran into hiding. This caused the Nationalists to shell the village and the people had to bear the damage.

161. Was your village bombed?

My village has been bombed three timessince the beginning of the year. Each time some houses were destroyed and some people wounded. No damage was caused to the VC by the bombing because they all ran away. The people have repeatedly begged them to move to another area to live so that the people would have to bear the bombing. The people were willing to contribute anything they wants, even to the extent of going without food. But the VC turned deaf ears, through they knew that the people blamed them.

162. Did the Government inform the people in advance of the coming bombing or shelling?

The people were never informed in advance.

163. In your opinion, should the Government inform the people in advance about these attacks?

I don't think the Government needs to informs the people in advance about these attacks. The Government bombs or shells with the purpose of killing the VC. If the people are informed in advance, the VC will know about the coming attacks also. Then what is the use of bombing and shelling?

164. Did you hear about the use of chemicals to destroy vegetation or crops?

There has never been any spraying in my village or the surrounding area. There was spraying in other area further away—from [redacted] mountain. The sprayed area was full of jungle trees, there was no crops around.

165. Did you see the spraying your self or did you hear others tell you about it?

I saw the spraying ~~last~~ in April of last year. Two Dakota conducted the spraying and two helicopters circled overhead. The chemicals looked like powder, and I thought it was poison. About 5 or 10 days ~~last~~ later, all the trees ~~were~~ died and were stripped of their leaves.

166. In your opinion, why did the Government use chemicals to kill the trees like that?

I think it is because the VC use to ~~ambush~~ prowl around the dense bushes. The Nationalists sprayed chemicals to kill the trees, to clear these areas, so that the VC wouldn't have any place left to hide.

167. Did you hear of anyone get sick by the spray?

The sprays kill the trees. They aren't harmful to people. I haven't heard of anyone getting sick because of the sprays.

168. Did you hear of ~~h~~ any ricefields being sprayed?

I have never heard of any ricefields being sprayed at all. The houses and ~~the~~ ricefields where I saw the spraying was being conducted, stayed intact.

169. Did you see any Americans before you took refuge?

I didn't meet any Americans before I took refuges, through the American troops had been parachuted ~~in~~ on the ricefield in my village.

170. How many American troops ~~jump~~ jumped that time? When did it happen? What did they do?

I happened last September. About two American platoons jumped that time. They walked on the outside of the hamlets, but didn't enter the hamlets. Whenever they heard the gunfire coming from ~~some~~ some place, they would charge into that place and search it, otherwise they only conducted their searching at the bushes and banks. That was why I didn't meet them.

171. What did the guerrillas and cadres do when the American troops ~~xx~~ landed there?

They all ran into hiding.

172. What did the cadres say about the Americans?

They often said that the Americans ~~took~~ wanted to take over Vietnam to exploit the people.

173. Did the people believe what the cadres say?

No one believed them because no one has been ~~exploits~~ exploited by the Americans

174. In your opinion, what do the Americans want in Vietnam?

The Americans come here to trade with the Vietnamese people, second, they come here to fight against the VC.

175. Why do the Americans fight against the VC?

The VC want to destroy the Nationalist regime to take over the South and to annihilate the landlord class. The Americans don't want the VC to take over the South, to annihilate the landlord class and to destroy the Nationalist regime, and so they come here to ~~fight~~ help the Nationalists fight against the VC and drive the communists out to the other side of the 17th parallel.

176. Do you think the Americans and the French are alike?

When the French were here, I was young and so I know nothing about the French. I can't make the comparison. I only know that the Americans help the Government in the reconstruction of the villages and hamlets, help the people. I didn't ~~xx~~ hear about the French.

177. Besides the Americans, ~~xxxxxxxx~~ did you hear of other countries that help the Nationalists?

I heard that the Australians and the ~~X~~ Koreans ~~support~~ assisted the National Government.

178. Did you meet the Australians and the Koreans?

I have met many Koreans since I came here ~~xxxxx~~ as a refugee.

179. What do you think about the Koreans?

I find ~~they were~~ them all right. I didn't hear any comments about them.

180. Did you hear about ~~xxx~~ bombing on the north?

I didn't hear anything about the bombing on the North.

181. Haven't you heard about the bombing on the North since you came here as a refugee?

Since I came here I have heard other people say that the B-52s bombed the Northern side of the 17th parallel. Thatwas all I heard, I know nothing else.

182. Have you listened to the radio since you came here?

I have never listened to the radio, but other people listened to the radio and told me what they had heard.

183. In your opinion, why was the North bombed?

I think that the North has sent military duty soldiers into the South to cause troubles, and so the Americans had to bomb the North to force it to withdraw its military duty soldiers.

186. What were the reasons that made you take refuge here?

When the Nationalists were still in my village, I could earn my living easily. I didn't have to work hard, yet I had enough to eat. Since the VC took over my village, they forced me to attend re-education course, to go on transportations missions in pestilential areas, to make heavy contributions. My life had become so arduous and miserable as if I was a slave to the VC. Also, my village was bombed and shelled. The Government has dropped leaflets calling on the people to move to the Government controlled areas to live, and if they refused to gom, they would have only themselves to blame if they were killed by bombs or bullets. That was why I left the VC controlledareas to take refuge in the GVN controlled area.

185. Of all the reasons you mentioned before, which was the most important?

As far as I am concerned heavy taxes was the most important reason. We had to pay tax to the VC on everything we produced, as if we were their servants.

186. Why didn't you leave your village before, why did you move out when you did?

I have two younger brothers. One left the village right after the VC took over the village. He is now earning his living in [redacted] The other one was drafted

into the Nationalist army. If I left the village, the VC would mistreat my parents They would take them to pestilential area for re-education. That was why I had to force myself to remain in the village and bear the miseries so that my parents ~~xxxxxx~~ wouldn't be mistreated. I didn't mind about losing my possessions. A man's life is his wealth. But if I had left the village, I would ~~xxxxxxxx~~ have been impious to my parents. And so I had to wait until my parents could make their ~~xxx~~ escape before I make mine.

187. How did your parents ~~xx~~ escape ~~xxxxxxxxx~~?

My mother was too frightened of the bombs and bullets that she remained all day long in the trench. I thought to ~~myself~~ myself that ~~x~~ she ~~x~~ could die of her fear without having to be killed by bombs or bullets. That was why I ~~xxxx~~ sneaked my mother out of the village and take her to [redacted] to stay with my younger brother. She left in April.

188. How did you father leave the village?

After my mother's escape, my father said that he would leave in September, when the harvest was over. That was why he left at the same time with me in September.

184. How did you get out of your village?

I ~~xx~~ had decided to leave when the harvest was over. But as the rice ~~xxxx~~ was ripe but not yet harvested, the American troops came and were stationed in my hamlet. I took that opportunity to leave the hamlet. When I left, I was so afraid~~x~~ the VC would see me. If they could capture me then, they would kill me immediately. I was very frightened then. I looked back often as we walked. I didn't feel safe until we arrived at [redacted]

185. Did anyone try to stop you from leaving the village?

No.

196. What preparations did you make before you took refuge?

I didn't make any preparations at all. I left behind all my possessions and money. My wife had eyesore and so she couldn't [illegible]

could [redacted] bring only some clothes and rice.

192. Did any family leave the village and take refuge at the same time with you?

Nine families went at the same time with us. These families could take their [redacted] cows and buffaloes alongwith them.

193. Could you bring your cows along with you?

I had had two cows, but had sold them so that I could rent more land to farm. And so I had no cows left.

194. How long did you think you would be away from your village when you left it?

When I left it was for good. I regretted nothing. I would return only after the the Government has [redacted] pacified my village. I will wait [redacted] as long as it takes the Government to do that.

195. When you left your village, how many families were left in your [redacted] hamlet?

When I left there were only about [redacted] families left in my hamlet. Before there [redacted] had been [redacted] families in my hamlet. Some of these families moved to [redacted] others came here.

196. What type of families remained in the hamlet?

Thosewere families who had [redacted] sons in the [redacted] guerrilla. They were cadre — families or families who were extremely poor in the village and had received some gia of seeds from the cadres (Interviewer's note: theyreceived some land enough for the planting of some gia of seeds)

197. When did the people in your village begin to leave the village?

Some families left right after the VC took over the [redacted] village.

198. What type of families were they?

They were families with members working for the Nationalist, and landlord families The landlord families were afraid the VC would force them to pay heavy taxes, or would cause them trouble, and so they had to leave early.

199. Have any people who left your village gone back?

No one has returned.

200. Do you think you can return to your village now?

I can't return now.

201. Why can't you return to your village now?

If I returned now, the VC would arrest me and cut off my head. They accused me of ~~running~~ showing the ways to other people to leave their village to go over to the enemy.

202. What help have you received from the Government since you came here?

I received 900 piasters from the Government.

203. What else has the Government promised to give you?

The camp chief has said that the Government would soon distribute blankets and mosquito nets the second time.

204. Did you have enough to eat with the money you received from the Government?

According to the camp chief, there are six members in my family and the Government would give us 1200 piasters a month. If no one in my family gets sick, ~~it would~~ we could have enough to eat with me working as hired laborer to supply our income.

205. Since you came here, have you done anything to ~~supply~~ raise your income?

My wife and children have been sick since we arrived here, and so I haven't been able to do any work. I have cut some firewood for cooking. that was all.

206. Do you have your identification card?

I still have my identification card.

207. When the VC took over the village, didn't they confiscate the people's identification cards?

Yes. They told the people to turn in their family records and identification cards. I only turned in my family records

As for the identification card, I told them that I had lost it when we moved out house when the strategic hamlet was built, and I hadn't asked for a new one to replace the one I had lost.

207. Is there any training course organized in the m refugee camp for the refugees?

When I first arrived at the refugee camp there was a delegation coming there and we were asked if anyone of us wanted to ~~them~~ learn some professions. We were told there were; carpentry, tailoring and driving. I told them that I was a farmer, but if I had to earn my living by another professions, I would like to learn ~~next~~ carpentry.

208. Have you started on your training?

That was only talk. The training hasn't started yet.

209. Do ~~there~~/many people in the camp have jobs?

A great number of them are working for the Americans.

210. How many refugees are there in the camp?

There are four camps/located close together. There are 725 families in these camps.

211. Do you feel safe in this camp?

This camp is safe. The soldiers are stationed right next to the camp and the camp isn't far from the province (Tuy Hoa).

212. How is the leadership of this camp organized?

There are the camp chief and four men to assist him. One is in charge of bookeeping, one is in charge of ~~handing~~ distributing goods, one is in charge of sanitation, and the ~~last~~ fourth is in charge of overseeing the cooking of food.

213. How do these people treat the refugees?

They treat the ~~f~~ refugees very nicely. They look after ~~everyone~~ and always advice people against quarrelling with their neighbors.

214. Are there any leaders here from your own village?

No.

215. Have you received any news from your village since you came here?

I receive no ~~any~~ news from my village at all.

216. Since your arrival at this camp, have any foreigners come to this camp?

Once, some Americans came and distributed gifts to the refugees. I found that that distribution of gifts was unfair. Each family was given a bag of flour and a bar of soap. But about 50 families hadn't received anything when the flour ran out. But there were still some barsof soaps. The Americans stopped the distribution and brought the bars of soap to the door of the village council headquarter which was located at the gate of the camp, then they threw the soap on the ground to let the refugees fight against each other to retreive the soap. Then the Americans stood there and laughed.

217. What do the refugees' children do during the day?

They don't do anything at all.

218. Is there a school in the camp for the children?

There are no classes in the camp, but there is a school outside of the camp. But the refugees are too poor to think of sending their children to school.

219. Who do you think are responsible for the hardships you have to bear now?

The VC are responsible. If the VC hadn't come to my village, I wouldn't have to be in this situation.

220. Where will you go, when you leave this camp?

I will go to [redacted] camp.

221. Why do you chose that camp?

My wife's brother is living there. I want to be near to my relatives and to ask my brother to find me a job.

222. This is the picture of a ladder with ten rungs. The top rung is numbered 1 and the bottom rung is numbered 10. Suppose the top rung represents the best possible life you can imagine and the bottom rung the worse possible life you can imagine. In your opinion, on which rung were you before the VC took over your village? On which rung were you after the VC took over your village? and where are you now?

When the Nationalists were still kx in my village, I was on rung 5. After the VC took over, I was on rung 10 and now I am on rung 9.

223. Would you describe the worse life you can imagine kxx living back in your village?

Earning not enough to eat and to cloth, having to pay heavy taxes to the VC on everything I produced and having to go on transportation missions.

224. Would you describe the best life you can imagine?

Earning enough to eat, to cloth, kxxingxxix living in big house, kxix having car, being xhx able to move around, not having to listen to fxxgix gunfire.

225. What kind of life do you kxpx hope your son will have?

I hope my son xixx/would have a good education so that he xixx/would be a teacher later on. If that can't be realised, then I hope he would xx have and independent profession such as watches repairing.

226. If you could ask three things from the Government, what xx would they be?

If it is possible, I will ask the Government only two things: one xx,give my family money, rice, clothes, blankets and mosquito nets; two, give me a job.

226. Do you think the Government could give you these things?

The Nationalist Government could give me those things.

227. In your opinion, how long will the war last?

It is my opinion that this war will last for a few more years.

229. Why do you think so?

I found that the VC continue to live in pestilential areas/hiding like mice. The Nationalists will have a hard time to find them. And so I think it will xx take a few years more to find them and destroy them.

230. Since when did you think like that?

I thought/didn't think like that when I was still in my village because I heard the VC say that they were determined to fight until the end. If they couldn't win, then their children/and children's children would continue the fight. I didn't know much about the Nationalist strength then. Since I came here I found that the Nationalists and the xhixdx

allies ~~xxxxxx~~ had so many troops, were too strong, and so I changed my mind.

231. Which side ~~x~~ is winning, VC or GVN?

The Nationalists are winning, otherwise the people ~~xx~~ will not side with them.

232. Does that mean that the people give their support to the Nationalists?

That is right. I find that most people support the Nationalists. Even the people living in the VC controlled areas want the Nationalist troops to come to drive the VC out. I believe that all the Nationalists have to ~~x~~ do is to go to the VC controlled areas, the people will point out to them the VC's hideouts. The people there are so miserable, how can they support the VC? And the fact is uncountable families have left the VC controlled areas~~x~~ to come to the Nationalist areas.

233. In your opinion, ~~what~~ if the VC win, what will happen to the people?

If the VC win, the empty handed people (translator's note: the extremely poor) and the cadres will be very happy. The rest will be miserable and the landlord will all be killed.

234. If the Nationalists win, what will ~~xx~~ happen to the people?

If the Nationalists win, the people won't have to pay heavy taxes. The Government will reconstruct the roads, the people will receive help to rebuild their houses, to earn their living. Everyone will have food to eat and clothes to wear. In a word, the people will be happy.

Interviewer's comments

The subject was very at easy during the entire interview. He wasn't intelligent but seemed sincere and cooperative. He spoke ~~xxry~~ clearly and ~~xxxxx~~ seldom hesitated in his answers.

NO. AGR 8

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

1. Name of interviewer [redacted]
2. Name of subject [redacted]
3. Time and date of interview :
   From 10.40 to 12.00 on Nov [redacted] 1966
   From 2.10 to 5.45 on " 1966
   From 7.30 to 11.30 on Nov [redacted] 1966
   Total time 7.35' based on written notes and tape
4. Place of interview : Tuy Hoa
5. Sex of subject : Male (✓) Female ( )
6. Age of subject : ~~25~~
7. Ethnic background : Vietnamese
8. Place of birth :
   hamlet [redacted] (Hamlet)
   village [redacted]
   district Tuy Hoa
   province Phu Yen
9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee :
   hamlet [redacted]
   village [redacted]
   district Tuy Hoa
   province Phu Yen
10. (a) Length of residence in last location : Since birth
    (b) Who controlled the place of residence :
    GVN ( ) VC (✓) Contested ( ) How long? [illegible]

NO. AGR_____

11. Number of brothers (2) and sisters (2)

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age : 2

13. Marital status : Married

14. Number of children : 4

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age : _____

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject( ) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject (✓) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject(✓) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion : Buddhist

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge : farming

19. Economic status :
(a) VC designation _____
(b) Landowner? /

20. Education :
illiterate ( )
literate (✓)
schooling completed : 2 years of schooling

21. Any relatives in VC : No

22. Any relatives in GVN : brother in ARVN

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by :
(a) French
(b) GVN / two
(c) VC

24. When became a refugee : one month and 20 days

Present address : Hau Duong District

INTERVIEW #AGR-81 MISSING—
THRU AGR-84

INTERVIEW NOT COMPLETED

AGR

INTERVIEW

85

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THE RAND CORPORATION

INTERVIEWS CONCERNING THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR-85

Date of Interviews : January [redacted]
February [redacted] 1967

Subject's Category : Refugee: December 1966

Place of Residence : [redacted] Hamlet, [redacted]
[redacted] Village, Ben Cat District,
Binh Duong Province

This interview is for the information of US and Vietnamese official agencies and personnel on a need-to-know basis. Permission to distribute or show this interview to non-official persons requires the prior approval of The RAND Corporation and the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs.

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1. How long did you and your family live in your village before taking refuge in this area?

My family and I had always lived in our native village. Only recently, when our village was bombed and strafed by aircraft did we immigrate to [redacted] Hamlet, [redacted] Village. This happened three months ago.

2. How many hamlets were there in your native village and what were their populations?

I do not know. Our village was quite populated; however, I cannot tell the exact population.

3. How many hamlets were there in [redacted] Village and what were their populations?

I do not know.

4. What was your occupation?

I was a farmer.

5. How much land did you have? How many harvests did you have in one year? What were your revenues?

I did not own any land. I rented one acre from a landowner. My land yielded only one crop a year. Each year I harvested about 80' gia' of rice.

6. How much did you have to pay in land rent? Did you have enough to eat?

Each year I had to pay 20 'gia' of rice in land rent to my landowner and two more 'gia' in agricultural taxes to the VC. The remaining part of the harvest took care of our need for nine months. For the other three months, I had to catch fish and sell them at Ben Cat market in exchange for food. During these three months my family had to live on plain rice soup instead of a regular meal.

7. Did your landowner also live in the village?

No, he did not. Most of the landlords did not live in the village. They only sent their representatives to the village to pick up land rents during harvest times.

8. Did (VC) cadres allow these landlords to pick up land rents?

(VC) cadres did not object to the landlords picking up land rents from tenant farmers. I presumed the landlords too had to pay some sort of taxes to the VC.

9. What was the general occupation of the people in your village? Did they have enough to eat?

The people in my village were generally farmers and 95% of them did not have enough to eat. As a result, they had to work as laborers at various rubber plantations, when not working in the fields.

10. What was the general occupation of the people at [redacted] hamlet? Did they have enough to eat?

Like the people in my village, the people of [redacted] were mostly farmers and, not having enough to eat, they had to work at various rubber plantations for a living.

11. How many people are there in your family? Are your children grown up?

I have a wife and 5 children. My eldest daughter is 23 years old and my youngest child is 4. My sister also lives with my family. She is 44, and a widow without any children.

12. What is your religion?

I have no religion.

13. What is the general religion of the people in your village?

I do not know. However, I believe they do not follow any particular religion, because I saw neither temples nor churches in my village.

14. What about the people in [redacted] Hamlet?

The people of Rach [redacted] are the same way. I saw neither temples nor churches in their hamlet.

15. Were there any people in your village who were not Vietnamese by birth?

No. All the people in my village are Vietnamese.

16. Did you go to school?

I am illiterate.

17. Were there any people in your village who had a high education?

The majority of the people in my village are illiterate. I dare say only four persons out of ten can read and write.

18. Was there any school in your village?

When the Government was still in control of the village, we used to have a school for children. However, when GVN authorities withdrew from the village three years ago, the school was closed and all the children had to stay home to work either as buffalo herders, or field laborers, or fish catchers.

19. Was there any school in [redacted] Hamlet?

There was no school in [redacted] Hamlet and all the people there were illiterate.

20. Did you have any particularly close friend when you lived in your village?

I did not have any close friend. My only acquaintances were my neighbors and when I talked to them it was strictly business.

21. Was there anybody in your village who was particularly beloved and respected by the people?

The person who was most beloved and respected was the village representative (Chairman of the Village Council). He was very kind and gentle to the people and the people in turn had full confidence in him. When faced with a difficult problem, they invariably sought his advice. However, when GVN troops withdrew from the village, the village representative left with them too.

22. After the GVN authorities had left, who else was beloved and respected by the people?

No one.

23. Who was the man most informed about matters happening outside your village?

No one.

24. How was the life of the people in your village before 1954?

During the nine years of resistance against the French, life was very miserable for the people in my village. Due to the hostile attitude and trigger-happiness of the French soldiers, no one dared come out and work in the ricefields and these lay wasted and unattended. To scrape for a living, people had to plant secondary crops such as sweet potatoes or manioc in their small gardens. There scarcely was any rice in the village at that time. And, more often than not, people had to go begging from other villages. Rice was reserved for children and grown up people lived strictly on secondary crops.

25. What did Viet Minh cadres do to help the people?

Viet Minh cadres did nothing to help the people. All they did was to demand that the people sabotage roads. Popular response to Viet Minh demand was, however, very negative.

26. Were there many people in your village joining the Viet Minh to resist the French?

Yes, at that time, there were many people in my village joining the Viet Minh to resist the French.

27. What has become of these people?

Most of these people were regrouped to North Vietnam. Only four or five persons stayed behind and they were all arrested by the GVN.

28. How was the life of the people in your village after 1954?

After the GVN took over the control of my village, life changed completely. People resumed their work in the fields and started saving money to buy cattle or rebuild their houses. I myself succeeded in saving enough money to build a new home and purchase two buffaloes.

29. Where did the officials in your village come from?

Officials in my village were all local people.

30. Were these officials elected by the people?

No. They were appointed by the Government.

31. How did the village officials treat the people? Were there any complaints against them?

The village officials were very kind and gentle to the people. They never did anything that might offend the people. Of all the village officials, the village representative was the kindest. He had been village chief since the days of the French protectorate. No, the people had no complaint whatsoever against the government officials.

32. Has there been any popular election in your village?

Yes. It was the election of representatives to the 2nd National Congress.

33. How was this election organized?

This election was organized through free and secret balloting. However, only people who were literate could truly make their choice. For people who could not read and write, like myself, the choice of a representative was normally done through the help of the workers at the ballot office, who at the request of the illiterate voters, would hand them any one vote and instruct them to cast it in the ballot.

34. Did the elected representatives ever do anything to help the people? Do you feel they deserved the people's votes?

I do not know who was elected at that time, the elected representatives never came to the village; as a result, I do not know whether they have done anything to help the people or deserved the peoples' confidence.

35. Do you know anything about the government of Ngo Dinh Diem?

I do not know anything about the government of Ngo Dinh Diem. I only heard vaguely that administration did nothing to help the people. Under Diem, our village officials were very good. Yes, I have heard about Mr. Diem, but I do not know anything about him.

36. Did you know of Diem being overthrown?

Yes, I heard about Diem being overthrown, but I do not recall the exact time when I received this information.

37. Did the people say anything about Mr. Diem being overthrown?

I do not recall what the people said about this matter.

38. What did you think of Mr. Diem being overthrown?

I did not have any idea.

39. Were there any GVN forces stationed near your village?

There used to be two RVNAF forts near my village: the [redacted] and the [redacted] outposts, both located about three and four kilometers respectively from my village. The [redacted] outpost was abandoned four years ago, and the [redacted] Tay outpost was abandoned one year later.

40. Did the people say anything about these outposts being abandoned by the Government forces?

The people regretted that Government forces withdrew from the area because they knew after the Government left, the VC would come to collect taxes, and above everything else they were afraid that aircraft would come and drop bombs in the area.

41. How did the GVN soldiers treat the people, both before and after the overthrow of the Diem government?

GVN soldiers were always kind and correct in their treatment of the people and they never did anything that aroused offense or resentment from the local inhabitants. Once in a while, a soldier would steal a couple of stray chickens running on the village roads, but I heard nobody complain about this.

42. Besides the Government forces stationed at these two outposts, were there any other troops operating past your village?

Once in a while, I saw other Government troops operating past my village. And it was these troops that stole the chickens, and not the soldiers stationed at the forts.

43. Did you ever live in a Strategic Hamlet?

There was no Strategic Hamlet in my village.

44. How was your life before the NFLSVN took over the control of your village?

When GVN forces were still in the area, life was pretty happy for me as for the rest of the people in the village. However, after Government forces withdrew from the area, we started experiencing troubles and miseries. Aircraft would come and strafe

the area daily, so that nobody dared turn out to work in the field. I, myself, was unable to take care of my one acre of land and half of my rice field lay wasted and unattended. So we became more destitute every day. I was even unable to keep my two buffaloes. Two years ago, as US troops conducted an operation in our village, we were ordered to move to Trung Hoa for three days to avoid mishaps that might arise from their fire fights with the VC forces. When I returned to my village, I found my two buffaloes had been shot dead.

45. When GVN forces were still in the area, did you feel that your life would be better off every day?

If the Government forces had not withdrawn from the area, I would have had a peaceful life and have been able to save a lot of money to better my living conditions.

46. What do you feel the Government of Vietnam should have done at that time to help the people?

I feel that the Government of Vietnam should have left its troops in the area where they had been, in order to provide security for the people to live in peace and happiness.

47. Was there anything that particularly dissatisfied you at that time?

No.

48. Did you resent the GVN for the bombing and strafing of your area and for the killing of your two buffaloes?

I did not particularly resent the GVN for all these misfortunes because I knew it would not have done it if the Viet Cong had not been in the area.

49. When did you first hear of the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam?

I do not recall when I first heard of this organization. It was probably during one of these clandestine propaganda sessions held in the village by the VC, when the Government forces were still stationed at the village forts.

50. What did the Viet Cong say during these propaganda sessions?

The Viet Cong said that they would liberate the people in the village

51. Did the people believe in the VC propaganda?

I do not know. I did not hear anybody say anything about it.

52. Did you yourself, believe in the VC propaganda?

No. I did not believe a word of it; however I dared not say it out loud for fear that I might be arrested and even killed by them. I thought to myself that all the VC were good about was to create troubles and even death for the people.

53. Was there anybody in your village who worked for the VC at that time?

Yes. A number of people left the village to join the VC. In my own hamlet there were two such people and I never saw them again.

54. What kind of men were the people who left the village to join the VC?

They were all farmers, poor farmers, like the rest of the inhabitants in the village.

55. How were the VC propaganda sessions organized?

The VC gathered the people in an area and talked to them.

56. Didn't the GVN forces and the village officials do anything to stop them?

The village officials and GVN forces did not know about it because they were located too far from the village. Besides, the VC only conducted propaganda activities at night.

57. When did the VC start controlling your village?

The VC started controlling the village as soon as the GVN forces and the village administration had withdrawn from the area. And this time they came in broad daylight.

58. Was there any fighting when the VC arrived and occupied the village?

No. The VC arrived only after government troops had withdrawn When the VC arrived they searched all houses, gathered all ID cards and burned them all.

59. When VC cadres arrived at the village, were they accompanied by troops or guerrilla fighters?

No.

60. How did VC cadres treat the people?

On the surface, they were very gentle. They did not beat or insult anybody and the people were passive and scared. I do not know whether this gentleness was genuine or it was simply an act.

61. Were there many guerrilla fighters in your village?

There were about ten guerrilla fighters in my village. Five of them were local natives and the other five were strangers. I do not know where they came from.

62. How did the guerrillas treat the people?

The guerrillas treated the people very well. They never harassed or oppressed them. When they borrowed something from the people it was always with their prior consent.

63. Do you know what the objective of the NFLSVN was?

No.

64. Do you know why the NFLSVN waged a war with the Government of the Republic of Vietnam?

No.

65. Do you know who the leaders of the NFLSVN are?

No.

66. Do you think that the NFLSVN is truly for peace?

I do not know.

67. Do you think that the NFLSVN is a truly patriotic organization?

I do not know.

68. Do you think that the NFLSVN is truly for the people?

I have not seen the VC do anything for the people yet. They

were quite indifferent to the poverty of the people. A case in point was their tax collection. They never reduced taxes for anyone. I doubt very much that the VC truly love the people, although they always claim that they work and die for the people.

69. Do you think that the VC are truly courageous?

I have no idea.

70. Do you think that the VC are truly unafraid?

I have no idea.

71. Do you think that the VC care less about death?

I do not know, but it seems to me that they take the matter very lightly.

72. How do you know that they take the matter of death lightly?

I know so, because during the last operation in [redacted] after moving the civilians out of the area, government forces killed a lot of the VC, yet they did not seem to care and went on to oppose the government.

73. Do the VC have a high sense of discipline?

I do not know whether the VC have a high sense of discipline or not, but I do know that they were quite tough with the people, and when the VC wanted the people to do something, they had no other choice but to comply.

74. Did cadres in your village often organize public meetings?

Normally, meetings were organized once every three or four months. Attendance was compulsory except for the sick.

75. What did the cadres say during these public meetings?

Cadres talked a lot during these meetings; however, because I did not pay any attention, I cannot recall what they said.

76. What did the VC cadres say about the GVN?

The VC cadres said that instead of protecting the people, the GVN had terrorized them and killed them and burned their houses.

77. What do you think of this statement?

I think that this statement is false, because I know the GVN did not oppress the people or do anything that harmed them. The reason the Government could no longer protect the people was because its forces had withdrawn from the area and the Government had lost contact with them. As far as the killing of innocent people and the burning of their houses is concerned, I think it is strictly accidental. Accidents of this type can happen any time and in any war. I do not believe that the Government intentionally killed the people or burned their houses. Take that US operation at Ben Suc as an example. During that operation, out of fear that civilian people could be killed by stray bullets, US forces moved all of them out to [redacted] and kept them there for three days until the operation was over.

78. Did the VC cadres say anything about the North Vietnamese regime?

The VC cadres said that North Vietnam was now strong and independent; that the North Vietnamese were enjoying a high economy, etc. They talked a lot more about North Vietnam but I do not recall it all.

79. Did you believe what they said?

No.

80. Why?

Because I only believe things when I see them. This is part of my character.

80. Did the VC cadres say anything about Communist China?

I do not know what Communist China is.

81. Did the VC cadres ever arrest anybody in your village and send him to an indoctrination course?

I saw the VC cadres arrest one man in the hamlet next to mine, on a charge of spying for the GVN. Then they gathered the people in a public meeting and asked them if the man deserved a death sentence. One man from the crowd stood up and said the man did not deserve capital punishment, reasoning that if he had worked for the GVN it was because he was too poor and had to have some resources for the upkeep his family. As a result, the VC did not kill this man but sent him to an indoctrination course instead.

83. What did this man do actually?

I do not know. I only knew him as a farmer.

84. Where was this man sent and how long did he undergo indoctrination? What type of indoctrination was he given?

I do not know where this man was sent nor what type of indoctrination he was given. I only know that after leaving the village for one month he returned among us.

85. Did the people say anything about this man being arrested and sent to an indoctrination course?

No. I did not hear them say anything.

86. At the time you left your village, how many young men 15 and above were there in your village?

At the time of my departure, there was not a single young man in my village.

87. Before that time, were there many young men in your village?

Yes, there were many of them; however, I do not know the exact number.

88. Did any young men join the ARVN or the Liberation Army?

There were about 10 young men joining the ARVN and two, the Liberation Army. Five other young men joined the local guerrilla forces and still remained in the village. The rest left the village for places unknown to me.

89. What kind of men were the youths that joined the ARVN and the Liberation Army?

They were all poor people in the village.

90. When the NFLSVN took over the control of the village, did its cadres force the young men to join the Liberation Army?

No. They only conducted an intensive propaganda campaign to exhort the young men to join the Liberation Army. Whether or not their exhortation was positively responded to is not known.

91. Were the families whose sons and relatives served in the guerrilla force granted any privileges?

I do not know.

92. How were the families whose sons and relatives served in the ARVN treated?

I myself had a brother serving in the ARVN and because of this I was terribly harassed by VC cadres for some time. They would come to my house and press me with questions as to why my brother had joined the ARVN and why I did not know about it. To these questions, I would reply that my brother had left the family without my approval and knowledge, arguing that a father does not necessarily know all about his own son's behavior and if his son turns out to a thief, there is not much he can do about it. I went on to say that if the cadres were considerate and spared me punishment, I would be very grateful, but if they wanted to kill me I would have to accept the fate. However, as it turned out, the cadres did not do anything to me.

93. Did other families with sons and relatives serving in the ARVN have any more troubles than you did?

I do not know. However, I am sure they would have been badly harassed by VC cadres for some time, but always emerge unharmed at the end.

94. When government forces were still in the area, were there any young men dodging the GVN draft?

There were none in my hamlet. As for other hamlets, I have no information.

95. Was the cultivation of land badly affected by the absence of young men from the village?

No. The cultivation of land could still be assumed by older men.

96. When the NFLSVN took over the control of your village, did it undertake any redistribution of land.

When the French were here, I rented two acres of land. When the Viet Minh took over, its cadres took one acre from me and gave it to another farmer. When the NFLSVN came to my village, still another half of an acre was taken away from my tenancy and given to another farmer, so that by now I only had half an acre of land for farming.

97. Where they many people like you?

Yes, there were.

98. Did the new land tenants have to pay land rent to the landlords?

Yes.

99. Were absentee landlords authorized to collect land rents from the farmers?

Yes, all landlords, whether they were present in or absent from the village, were authorized to collect land rents in the form of grain. This also held true for the landlords living in GVN-controlled areas. After collecting the land rents, landlords had to pay taxes to the NFLSVN.

100. What did you think of your lands being taken away?

I was very unhappy; however, I dared not say anything in protest. My life, already miserable, became worse now that part of the land was taken away.

101. How were you rated as a farmer -- wealthy or poor?

I was rated as a share cropper.

102. Were the men who received your lands satisfied that they finally had some land to farm?

Yes, they were.

103. Did they feel that this land belonged to them?

No. They knew that they were only tenant farmers, because they still had to pay land rents to the landlords.

104. Were there any public lands in your village?

No.

105. Did VC cadres levy any kind of taxes against land tenancy?

Anyone who farmed must have paid taxes to the VC, each according to his income. Taxes were paid in the form of grain.

106. How much did you have to pay in taxes?

When I was the tenant of two acres of land, I had to pay two 'gia', but when my tenancy was reduced to half an acre, I asked for tax reduction, complaining that I did not have enough to eat. Only after repeated requests, did I obtain permission to pay half a 'gia' of rice in taxes.

107. Were tax collectors just and honest?

I do not know.

108. Were there any people in the village who were exempt from taxes.

There were three people in my village who were exempt from taxes. They were exempt because they could produre only about 10 to 15 'gia' a year.

109. Did the people say anything about having to pay taxes?

The people, particularly those in my neighborhood, complained a great deal. They said that the VC cadres should have known that they did not have enough to eat and spare them paying taxes. Despite all this complaining, they couldn't do anything to change the status of their taxes.

110. Were taxes increased or decreased during the period between the NFLSVN taking over the control of your village and your departure from the village?

To the best of my knowledge, there was no increase or decrease in taxes during this period. I saw people in my hamlet pay the same amount of taxes all along. As for people in other hamlets, I do not know whether they enjoyed any tax change.

111. When did the people in your village start paying taxes to the VC?

The people in my village had to pay taxes immediately after the Government forces withdrew from [redacted] fort, but still occupied the [redacted] post.

112. What did cadres say in the way of persuading the people to pay taxes?

They said the people had to pay taxes to help feed the (liberation) troops.

113. What did you think of this pretext?

I thought to myself that was the VC claimed to use the rice collected to feed the troops, but what troops and where were they? I think a lot of people thought the same way, but they dared not say it out loud.

114. Where was the collected grain shipped and how was it used?

I do not know.

115. Besides the agricultural tax, did the people have to pay any other taxes?

Besides the agricultural tax, people had to contribute one piaster per man per month, with the understanding that this one piaster would become two in two-years' time.

116. Did the people know why they had to make this cash contribution?

No, the cadres did not say anything by way of explanation.

117. Were the people authorized to sell their products outside the village?

The two items that could be sold outside the village were fish and vegetables.

118. Where did the people usually sell their products?

When Government forces still occupied the local forts, the people usually took their products to the forts and sold them to the soldiers. When the forts were vacated, they took their products to Ben Cat market.

119. Ben Cat market is under GVN control. Does the fact that VC cadres let the people sell their products at that market mean that they authorized business dealings with people in GVN-controlled areas?

Although the Ben Cat market was under control, it was not [redacted] VC cadres did not prohibit people going to Ben Cat market.

120. How could the people go to a GVN-controlled area, since all their identity cards had been burned or destroyed by the VC?

After the VC had torn up their ID cards, a number of people in my village succeeded in obtaining duplicate copies. The action

was started with me in the following manner. Three months after my ID card was torn up, I heard that the GVN administrative council of my village was stationed at [redacted] and was giving out duplicate copies of ID cards to people whose original cards had been burned by the VC. So I sneaked into [redacted] and secured an identity card, not only for myself but also for wife and my children. Back in the village I passed the word to my neighbors and urged them to go to [redacted] to get new copies of their identity cards. Nevertheless, I advised them to be really cautious for if the VC cadres knew about it they would be doomed. Quite a few people followed my advice and went to [redacted] to obtain new ID cards.

121. Did VC cadres later know about the people going to [redacted] to get ID cards?

I do not know. I only know that one day the VC cadres came to my house and inquired if I had gone to [redacted] to obtain a duplicate of my ID card. I said no.

122. Was the living standard of the people somewhat improved by the sale of local goods and products?

Not much. First, only a handful of people had one product or another to sell. Secondly, the quantity of their products was very small.

123. Where did the people buy the things that they needed?

In addition to the vegetable and fish mongers in Ben Cat market, who were the main sources of supply of commodities for the people back in the village, once in a while a merchant boat would stop at a nearby wharf (2 kms from the village) with plenty of goods which the people could buy to their hearts' content. Nevertheless, the more-needed items were still scarce.

124. Did not the cadres prevent the people from going to the wharf and buying goods?

No. They did not raise a finger in prohibition, although they knew where the people were heading.

125. Did these merchant boats have to pay any taxes to the VC cadres?

I do not know.

126. Did the VC cadres establish any political groups in your village?

I know they did organize some groups in the village, but I do not know exactly what. I heard that membership was compulsory and people had to contribute certain fees monthly.

127. What were the objectives of these organizations and groups?

I think the objectives of these groups were to control the people, because, since their formation, I have not seen them perform any specific task.

128. Was there any other organization?

Yes, there was the village administrative committee.

129. How was the administrative committee organized and staffed?

I do not know how the village administrative committee was organized and staffed. I had contact with only one man and he was the money collector. I heard that this man was a member of the Farmers' Association. I never understand what a farmers' association is.

130. Where do the VC cadres in your village come from?

All of the VC cadres in my village were local natives. I do not know whether there were any strangers who were cadres.

131. What kind of people were the VC cadres in your village? How did they treat the people?

The VC cadres were extremely kind and gentle, but the people were very afraid of them. That is about all I know.

132. Why were the people so afraid of the cadres?

The people were afraid because these cadres might arrest or kill anyone who opposed them or whom they suspected of collaborating with the Government of Vietnam.

133. Were there any female cadres in your village?

There were some.

134. What functions did these female cadres hold? Did the people say anything about them?

I do not know what functions these female cadres held. Nobody said anything about them.

135. What was the most important function in your village?

I do not know.

136. What did the VC-sponsored groups and the village administrative committee do to improve the living standard of the people?

Not only did the VC-sponsored groups and the village administrative committee not do anything to improve the living standard of the people, but they undertook some projects that were harmful to them such as collection of taxes, contribution of money, etc.

137. Was there a village party chapter in the village?

I do not know.

138. Were the people sympathetic to cadres?

How could the people be sympathetic to cadres when they had to make contributions and pay taxes to them, not to mention acts of hostility the people had to bear as a result of cadres' presence in the village. Nevertheless, the people never dared venture to express their opinions out loud.

139. Was there any change in the attitudes of cadres during the period between their taking over the control of your village and your departure from it?

No. I did not see any changes. Their attitudes were the same all along.

140. Did you ever see two cadres quarrel with each other?

Yes, one time.

141. Did you know why they quarrelled?

I heard that two or three cadres had been assigned to jointly perform a job but failed to perform it correctly, and now they were trying to put the blame on one another.

142. What did the people say about these disputes between cadres?

The people said if cadres did not love each other, how could they love the people.

143. Was there partisanship among the cadres' ranks?

I do not know.

144. When you were still in the village, did you notice any change in the attitude of the people towards the VC cadres?

When the VC cadres first arrived in the village, they said that they were struggling for the people's peace and happiness. Their talk was so suave and convincing that some people in the village came to like them. Nevertheless, after a short while, people started realizing that the VC cadres were not doing anything to help them and would remain indifferent even when the people starved or did not have enough to eat. So the people turned their sympathy into hatred and, although out of fear of reprisal they dared not express their feeling openly, they nevertheless showed it in their attitude.

145. Did VC cadres ever punish or kill anyone in the village?

Three months after the VC had taken control of the village, they arrested two individuals on charges of spying for the GVN. The two men were taken away and they have never returned.

146. Did the VC gather the people to pass judgment on these two men as they did with the man you mentioned earlier in this interview?

No. There was no public meeting or public hearing to condemn these two people.

147. Why was there such a difference?

I do not know.

148. What were the occupations of the two men arrested?

They were farmers, like the rest of our people. I did not notice any special activities from these men.

149. Did the people say anything about this incident?

The people rumored that the VC had taken the two men away and had killed them.

150. Did this incident have any bad influence upon the people's attitude.

This incident made the people more scared of cadres. The end result was that the people now did everything the cadres told them to.

151. Did the people in the hamlet have to perform compulsory labor service?

Yes, with the exception of old men like me, all the young and able-bodied people had to perform compulsory labor services.

152. Did the women have to perform compulsory labor service?

Only unmarried women had to perform compulsory labor service.

153. What did the people usually have to do during this corvée labor?

People usually had to carry rice or grain from the village to secret caches, or from one cache to another. This is only what I heard, for I have never been on these labor missions myself.

154. How many people were normally used in one labor mission, and how long did a labor mission normally last?

Each labor mission was normally composed of 20 to 30 persons and lasted one day and one night.

155. What was the usual interval between two labor missions?

The usual interval between two missions was two or three months. But sometimes it was six months.

156. Did the people say anything about these labor missions?

Nobody said anything in protest. With the exception of sick people, nobody ever dared refuse orders from VC cadres.

157. Were there any combat hamlets in your village?

No.

158. Did the VC cadres establish any check points to control the coming and going of the people?

No. The people had complete freedom of movement.

159. When you were still in your village, did you ever hear about life in the VC army.

No.

160. Did you ever meet a non-Southern cadre?

Once in a while, I would meet with a non-Southern cadre who spoke a very heavy dialect. I do not know whether they were North Vietnamese or Central Vietnamese.

161. Did the VC troops ever pass through your village?

The VC troops normally passed through my village once every other month. However, they never stayed in the village.

162. Were they numerous and how were they dressed and equipped?

They were about 30 to 40 in number and half of the troops were armed. They normally were dressed in black. Once in a while I would see the troops dressed in khaki uniforms.

163. Did the people ever say anything about them?

No.

164. Did you ever hear about the defeats suffered by VC troops?

Cadres never mentioned the defeats suffered by the VC troops. They only mentioned their victories.

165. Did the people believe in these victory claims?

I do not know whether the people believed them or not. But as far as I am concerned, these claims were a little doubtful.

166. What made you think so?

The victories which VC cadres claimed the liberation troops had achieved occurred in places too far away from my village; therefore, nobody could check the accuracy of the claims.

167. Do you think the VC troops will eventually be defeated?

I think so. Although nobody said anything about it, I still believe that the government forces will win. For one thing, the VC does not have as much ammunition as the government forces. I have seen ARVN soldiers at the fort use ammunition lavishly to fire at birds, pidgeons, or wild chickens. On the contrary, the guerrillas were too prudent about using ammunition. I have never seen them fire a single shot, not even when ARVN troops passed by the village. How can an army so restricted in the use of ammunition win over its adversary?

168. Were there any doctors or hospitals in your village?

When the government forces were still in the area, we had one dispensary at nearby [redacted] Village. However, when the VC came, the dispensary ceased to function.

169. What happened when a person was wounded and sick?

If a person was seriously wounded or sick, we would take him on stretcher to the Ben Cat hospital, which is about [redacted] from my village and under GVN control.

170. Did the VC cadres ever distribute drugs or medicines to the people?

No, never.

171. When you were still in your village, did you ever hear about the Government in Saigon?

No.

172. Do you know about it now?

No.

173. Do you know who is the head of the Nationalist Government?

No.

174. Have you ever heard of the objectives of the Nationalist Government?

I do not know anything about the objectives of the Nationalist Government. I only heard that the Government of Vietnam is doing all it can to bring peace and happiness to the people, the funny thing about this is the VC also claimed they would bring peace and happiness to the people.

175. Whose claims do you think are more reliable -- the Nationalist Government's or the VC's?

Although the VC talked a lot about it, they never did anything to help the people, besides collecting taxes and contributions. The Nationalist Government, though, was very thoughtful about the people. For instance, during the last operation in the area, fearing that innocent people would be killed by stray bullets resulting from fire fights between its forces and the VC, the Government evacuated all the people from Ben Suc and provided them with houses, food, and medicine.

176. In your opinion, is the GVN force strong or weak?

I think the Government force is strong. I have seen Government troops rove and bivouack at will; and I have seen the VC run away at the approach of Government troops.

177. In your opinion, does the Nationalist Government truly love its people?

I think it does, for the Nationalist Government never left the people to starve, never abandoned the people to the mercy of bombs and bullets, never left the people to suffer from disease or sickness. To me, this is sign of a government's concern for its people.

178. Is the Nationalist Government just?

I think it is, for its servants never arrested people without valid motives. Take the camp in which I live for instance. The Government distributed rice to the people according to their need. To me, this is good enough justice.

179. Do you think that the Nationalist Government is truly devoted to the service of the people?

Yes I do. The Government seems to take care of every thing for us refugees in this camp. Public servants are considerate and thoughtful. They are concerned even with such trivial questions as sanitation. The other day, the kids in the camp made a mess out of the public pond. Yet, instead of reprimanding them, Government cadres only warned their parents to keep close watch on their children. To hear these Government cadres talking, pleading in the megaphones made my heart fill with affection for them. This is something VC cadres never do. They never gave food to any family for any day. But the Nationalist Government did and it gave food not only to a family, but

to 5000 persons for a period of one month. To me, this is more than devotion to the service of the people.

180. How did GVN cadres, including the ones from the province, district and village, you came to know recently, treat the people?

I do not know, because I have never had any chance to have close contact with these cadres.

181. When you were still in your village, did you ever hear of the changing events in Saigon?

No, I did not hear anything. The only place beyond my village which I know is Ben Cat, where I had an opportunity to visit two years ago. I do not even know what happened in Ben Cat, let alone Saigon.

182. Did VC cadres ever talk to the people about what happened elsewhere?

No. All they talked about was the victory of VC troops.

183. Did you ever see any newspaper in your village?

No.

184. Were there any radios in your village?

There were two and their owners usually tuned them to the classical music program of Radio Saigon. Previously, I occasionally listened to this program, but later I discontinued this luxury completely.

185. Did not VC cadres forbid the people to tune in Radio Saigon?

Yes they did, stating that too much classical music would make the people lazy and reluctant to work. But I knew that in their minds the cadres were afraid that people would know the truth by listening to Radio Saigon, therefore they banned all radio listening.

186. What was the reaction of the people when they were forbidden to listen to the radio?

The reaction of the people was one of protest, particularly by those who owned a radio. They insisted on being permitted to listen to the classical music program of Radio Saigon, stating

that if this much was forbidden, they might as well throw away their radios. Finally, the VC cadres backed down and allowed the people to tune in Radio Saigon. However, they gave strict instructions to radio owners that they could only tune in to the classical music program and nothing else and that the sound should be kept to a minimum volume. From that time, very few people - myself included - had a chance to listen to music from Radio Saigon any more.

187. Did cadres urge the people to listen to any particular radio?

Yes, cadres urged the people to listen to Radio Hanoi; however, I do not know if the radio owners complied with this instruction or not. I think that only Radio Saigon has a classical music program; therefore, I believe few people tuned in Radio Hanoi.

188. Did cadres ever organize entertainment and theatrical shows of any kind for the people?

No. There never was any theatrical show. Only last year was there a two-hour film show. I also attended this show, but I have forgotten all about its contents. I only remember vaguely that there were a lot of VC soldiers in the film.

189. Did you ever hear of the Chieu Hôi program?

When I was still in my hamlet, every once in a while an airplane would come and drop leaflets on my hamlet. I, myself, got hold of one of these leaflets and, being an illiterate, I asked my neighbors to read it for me. They said that the leaflets contained GVN appeals to VC cadres and troops to return to the GVN area where they could live in peace and happiness.

190. When you came to [redacted] did you see any more of these leaflets?

At [redacted] I saw many more of these leaflets, and nearly anyone who could read and write had a chance to know what the leaflets were all about.

191. Did cadres also read these leaflets? Did they know of the Chieu Hoi program?

I did not personally see cadres read these leaflets, however, I was sure they did and knew about the Chieu Hoi program. For when I was at [redacted] noted that after each leaflet drop, there invariably were some cadres rallying to GVN authorities at Ben Cat. I obtained this information from other people in the village.

192. Did these people actually see VC cadres rallying to GVN authorities at Ben Cat?

I do not know whether they did or not, but someone must have seen. They even specified that VC cadres returned to GVN authorities in groups of two or three.

193. What did you yourself think of the Chieu Hoi program?

I did not have any idea. However, I felt that the Chieu Hoi program was beneficial to VC cadres in that it provided them with an easily accessible loophole, if they ever chose to return to the GVN cause.

194. Was your village ever bombed?

My village was bombed four times last year. It was around April or May. Each time, there were a few killed and wounded. As a result, a lot of people immigrated to [redacted]. Only people with some land to till, like me, remained in the village. However, in October, when the land had been tilled and the rice transplanted, they also immigrated.

195. Do you know why your village was bombed?

I think we were bombed because the VC were in the village. This was at least the concensus of every one in the village.

196. Did anybody complain about anything? Did the people resent the GVN for the bombing?

The attitude of the people was one of resignation. They did not resent the GVN so much as they blamed the VC, for they felt their presence in the village was the cause of the bombing.

197. Did the cadres say anything about the bombing?

I did not hear them say anything.

198. Was your village ever attacked by Government troops?

The village was attacked once last year; however, I had fled before the Government troops came, so I do not know how the attack was conducted. When I returned to the village I learned that one guerrilla was killed during the attack. I do not know the casualties on the Government side.

199. When Government troops attacked the village, were there any VC troops in it.

No. Only guerrillas.

200. Did the civilian people suffer any casualties?

No, there were no civilian casualties. Government troops did not manhandle the people, or arrest them, or take away their property.

201. Did the people say anything about this attack?

The people again put the blame on the VC, stating that if there had been no VC in the village, the government forces would not have attacked. The people did not particularly resent Government troops; however they were afraid of being captured and killed by stray bullets.

202. Did GVN authorities ever warn the civilian people in advance of these attacks?

No, never.

203. What did the people do in the way of protection?

Every family had trenches and shelters.

204. Do you feel that GVN authorities should have warned the people in advance of these attacks?

I do not think they should. For if they had done this, the VC would have fled, and the whole purpose of the attack - which was to kill the VC and not the people - would have been defeated.

205. If GVN authorities had given the people some sort of advance warning, would the civilians have benefitted from it in some way?

An advance warning would have been beneficial to the civilian population in that it would have reduced civilian casualties. However, the VC would have known of these attacks and run away too.

206. Did you ever hear of chemical spray and its destructive effects upon vegetation and crops?

Last November, airplanes came and sprayed chemicals upon my village; however, at that time, all the people had already left the area.

207. What were the results of this chemical spray in November?

After the spray, I returned once to the village. I saw that all the vegetation was dead and rice plants destroyed. Some people were able to gather some grain, but others were empty-handed. I lost two-thirds of my crop as a result of the spray.

208. Did the people say anything about this?

The people complained a great deal. They often wondered among themselves why the GVN had sprayed the chemicals to destroy their rice field and gardens - their only means of living.

209. Do you know why the Government had sprayed chemicals to destroy people's rice fields and gardens?

I do not know and nobody else seems to know either. I always believed that the Government of Vietnam never intentionally did harm to the people. The proof was that it had taken pains to feed five thousand persons here in this refugee camp, and no one had ever complained that he did not have enough to eat. My guess was that the Government had intended to spray some forest areas where the VC were hiding in order to kill them, but the spray had been left off by mistake or had been wind-swept to my village.

210. Did the cadres say anything about the chemical spray?

No. I did not hear them say anything.

211. Was anybody contaminated by the effects of the spraying?

The spraying was conducted very early in the morning when nobody was out in the field yet, and at a time when all the people abandoned the village for another area; therefore, there were very few people contaminated. I heard there were only two or three of them.

212. What happened to the people contaminated by the spray?

I heard that they felt dizzy for a couple of hours and that was all. There were no diseases or sickness.

213. Were the people afraid of the chemical sprays?

Yes, they were very fearful, for they did not know what would become of them medically if they were contaminated by the spray.

214. Did the people dread chemical sprays more than bombs and bullets.

No, the people dread bombs and bullets more than chemical sprays.

215. Did the people receive anything in the way of compensation for the damage done to their property?

No.

216. Did the VC cadres do anything to help the people whose property was damaged?

No.

217. Do you feel that the destruction of people's crops had any disastrous effect upon the VC?

Yes, I think so, for if the people did not have grain, they could not pay taxes to the VC. However, the civilian population suffered more from this destruction than the VC did.

218. Do you feel that these chemical sprays would bring famine and death to the people?

I do not think that people would suffer or die from famine as a result of chemical sprays. If they had no crops, they still could go to various rubber plantations to work as hired-hands, although they might not be too well off.

219. Had you ever seen an American before you arrived at this hamlet?

Yes, I had. It was during one of my trips to Ben Cat.

220. How did the Americans you saw treat the Vietnamese people?

I do not know how the Americans at Ben Cat behaved towards the Vietnamese people, because I did not have any contact with them.

However, when I came here to this camp, I came to know the Americansbetter. There are many of them in this camp, and they always look happy and pleasant and often tease and joke with the children. Sometimes they even brought water to the camp for the people to use. I never saw the Americans frown or reprimand anybody in loud or raised voices.

221. Why do you think the American people are here?

I think the American people are here to fight the VC and to occupy Vietnam. Theirs is the ambition of an individual who already owns a large house, but still wants to expand it more and more in size.

222. What do you feel if the American people really want to conquer this country?

It does not matter to me who conquers this country, as long as they are considerate of and love the people.

223. Do you particularly wish that all the American people withdraw from this country?

Yes, I do. I feel this nation belongs to the Vietnamese people and the Vietnamese people are the only masters of their country I feel things had better be carried out with this in mind.

224. Do you feel the Government of Vietnam would be able to defeat the VC if all US troops withdraw from the country?

I think they would. I have never seen Government forces overpowered by the VC troops in any battle. And now the ARVN forces are more powerful than ever. The proof is that they can launch a military operation at any time and at any place they want. They can establish a new post where and when they desire. They can move an entire population from one place to another without being hindered by the VC.
The VC do not have the same freedom of action, and this alone proves that they are weaker than the Government of Vietnam. In my opinion, the GVN can still carry on its present job even if all the US troops withdraw.

225. Do you see any similarity between the Americans today and the former French colons?

Yes, I feel the Americans today are similar to the French formerly living in this country. Like the French, the Americans also govern this country, and are considerate of the people.

226. Did you ever hear of foreign nationals coming to this country?

No.

227. Did you know about the bombing of North Vietnam?

I learned of the bombing on North Vietnam through various radio programs. I heard that lots of damage had been done to North Vietnam as a result of this bombing.

228. Do you know why North Vietnam was bombed?

I do not know.

229. What do you think of North Vietnam being bombed?

I often wondered why a country, independent like North Vietnam, could be subjected to bombings and acts of hostility. This is also the opinion of my neighbors.

230. Who told you that North Vietnam was independent?

The VC cadres in the village.

231. Did VC cadres ever make any comments on the bombing of North Vietnam?

No. Never.

232. Do you feel the bombings of North Vietnam have any detrimental effect upon the VC in South Vietnam?

I have no idea.

233. Why did you take refuge in this place?

I was brought out here by the Government forces. I did not intend to come here.

234. When you were still in your village, did you ever contemplate leaving the village?

Yes, and I left my village for [redacted] after it had been bombed and strafed.

235. Did you ever contemplate leaving your village completely for an area controlled by the GVN?

When I settled in [redacted] I was still scared of aircraft, so I thought of going to Ben Cat, an area controlled by the GVN. I felt I could make a living there by working for various rubber plantations.

236. Why didn't you go to Ben Cat earlier?

I had decided to wait until the grain was ripe and the harvests were over before I moved. However, the Government forces arrived before then and there I was, rounded up and brought over here to this camp.

237. Why didn't you go straight to Ben Cat or another GVN-controlled area when you left your village for [redacted]?

It was my ricefields that kept me from going to Ben Cat or another GVN-controlled area. [redacted] is near my village and, by living there, I could go back to my village and work on my fields. In addition, I felt life in Ben Cat as a plantation hand could not be better than life in [redacted] as a farmer. However, there were so many bombings and chemical sprayings recently that I decided to go to Ben Cat.

238. Before you came to this camp, did you have any idea how life under the GVN was?

I knew life under the GVN was always easy and that newly arrived people would be helped by the Government.

239. Who told you this?

While in my village, I occasionally went to Ben Cat market and that is how I came to know life under the GVN. As for the assistance from the Government, I learned about it from my brother who had fled to Doc near Ben Cat in October 1966.

240. How were you and your family brought to his camp?

One day, an aircraft with a loudspeaker hovered over my village and warned the civilian population to leave the area immediately because a military operation by Allied Forces was going to take place. Upon hearing this, I picked up all necessary items such as clothes and foodstuffs, and took my family to [redacted] where we lived temporarily in my brother's house. The next day, an army

truck took me back to the village so that I could round up the rest of my belongings. However, when I reached my home, everything had been destroyed by fire, including my house and furniture, and my ten bushels of rice. The only items that remained intact were the two bushels of grain and gruel rice I stored underground. So, I put every thing on the truck and rode off to this place.

241. Were there many families who went to this place at the same time you did?

All the people in the village -- estimated at five thousand -- were taken to this place. The ARVN had to transport them in many trips over a period of two or three days.

242. When did the people in your village first leave their homes?

The people first left their homes in October. Some, such as my brother, immigrated to a GVN-controlled area, while others went to VC zones such as [redacted]. These places were all near [redacted], which was an area controlled by the GVN.

243. When you first arrived in this camp, how long did you think you would stay before returning to your village?

I did not have any clear idea. However, I told to myself that I would return to my village only when the Government forces established a military post there.

244. Have there been any refugees returning to the village?

No.

245. Would you return to the village now if you were allowed to?

If the Government presently allowed all the people to return to their village, with promises not to drop any bombs or lob any shells into our midst, I think we would return to the village as a group. But returning to the village now, by myself, is something I dare not risk, even if the Government promises not to drop any more bombs. For I am sure the VC would suspect me as a spy and would kill me. A return in a large group is different.

246. Since your arrival in this camp, have you ever had any assistance from the Government?

Yes, I have received a mosquito net, a blanket, a mat, dried fish, and rice. Dried fish is issued in rather small quantities but rice is adequate. Other people receive the same assistance as I do.

247. Did the Government promise to give more assistance?

The Government promised that it would pay each man ten piasters a day. However, this has not been done yet.

248. Do you think that the Government will keep its promise?

Yes, I do.

249. In one of your earlier statements, you said that you still kept an ID card. Did other people also keep their ID cards with them?

Some people do not have ID cards.

250. Did GVN authorities issue them duplicate copies of their ID cards yet?

I do not know whether they did or not.

251. Was there any vocational training program being conducted in this refugee camp?

No.

252. Would you like to attend a vocational training course?

I do not want to learn any trade any more. I feel I am too old to learn.

253. Do other refugees want to receive vocational training?

I do not know.

254. Was there anyone in the camp who succeeded in obtaining a job to earn some extra money?

There were some people working at the US brick factory. Each day they were given two cans of meat, which they resold for 100 VN$.

255. Do you yourself have a job?

I cannot work. Since arriving here, I have had a very bad backache; it was, in fact, so bad that I could not sit up straight. The crisis came back again yesterday. I can talk to you only when the pain is gone.

256. Wasn't there any dispensary in the camp?

Yes, there was and I even obtained some drugs from the dispensary. However, the back ache was still there.

257. Of the five thousand people who arrived at the camp, has anybody left it yet?

Yes. People whose relatives live in this area are authorized to go and stay with them.

258. Do you feel safe living in this camp?

Very safe. There are no bombs, no VC. The camp has guards and patrols 24 hours a day.

259. How is the administration of the camp organized?

I do not know how the administration of this camp is organized. I only know that the board of administrators includes a number of officers and civilian cadres.

260. How do they treat the refugees in the camp?

They are all very kind and gentle. They take care of everyone and everything, including problems of sanitation. They never reprimanded anybody. I have never heard of any complaints against them.

261. Were there any people in this camp who formerly were members of your village administrative council?

All members of my village administrative council are presently located at [redacted]. I see none of them at this camp.

262. Since your arrival in this camp, have you heard anything from your village?

No.

263. Have you seen any foreign national/visitors at the camp?

I have seen a lot of US military arrive at the camp. They brought water to the camp for the refugees. Some merely made the rounds of the camp.

264. What are the young children in the camp doing?

They play.

265. Whomwould you blame for all the misfortunes you suffer today?

The VC are the ones I would blame first. It is they who provoke this war, who bring bombardments upon the innocent people, and who force the people to leave their homes and their gardens for this miserable refugee life. It all starts with the VC.

266. How about the GVN? Didn't it drop bombs on your village?

The GVN would not have dropped bombs if the VC had not been present in the village. I am sure the Government would not intentionally harm the people. The proof was that it has taken great pains to take care of the five thousand refugees in this camp.

267. If you are to leave the camp, where would you go?

I do not have any particular choice. However, I would like to go to a place where there are no bombs and no fighting and where I can make a living.

268. What will you do to make a living?

I will farm or work as a laborer at some rubber plantation.

269. Let me show you the picture of a ladder with ten rungs, numbered from 1 to 10. Rung 1 is at the top of the ladder and rung 10 is at the bottom. Each rung represents a standard of living you have experienced, rung 1 being the highest and rung 10 being the lowest. Now can you tell me what rung of the ladder represents your life before and after the NFLSVN controlled your village, and what rung of the ladder represents your life now in this camp.

Before the NFLSVN controlled my village, my life was at rung 7. When the NFLSVN controlled the village, my life was at rung 8. And now in this camp, my life is at rung 9. If I had continued to live in [redacted] my life there would have been at rung 10.

270. At what rung of the ladder do you think your life will be in five more years?

I cannot tell. We shall have to wait until that time comes.

271. Can you describe your life in your village at its worst moment?

My life at its worst moment was when I did not have clothes to wear and rice to eat, the only living substance being tree roots, and when fear of bombing and strafing was constant.

272. Can you describe your life in your village at its best moment?

My life at its best moment was when I was well off, having plenty to wear and to eat and when there was no fear of air attacks.

273. Do you have any sons?

No.

274. If you had a son, what would you want him to become?

If I had a son, I would want him to be well educated, to hold some high diplomas, and finally to become a school teacher.

275. If you are allowed to make three requests from the Government, what will you request?

The only thing I wish is independence of our country. When the country is independent, there can be only one government. As things stand right now, there are two governments in the country, the Government of the Republic of Vietnam and the NFLSVN. And this seems to have been the cause of all the hardships and sufferings of the people. I sincerely look forward to the day when there is only one government - the Republic of Vietnam - so that I can return to my native village and live in peace.

276. If you are allowed to make three wishes for your family's or your own benefit, what will you wish?

First, I will wish to have a buffalo and some land to till; second, I will wish to be free to work and live wherever I want; and third, I will wish to have a house large enough to hold my entire family.

277. What government, do you think, will be able to satisfy your three wishes?

I am sure the VC government will satisfy none of my three wishes, for it seems to have been its policy to take from and not to give to the people. I believe the GVN can satisfy my first and second wishes.

278. How do you know the GVN can satisfy your two wishes?

My first wish pertains to ways and means of living, and since the GVN's proclaimed policy is to provide the people with social security, I am sure my first wish can be granted. My second wish also has a good chance of being accepted, because I am sure the GVN will let us, refugees, freely choose our trades and freely move about on GVN territory, like the rest of its citizenry.
My third wish is, I think, a little difficult for the GVN to fulfill. Anyway, I feel the question of housing is not as important as the question of living. For as far as I am concerned, so long as I have an occupation to keep me and my family alive, I can live in any type of house, whether it is made of brick or of thatch or of plain grass. Besides, if I have job, I can still save money to build a house of my own.

279. How long do you think this war will last?

I have no idea.

280. Which side do you think is winning the war right now?

I told you about this already. I told you that the GVN is strong, rich and people-loving. The proofs are that the Government forces could operate whenever they want, station wherever they desire, settle and resettle the people in whatever way they wish, feed whatever number of refugees may come under its control. Isn't this a sign of strength? And, in any war, it is always the stronger who will win.
The VC are not only much weaker, but they are also losing the confidence of the people. Whoever is hampered by these deficiencies is bound for defeat.

281. Do other refugees think the same as you do?

I do not know about other refugees, but those in my neighborhood think the same way.

282. Who, do you think, is enjoying the support of the people -- the GVN of the NFLSVN?

I saw all the people in my village support the GVN.

283. If the people in your village did not support the VC, then why did they stay with the VC and contribute money and wealth to the VC?

The people had to stay in the village under VC control, because they could not afford to leave their fields and their gardens. As for contributions, what could they do about them? Contributions to the VC were compulsory. And the people contributed more out of fear than willingness.

284. What do you think the GVN should do to win more support from the people?

What the GVN should do is to provide each and every one of its citizens a job so that nobody lives in poverty and want. If the Government can do this much, it will win greater support from the people.

285. If the NFLSVN won, what do think the life of the people would be?

I think the life of the people would be worse than it is now. For if the VC can be so hard about forcing the people to pay taxes and make contributions now while still weak and fledgeling, what would they become if they came out victorious in this war?

286. If the GVN won, what do think the life of the people would be?

If the GVN wins, I think the life of the people will be much better than it is now. For if it can take care of so many people now while it has a war to fight, it certainly can do much more when the war is over.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

The subject was at ease throughout the interrogation. Although he was illiterate and not very intelligent, he was very sincere and cooperative.

No. AGR 85

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

1. Name of Interviewer: [redacted]

2. Name of Subject: [redacted]

3. Time and Date of Interview:

From 1330 to 1500 on [redacted] JAN ~~1966~~ 1967

From 0930 to 1150 on [redacted] JAN ~~1966~~ 1967

From 1005 to 1155 on [redacted] FEB ~~1966~~ 1967

From 1330 to 1450 on [redacted] FEB ~~1966~~ 1967

Total time: _____

Interview based on: tape ( ) hand written notes (x)

4. Place of Interview:

BINH DUONG

5. Sex of subject: Male (x) Female ( )

6. Age of subject: 52

7. Ethnic background: Viet Nam

8. Place of birth:

hamlet [redacted]

village [redacted]

district Cu Chi

province Binh Duong

9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee:

hamlet [redacted]

village [redacted]

district Ben Cat

province Binh Duong

10. (a) Length of residence in last location: 3 months

(b) Who controlled the place of residence:

GVN ( ) VC (x) Contested ( )

(c) Since when controlled or contested? a long time ago

11. Number of brothers (4) and sisters (2)

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age: 4

13. Marital status: Married

14. Number of children: 5

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age: 0

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject (x) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject (x) or not with subject ( )
1 sister with subject (x) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion: None

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge: farmer

19. Economic status:
(a) VC designation Share-cropper
(b) Landowner? _____ How much land 1 rented acre of land

20. Education:
Illiterate (x)
Literate ( )
Schooling completed: _____

21. Any relatives in VC: None

22. Any relatives in GVN: 1 brother serving in the RVNAF

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by:
(a) French
(b) GVN A niece
(c) VC

24. When became a refugee: 1 month

25. Where took refuge first: _____

26. Parent residence: _____

INTERVIEW #AGR-86 MISSING—
THRU AGR-88

INTERVIEW NOT COMPLETED

AGR

INTERVIEW

89

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THE RAND CORPORATION

INTERVIEWS CONCERNING THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR - 89

Date of Interview : January [redacted] 1967

Date of Refuge : January [redacted] 1967

Subject's Category : Refugee

This interview is for the information of US and Vietnamese official agencies and personnel on a need-to-know basis. Permission to distribute or show this interview to non-official persons requires the prior approval of The RAND Corporation and the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs.

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1. You say your husband isn't with you. Where is he now?

I don't know. He was captured.

2. By whom?

He was captured the day we left our home to come out here.

3. Who took him away?

The Nationalist soldiers.

4. After you left your village, did you go to any other place to take refuge?

No. I came straight here. I haven't gone to any other place since. I haven't even gone to the market.

5. Why haven't you gone to the market?

I have my children to look after. Also, each time anyone of us goes to the market, she has to obtain this or that paper. It's just too much trouble. I decided not to go at all.

6. What kind of paper would you have to obtain?

One from the officials here. Many people have gone to the [redacted] and gone here and there, but I have found that it is too st[redacted] to get permission. I decided to remain put.

7. Why did you move from [redacted]?

Because everybody else had gone to [redacted] and so I went too.

8. Why did people move to [redacted]

Because of the bombing. The bombing there was very intense. People couldn't bear it any longer. They left for [redacted] and so I followed suit.

9. Did all the people in [redacted] because of the bombing?

Yes.

10. Was there much damage to the people's properties? Did many people get killed because of the bombing?

Most of the houses in [redacted] were destroyed or burned down, and many people were killed.

11. Do you know why [redacted] was bombed?

How do I know?

12. Did the VC often come to [redacted] at that time?

Yes.

13. When did the VC first come to [redacted]

How could I remember that? It was a long time ago.

14. What did they do when they came to [redacted]

They didn't do anything to us at all.

15. Was your house damaged by the bombing?

My house was burned down. All my household goods were burned too. I lost everything.

16. Whom do you think bombed your village?

The Americans. It must have been the Americans who bombed us. The Government couldn't have done that. It must have been the Americans.

17. How do you know it was the Americans who bombed your village?

How? There were airplanes and only Americans have airplanes.

18. Did you see any Americans before you came here?

Yes.

19. Where did you see them?

Up there. They when on operations up there.

20. Where is up there?

[redacted] They went on operations in [redacted]

21. How did they treat the people?

They were very nice. They didn't do anything to the people. They bought a chicken from me and paid me 250 piasters. I didn't tell them the price, but they took the money out of their pockets and paid me.

22. What did you do before you came to [redacted]

I worked as a hired laborer. I tilled the land.

23. Did you make enough to live on?

I don't know. We just harvested about 10 gia of rice recently but had to leave them behind when we moved out here.

24. What did your husband do?

He worked as a hired laborer. He killed pigs for sale.

25. What did you do before you came to [redacted]

We were rubber tappers, I have been to many places to work to make our living.

26. How many members were in your family?

I used to live with my mother in [redacted] when we moved to [redacted] my mother moved to Binh Duong. When she heard I had moved here, she came to visit me. The authorities here w[illegible] let her leave again. Now she is a refugee like me. We all live together again.

27. How big was [redacted] And how many people lived in [redacted]

How could I know about that? I was a refugee when I was in [redacted] too. I asked people there to let us put up a hut on their land, but they all refused, and so we had to put up our hut in the middle of the field. Even the soldiers felt pity for us when they saw how we lived.

28. How old is your husband?

He is 30. He was in prison for two years.

29. Why was he in prison?

You know, he was told to drop propaganda leaflets. He was working at some plantation in [redacted] then. Someone told him to distribute propaganda leaflets and he agreed. He brought them home and hid them in the chicken pen. When the house was searched, the searchers found all the leaflets intact. They took my husband away and put him in prison for two years. He has been released for two or three years now.

30. Do you think that the reason your husband was re-arrested was because he might have worked for the VC?

No. He was a worker; he worked to earn his living.

31. How did you come out here?

I came out here by plane.

32. Would you describe what happened the day you moved out here?

Some Americans came to my home and told me to pack up all my things and they would take me away by ship. I had nine gia of rice we had saved, but I couldn't do anything about them because I also had three children to take care of. All I could do was hold my children. They took me to the ship, but it was full, so they took me to the airplane.

33. Did you hear any broadcasts from airplanes asking the people to leave their village?

Yes. I heard the broadcasts a few times.

34. How long did the airplane broadcast before the Americans arrived?

Not very long.

35. Could you bring anything with you when you came out here?

I didn't have much. I had some rice, but it was such a long way. The Americans told me I could bring anything with me and they would help me carry it. But it was such a long way. I just packed all our clothes and moved out.

36. Were you frightened?

Why should I have been? I wasn't frightened or anything. Only the guilty ones were frightened. I didn't do anything wrong. Also, the Americans didn't do anything to us then.

37. What did the people in [redacted] do to earn their living?

They did all kinds of things. The rich had stores. They were in the mercantile business. The poor worked as hired laborers.

38. Were most of the people in [redacted] poor or rich?

Some were extremely poor, others just made ends meet, and there were also rich people.

39. What category did the Front assign to your family?

Very poor. We had nothing. In [redacted] my family had one mau of land. My mother worked it while I went here and there seeking work. When we moved out of [redacted] my mother came here, while I went to [redacted]

40. Did you know that [redacted] was controlled by the VC before you moved there?

Yes, but I was very poor. What could I do to earn a living if I moved here then? Had I been rich, I would have moved out here. My mother, each time she came to visit me, urged me to come out here. But, I couldn't because we were too poor.

41. How much education have you had?

I went to school when I was very young, when I was eight or nine years old. It was a long time ago. By now, I have forgotten everything.

42. Did your children go to school when you were in Ben Suc?

No. My oldest child is only seven now.

43. Was there a school in [redacted]

Yes, but it closed down soon after we moved there.

44. Why?

I don't know. I was a refugee in [redacted] too. You should ask the [redacted] people about that.

45. Was [redacted] a strategic hamlet?

It was. It was a strategic hamlet for two or three years until the soldiers withdrew, then the people in the strategic hamlet followed suit and went back to their former homes. I lived there until the soldiers left and then I left too.

46. You left where?

The strategic hamlet.

47. Which one?

The one in [redacted] I stayed there for two or three years.

48. Didn't you tell me that you stayed for only seven or eight months in [redacted] before you came here?

I had been in [redacted] before. I was working as a rubber tapper in [redacted] then. We were concentrated in the strategic hamlet and I lived there for two or three years. When the soldiers (Nationalist) withdrew, the strategic hamlet disintegrated, and the people moved back to their former homes. I moved back to [redacted] Village because there was no work to be had there. When [redacted] was bombed, the people moved out. I moved out too and went back to [redacted] I went where the people went.

49. Did you like living in the strategic hamlet?

Of course.

50. Why?

It was safe in the strategic hamlet and, also, we received the Government's help. I like to live here also. Here, we don't have to work, but have food to eat. The Government feeds us. It is much better than living in [redacted] I just wish to have a house of my own and I would stay here from now on.

51. Was there anything you didn't like about the strategic hamlet?

No.

52. When you came to [redacted] the second time, did you hear if the VC had killed or arrested anyone in [redacted]

I don't know. But, I know that after the soldiers (Nationalist) left the strategic hamlet, the VC came and arrested some dozens of people. Some of them were released afterwards, and others were taken away for good. I didn't hear anything like that going on the second time I came to [redacted]

53. How did you find the people's condition of life when you came to [redacted] the second time compared with their condition of life when you were there the first time?

Oh my Lord, the people's condition of life was extremely [illegible] Before, they slept in peace, and didn't have to worry about bombing, digging trenches and caves. The second time I came to [redacted] I found trenches everywhere and people sleeping in their trenches at night. They didn't dare stay in bed.

54. What did the people say about their condition of life?

They complained about their hardships. To tell the truth, only the poor remained in [redacted] the rich left it a long time ago.

55. When did these rich people move out of [redacted]

When the bombing started.

56. When did the bombing start?

How could I remember that?

57. If [redacted] was bombed, why did you move there?

The bombing occurred a little further down from [redacted] hasn't been bombed yet.

58. Why did the people stay in the trenches?

They were frightened.

59. You said the VC controlled [redacted]. How did the people there feel about having the VC with them?

I don't know. The people continued to work to earn their living. They earned enough to support themselves. Only the poor remained in [redacted] the rich left a long time ago.

60. Did you have to report yourself and your family to any authority when you came to [redacted]?

No.

61. Did you pay any tax to the VC while you were living there?

I paid no tax because I was a refugee. I don't know about the people in [redacted]. They didn't tell me what was going on. After all, you see, they didn't trust my family.

62. Why didn't they trust your family?

My father was killed and my husband was a prisoner.

63. Who didn't trust your family?

The VC, of course.

64. Before you came out here, what did you hear about life in the Government-controlled areas?

I heard people who had been out here say that life in the Government-controlled areas was all right. The Government gave sewing machines to people, and so on. They said that the Government provided a sewing machine and a radio set for each refugee family.

65. Who told you that?

The people who had moved out here. They came back to take their children out with them.

66. Did you see any guerrillas when you were in [redacted] the second time?

Yes. I saw seven or eight of them each time.

67. Were they armed?

Yes.

68. How did they treat the people?

They talked to the people as usual.

69. Did you see any cadres?

Of course.

70. What did they do?

They came to the bar for drinks.

71. Were they nice to the people?

They talked to the people. They were nice. I don't know what else they did.

72. Did the people like them?

They talked to the cadres. I don't know if they liked the cadres or not because they didn't tell me.

73. Did they make any complaints about the cadres?

Of course. When the cadres arrested innocent people, the people protested.

74. Who were the innocent people the cadres arrested?

When they saw people talking to the soldiers (Nationalist), they accused these people of this and that and arrested them. The people protested their innocence.

75. How many people were arrested by the VC?

There were some.

76. Where did they take these people?

I don't know.

77. Was [redacted] a combat hamlet?

I don't know.

78. How many young men were left in [redacted] when you went there the second time?

There were no young men left when I went there the second time. All the people left in [redacted] then were farmers. There were people of the 30-40 age group, but not younger. The younger ones were all guerrillas.

79. How many people in [redacted] have joined the Front?

I don't know.

80. How many people have joined the Nationalists?

I don't know.

81. When you were in [redacted] the second time, did you attend any VC meeting

Yes.

82. How many times did you attend these meetings?

Twice.

83. What did the VC talk about in these meetings?

They told the people who had stores near the road to close them down and move further into the jungle because the airplanes might see the people converged there and bomb the area.

84. What did they talk about during the second meeting?

They repeated the same warning. The people closed down their stores and then re-opened them again.

85. Were they punished for not obeying the orders?

no.

86. Did the VC talk about their victories and the Government defeats and losses?

Of course, but I am an ignorant woman, I don't remember what they said about those things.

87. Did they say anything about when they would win the war?

They said something about that, but I can't remember what I have heard. The old men remember these things better then we, women, do.

88. Was there a Farmers' Association in [redacted]

Yes.

89. How many people joined that Association?

I don't know.

90. What did the members do?

I don't know.

91. Were there the Women's and Foster Mothers' Associations?

Yes. I am a woman, but I have my children to look after. When they came to invite me to the meetings, I went.

92. What did you do at the meetings?

They talked about victories. This side won, and the other side lost. I listened, but forgot it all as soon as I reached home. If you ask me about it now, I won't be able to answer you.

93. Did the Front troops often come to [redacted]

Yes, but only at night.

94. Were they well armed?

They came at night. I don't know how they looked. I saw armed VC during the day.

95. Did the people mention anything about the taxes they had to pay the VC?

Of course.

96. Did they say how much they had to pay the VC?

They didn't. Let me tell you. You see, when I was in [redacted] the first time, I worked as a rubber tapper and earned 36 piasters a day. We had to pay one day's wage monthly to the VC. Each month I paid 35 piasters. It didn't matter to them whether I would have enough left to eat or not. No amount of complaints could change their decision. The second time I went to [redacted] I didn't have to pay any tax at all.

97. What did your husband do?

He killed pigs for sale.

98. Did he have to pay tax to the VC?

Of course. He paid 50 piasters for each pig he killed.

99. So your husband had to pay tax to the VC?

Of course, he paid 50 piasters for each pig he killed. It didn't matter whether he would make any profit from that pig or not, he still had to pay 50 piasters for tax.

100. Was 50 piasters for one pig too much?

Of course. Don't you know, sometimes we lost 200 or 300 piasters over one pig and still my husband had to pay 50 piasters for tax, as usual.

101. How much tax did your husband pay when he first came to [redacted]

He always paid 50 piasters for each pig, it made no difference whether the pig was small or big. When people killed a pig for meat and used it in the family, the VC didn't tax them. But, when they killed pigs for sale, then the VC taxed them 50 piasters for each pig they killed.

102. How much tax did each farmer pay a year?

I don't know how much the farmers had to pay the second time I went to [redacted]. But when I was there the first time, two or three years ago, each family had to pay at least half a gia of paddy. The richer families paid more. The VC allotted 15 gia of paddy for each person a year, and the people had to pay tax over and above the amount of the allotted amount of paddy. My family had two or three children and we had only 30 or so gia of paddy. And yet the VC made us to pay tax to them. We complained, but they wouldn't listen to us.

103. Did the VC carry out land reform in [redacted]

They took the land of those who had left for the Government-controlled areas and distributed it to the poor families. Some poor families received 20 or 30 cong of land. But they didn't take the land from those who remained in [redacted]

104. Did your family receive any land from the VC?

No.

105. Why?

I was new at [redacted]

106. How did the people feel about the land they had received from the VC?

They must have been happy.

107. Who were those who received land from the VC?

The extremely poor families -- those who owned no land at all.

108. Had you thought of moving to a Government-controlled area before?

No, we were too poor. What could we have done to earn our living if we had moved out here?

109. What have you received from the Government since you arrived here?

We have received everything: sauce, salt, blanket, straw mat, clothing material, milk, sugar, and so on. They also gave us canned food.

110. Do you know who heads the Nationalist Government now?

I heard the VC mention some names, but I don't remember these names at all.

111. What did the VC say about the Government?

I don't remember. I am so stupid, things came in one side and out of another. I don't remember what they said about the Nationalist Government.

112. What did they say about the Americans?

They said bad things about the Americans. They said that the Americans wanted to take over the country.

113. Do you think that the Americans want to take over the country?

How do I know? I am a woman. I just listen to people's talk and can't make heads or tails out of it. Every now and then, the VC invited us to a meeting and they talked about this and that person. I am just a woman and have my children to look after.

114. What have you heard about the aims of the Front?

I don't know.

115. Did the VC tell you that they were fighting against the Americans?

Yes, exactly. They said that they fought against the Americans to drive them back to their country. They said the Americans were about to be defeated.

116. When did they say the Americans would be defeated?

They didn't say.

117. What do you think about the Front's aims?

I see more Americans coming to Vietnam.

118. How do you know more Americans are coming to Vietnam?

Of course, I know about it. The old men and other women bought newspapers to read and they told me about it.

119. Did you know about it when you were in [redacted]

No.

120. What have you heard about life in Front military units?

Nothing.

121. What have you heard about Front sucesses, defeats and losses?

The VC didn't mention their defeats, only their victories. But I don't remember what they said. I have a bad memory. Also, I was concerned about my children. I am a woman and don't want to get involved in things I don't understand.

122. Do you have any close friends serving in Front military units?

No.

123. Are any members of your family serving in the ARVN or with the GVN?

An uncle of mine serves with the GVN. I don't know what he is doing.

124. When was the last time you talked with him?

I haven't seen him for a long time. I have other relatives working for the Government of living out here in Binh Duong. They are all well-to-do people. I don't go to visit them because I don't know how they will treat me. I am poor and they may not want to see me. One or two of them, having heard that I am living in this camp, have come to visit me.

125. Are any members of your family or relatives serving with the Front?

No.

126. Why was your father killed by the VC?

Because my father was a member of the "Yes" religion.

127. What is the "Yes" religion?

I don't know. I heard other people call it the "Yes" religion (Dao U).

128. What did the members of the "Yes" religion do?

I don't know. But I remember that there was a man in my village who tried to create some religion which people called the "Yes" religion. He asked my father to join him, and my father said "Yes". When the Vietminh came, they killed everyone who belonged to that religion, including my father, who wasn't then even an official member.

129. Do you know how the people in your village were recruited to work for the VC?

I don't know. I was often absent from my village. I had to go places to look for work.

130. Did any fighting take place near or in [redacted] while you were there for the second time?

There was no fighting. But before the farming season, the Nationalist soldiers conducted an operation in [redacted] They appealed to the people there to move out to Government-controlled areas to live. The people asked to stay there until after the harvest was over. Now the harvest is over for some; but others had to leave their paddy in the field and move out here.

131. How did the Nationalist soldiers conduct themselves in that operation?

They didn't do anything to the people. It was a quiet operation. They talked to the people and the people responded.

132. How did the people treat them?

They talked to the soldiers also.

133. Was [redacted] ever attacked by artillery?

Yes.

134. Was any damage caused by these artillery attacks?

I suffered no damage because I had nothing to begin with. There was damage to other people.

135. Who did the people blame for the damage?

They blamed the VC. They said that the VC were too careless when they walked, and the airplanes saw them and called for artillery.

136. Didn't they blame the Government or the Americans?

I suppose they did, but they often blamed the VC for being too careless.

137. Did the VC know that they were being blamed?

I don't know. I heard these complaints when a few women were sitting together. The women said, "These people (VC) go back and forth and the airplanes saw them and called for artillery. They (VC) leave the village when there is an attack and leave the people to bear all the consequences."

138. What kinds of attacks frightened you and the other villagers most?

I was afraid of all kind of attacks.

139. How did you feel about the attacks?

I wanted to come out to the Government-controlled areas very much, but I have too many children and, also, the communication between [redacted] and here was stopped. My mother tried many times to get me to come here. I also wanted to take my children out of [redacted] because, in there, night after night, my children slept in the trenches and I was afraid they might get sick.

140. In your opinion, why did the Government shell your village?

According to the people, it was because of the VC carelessness. They showed themselves to the airplanes.

141. How did you and the villagers get news about what was going on?

The VC told us what had happened here and there. But I didn't believe them because I didn't see it with my own eyes. I only believe things when I see them with my own eyes.

142. Were there any radios in your hamlet?

Yes.

143. Did the people have radios?

Yes. They knew what had happened out here because they could listen to their radios.

144. Didn't the VC forbid them to listen to the Government station?

They did, but the people listened to it secretly.

145. Were there newspapers?

There were VC newspapers, but the VC wouldn't let the people read them.

146. What have you heard about the conditions in Government-controlled areas before you left?

Some said we could earn a living out here, some said we couldn't. I didn't know whom to believe.

147. Were you told what the Government would do for you and your family?

I was told that the Government would help the refugee and that if anyone of us wanted to work, he could get a job.

148. Who told you about that?

The camp leaders.

149. Did anyone tell you about the Government help to refugees before you came here?

The soldiers (Nationalist soldiers) told us that, out here, it was easy to get a job. People were eager to come here because of promises of jobs.

150. What did you expect the Government to do for you?

I was told that the Government would give us enough rice to eat.

151. Did anyone induce you to move?

The Americans came with some Vietnamese soldiers and told me to move out, or the VC would come and the Americans would drop bombs to destroy everything so that the VC would have no place to stay.

152. How did the people react when they were told to move out?

Those who could take their paddy and other possessions with them didn't complain much. But those who couldn't bring their belongings along were very unhappy. They wailed and moaned that they would die of starvation. But when they were told that the Government would feed them, they stopped crying.

153. Did they blame the Government for their having to leave their homes?

They didn't blame the Government, but the Americans, for making them leave their homes and properties.

154. What did you fear most when you were considering leaving your village?

I was afraid of the bombing.

155. Did you hear broadcasts from aircraft or read leaflets telling you to leave?

Yes, but the broadcasts were unclear. I learned about our having to move out through the soldiers.

156. Did you read leaflets?

Yes.

157. What did the leaflets say?

They made appeals to the people to move out to the Government-controlled areas.

158. How often did you read leaflets?

Leaflets were dropped everyday while they were there.

159. Who were they?

The Nationalist soldiers.

160. How long had they been there before you moved out?

I don't remember. They set up medical stations to give medicine to anyone who was sick.

161. Have you heard about the Chieu Hoi program?

Yes.

162. What have you heard about it?

The Government made appeals to the VC to rally to the Government.

163. Who told you about it?

I heard people talking about it.

164. Who were these people?

They were people from [redacted] who had gone to the Government-controlled areas, then returned to [redacted] to visit their former homes and properties.

165. Did you expect to leave your village for a short or long time?

I don't know. I go where people go and live where people live.

166. Are you worried about the properties you left behind?

I left some gia of paddy behind. I take for granted that it is lost. I am not worried about it.

167. What else would you have liked to have taken with you if you had been able to do so?

What else have I left now to take with me?

168. What did the Front people in [redacted] say or do when you and the other villagers decided to leave?

They weren't there. They went into hiding when the soldiers arrived.

169. Has the Front threatened to punish you or other villagers for leaving [redacted]

No.

170. How many families stayed behind when you left?

I don't know.

171. Did your entire family come with you or did some members stay behind?

My husband didn't come with me.

172. What do you think might happen to you if you went back to your hamlet?

What would I go there for? I wouldn't be able to earn my living. I will only go back when the Government has pacified the area and tells me to return.

173. Are there any differences between what the Front told you about life under the GVN control and what you have heard and seen here?

The VC told us that we wouldn't be able to earn our living here, which isn't true.

174. How long do you think the war will go on?

I don't know.

175. Do you blame anyone for causing you to leave your village?

I don't know whom to blame now. It happens that we live in a war period and have to bear all the war consequences.

176. Do you blame the Americans?

They took me here, but they feed me, so I can't blame them.

177. Do you blame the Government?

The Government has given me aid.

178. Do you blame the VC?

The VC never gave me any help. I ate what I had earned.

179. Whom do you blame for being here?

It was because of the VC that the Americans moved us here.

180. What do the other refugees say?

I don't know.

181. Don't you talk to them?

The husband of an old couple, who lives right next to me, said that they had nothing to wish for, now that they have been brought here and receive food daily.

182. Are you satisfied with the help you receive?

I receive enough rice to eat, but there is a lack of side dishes.

183. What did the GVN authorities tell you they will do for you and your family?

Nothing.

184. What did you plan to do when you left your village?

I wanted to find a job. I will do anything.

185. Do you want to stay here or move elsewhere?

I want to stay here. I don't want to go anywhere else.

186. Did anyone try to persuade you or the other refugees to go back to your hamlet?

No.

187. Have any villagers who left with you moved back to their hamlet or village?

I don't know. The camp is too big. I haven't seen all of it yet.

188. Have you seen people from other countries, other than Americans, who are helping the Vietnamese?

No.

189. Where would you want to go if this camp is moved somewhere else?

I don't know.

190. What would conditions in your hamlet have to be before you would move back there?

There must be soldiers stationed there as before.

191. If you are given a chance to learn some profession, which one will you learn?

I just want to work as a hired laborer. I am too old for any type of training now. I went to school when I was very young, but I have forgotten all I learned.

192. This is the picture of a ladder. There are ten rungs on this ladder. The first rung is numbered one, and the bottom rung numbered ten. Suppose the top rung represents the best life that you can possibly imagine, and the bottom rung the worst life that you can possibly imagine. Will you tell me on what rung you were before the VC took over your village? Where were you after the VC had taken over your village? And where are you now?

Before the VC took over my village, I had to work to earn my living. After the VC took over my village, I still had to work to earn my living. Now, I don't have to work, but I have food to eat. In one sense, I am better now than before. But before, I wasn't miserable, nor happy. I am not happy, nor miserable, now either.

193. In your opinion, what would constitute the best possible life that you could imagine?

I just wish for a home of my own and a job. I don't care about happiness. I just want to be far away from the bombing and fighting.

194. In your opinion, what would constitute the worst possible life that you could imagine?

Living where there is bombing and fighting.

195. Suppose you could ask for three things from the Government, which are the things you would ask for?

To give me a job so I can work as a hired laborer. It is safe here. I don't have to hide from the bombing and fighting.

196. What else do you want to ask from the Government?

Just to be able to work as a hired laborer. I don't want anything else. Also, I don't know what else I should ask for. Other people could hope for better jobs because they are better educated then I am. I am an illiterate person. I can't hope for much.

197. Do you have a son?

No.

198. Suppose you had a son, what would your hopes for him be?

I would hope that he would be well educated.

199. Which side do you think has the people's support?

The Nationalists are helping the people.

200. How do you know?

I am here. I only know about the Government side.

201. Which side do you think is winning?

I don't know.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

The interview was conducted in a make-shift office of the refugee camp. There were many distractions.
The subject was a young woman, who seemed very confused about the time and place where she had been. She was cooperative and seemed sincere.

No. AGR - 89

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

1. Name of Interviewer: [redacted]
2. Name of Subject : [redacted]
3. Time and Date of Interview:

   From 10:30 AM to 12:00 AM on January [redacted], 1966 7

   From 1:00 PM to 1:30 PM on January [redacted], 1966 7

   From _____ to _____ on _____ 1966

   From _____ to _____ on _____ 1966

   Total time: 2 hours

   Interview based on: tape (X) hand written notes ( )
4. Place of Interview:

   Refugee Camp in Binh Duong
5. Sex of subject: Male ( ) Female (X)
6. Age of subject: 27
7. Ethnic background: Vietnamese [redacted]
8. Place of birth:

   hamlet [redacted]

   village [redacted]

   district Cu Chi

   province Tay Ninh
9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee:

   hamlet [redacted]

   village [redacted]

   district _____

   province _____
10. (a) Length of residence in last location: 7 or 8 months

    (b) Who controlled the place of residence:

    GVN ( ) VC (X) Contested ( )

    (c) Since when controlled or contested? 1 year

11. Number of brothers ( ) and sisters (2)

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age: _____

13. Marital status: Married

14. Number of children: 3

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age: _____

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject (X)
Brothers with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject (X) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion: "Yes" Religion

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge: Hired Laborer

19. Economic status:
(a) VC designation Poor Class
(b) Landowner? _____ How much land _____

20. Education:
Illiterate (X)
Literate ( )
Schooling completed: _____

21. Any relatives in VC: No

22. Any relatives in GVN: Yes

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by:
(a) French No
(b) GVN No
(c) VC Father killed in 1947

24. When became a refugee: January [redacted] 1967

25. Where took refuge first: Refugee Camp in Binh Duong

26. Parent residence: - id -

AGR

INTERVIEW

90

MASTER COPY

THE RAND CORPORATION

INTERVIEWS CONCERNING THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR - 90

Date of Interview : January [redacted] 1967

Date of Refuge : January 10, 1967

Subject's Category : Refugee

This interview is for the information of US and Vietnamese official agencies and personnel on a need-to-know basis. Permission to distribute or show this interview to non-official persons requires the prior approval of The RAND Corporation and the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs.

1. When did you become a refugee?

I don't know the exact date, but I must have been here for [redacted] or [redacted] days. It is so hot here. Other people here have water containers, I don't have anything. They could go to the market, but I have to look after my children. I am afraid to leave them alone. We receive rice every six or seven days. Some receive rice, some don't. This morning I was told that someone from Saigon has come up here. Other people went to see him, but I had no one to leave my children with. So I stayed home.

2. What did the person from Saigon want?

I was told he came here to visit the people. At home, we had plenty of water to use. Here, water is more precious than gold. Each day trucks bring water here for the people. The strong and healthy ones elbow their way to the trucks. I can't do that, and so have to resign to having no water to use.

3. When did you move to [redacted]

I was there since I was born. All my ancestors had lived there before me.

4. Why didn't you stay in Cot Chang? Why did you move to [redacted]

We moved to [redacted] because of the VC. At [redacted] my husband worked as a rubber tapper. At [redacted] my husband was a farmer, while I baked cake. When my husband could no longer farm, we moved to [redacted]

5. Did you move to [redacted] because of the VC or because your husband could no longer farm?

We left [redacted] because the area became an insecure one. The Nationalist soldiers and the VC often fought each other.

6. Was [redacted] a secure area when you moved there?

No, the government no longer controlled that area. My husband didn't do anything. He stayed home to earn his living. Someone must have hated him and fabricated lies about him, that was why he was arrested. When the troops came to [redacted] my husband was at home, he didn't run into hiding or anything like that. He was arrested when he was about to carry our possessions to the trucks to take refuge out here.

7. When did you leave [redacted]

I don't remember the date. It must have been two or three years ago.

8. Where did you go right after you left [redacted]

We took refuge in Tay Ninh. But, since we had no cows or buffaloes to farm, and my father couldn't help us out either because of my stepmother, we decided to move to [redacted] so my husband could work as a rubber tapper.

9. When did [redacted] become an insecure area?

I don't know. It must have been two or three years ago. The post in Rach Bap was abandoned at the same time as those in An Nhon and [redacted]

10. Why didn't you move to a Government-controlled area? Why did you move to [redacted]

We were poor and had no capital to start any business. My husband was a farmer, but he had no cow or buffalo. We had moved to Tay Ninh from [redacted] but we couldn't earn our living in Tay Ninh, and so we had to move to [redacted] where my husband could work as a rubber tapper while I baked cake. Before we took refuge here, we had decided to move to Tay Ninh again where my husband could till the land. I couldn't bring any rice with me when I came out here.

11. Would you describe the circumstances of your taking refuge here?

The Americans came and drove us out. They wouldn't even let us take time to gather our clothes. In some places people could take their belongings along with them. In other places the people's paddy was burned together with their homes. The Americans came in their amphibious vehicles. About 10 minutes after the airplanes had broadcast appeals to people to move out to the Government-controlled areas, the Americans arrived and drove us out. We had no time to do any packing or make preparations. I was telling my husband that we wouldn't be able to bake any cake for Tet when the Americans arrived. There was no shooting or fighting. There was some shooting, but it was somewhere else.

12. How many families lived in [redacted]

Quite a few, but I don't know how many of them were there. [redacted] was more crowded.

13. What did the people do to earn their living?

They were rubber tappers and fishermen; the women baked cake.

14. Did the people make enough to eat?

Most of the people had enough to eat. A few were very poor, though they didn't starve or anything like that.

15. On whose rubber plantation did your husband work?

The owner lived in Saigon. She came to visit her plantation every now and then. She is the wife of a Frenchman. She came the day of the operation because she had heard rumors that her house would be burned down. Later I heard from other people that her house had been burned down. The soldiers burned many houses and a great quantity of paddy.

16. How much did your husband make a day?

If he worked in the morning, he got 38 piasters; in the afternoon, he got 17 piasters. Very seldom was there work in the afternoon. My husband worked only in the morning.

17. How much did you make a day?

I baked cake and could make about 100 piasters a day. We have too many children and everything is expensive now. Fish sauce cost 150 piasters for a container.

18. What are your prospects now?

We were told that our area was an insecure area, and we weren't allowed to remain there. If we insisted on staying in [redacted] we might get killed by the bombing. Here we are, but my husband has been arrested. I hope the authorities will review his case soon and let him go free. My husband was a simple civilian. He didn't smoke or drink. In the morning, he went to the plantation to work, and in the afternoon he helped me by carrying cakes here and there to sell to the people. We grew some rice and harvested over 10 bags of paddy. We decided to save them. We might need them if our children got sick or something. I left them all behind when I came out here.

19. How many families left [redacted] at the same time as you?

All the families in [redacted] left at the same time. Three or four days later some people were permitted to reburn to their homes. I couldn't go along because I had to look after my children. These people returned to their homes and gathered all their personal belongings, which they had left behind, and brought them all out here. Some brought out paddy, others cows and buffaloes.

20. Could you bring anything with you when you came out here?

We were told to hurry up, and they (American troops) really drove us out of our homes. I pleaded with them to let me go back to my home and get my clothes, but they refused. I had bought a new mosquito net, which cost me 250 piasters. I couldn't bring it with me. Here, I have no mosquito net to use for my children. We were given one the other day, but the mosquito net here is too small. Here, when we want to go somewhere, we have to have permission. We are taken to places in Government vehicles. When someone leaves this camp, the authorities here take away all his papers and give them back to him when he returns.

21. How did you come out here?

We came out here by military trucks. We were marched to [redacted] where we climbed into military trucks and were driven out here.

22. Were you mistreated in any way?

Some people wanted to return to their homes to gather their personal belongings, but the Americans wouldn't let them. They carried things for people. Some women carried pigs, and the Americans told these women to let them carry the pigs for them.

23. Were the people frightened?

They were very frightened. When the Americans saw how frightened the people were of the amphibious vehicles, they laughed. They burned our homes.

24. Do you think the people would have felt better if there had been some Vietnamese soldiers there?

Yes. We would have felt much better if there had been some Vietnamese soldiers going along. As it was, there were only American troops. We didn't see the Vietnamese soldiers until we arrived at [redacted]. The Americans searched every house and drove everyone out, then they set fire to the houses. They set fire to my house, too, and bulldozed the rest.

25. Were you told where you would be taken?

We didn't know where we would be taken. When we arrived here, we asked some Vietnamese soldiers where we were, and were told that we were in [redacted]. The American drove the truck, but we didn't know his language and couldn't talk to him. The VC told us that the Americans would take us to the sea and dump us there. We thought that was true and cried all the way. When the truck stopped here, we felt so relieved. The soldiers came and helped to carry our things down.

26. When did the VC tell you that?

About five or ten days before we moved out here. They told us that people in other places were taken away and dumped into the sea. When the Americans came and told us to leave our homes, we thought it was our turn to be dumped into the sea.

27. How did the Americans treat the people?

We didn't know their language and couldn't talk to them. They saw people fighting each other to get water, and much water was spilled on the ground. They got angry and wouldn't let the people get water any more.

28. How did the Vietnamese soldiers treat you?

They were all right.

29. What have you received from the Government since you arrived here?

One blanket, one mosquito net, five cans of milk and five meters of clothing material. We are supposed to receive one liter of rice a day, but sometimes we don't receive rice for five or six days.

30. Did you receive enough rice to eat?

Most of the time, yes; sometimes, no. Sometimes there wasn't enough rice to distribute to the people. We received nothing but rice. We received no money. Twice, we were given dry fish, but the fish was moldy and it tasted bad.

31. Did the people complain?

They all complained and felt very unhappy because everyone of them had lost something when they moved out here. The rich lost more and the poor less. They lost their homes, their gardens and fields.

32. How many families or persons have left [redacted] during the past year?

Some people had left earlier. They went to [redacted] They left five or ten days before I moved out. The people who went to [redacted] received houses to live in, and there were wells for them to draw water. They are the lucky ones.

33. Why did they move out of [redacted]

They moved out because they had heard that the Government was distributing tin sheets to people. Those who went to [redacted] received tin sheets from the Government. My husband and I decided to move out during Tet. My father is a Caodaist, but some of his brothers were killed by the VC, and he got mad and told us to get out of [redacted]

34. How many families left at that time?

Quite a few of them left then.

35. How could they leave their village? Didn't the VC stop them from leaving?

The VC permitted the women to leave their village, but forbid the men to leave. They accused those men of wanting to surrender to the enemy. My husband and I decided to leave during Tet because we could take advantage of the truce. The real VC could leave their village anytime they wanted because they knew where the guards were. I really don't know what to say so they would let my husband free. I am talking to you here, but inside I am very unhappy. If my husband were well-educated like other people, I wouldn't say anything, but he couldn't write a sentence right. He was an innocent person.

36. Who were those who left [redacted] before you did?

They were also poor people. There were few rich people in [redacted]. They came to the Government-controlled areas so they could be employed by the Americans. Those who worked for the Americans received 80 piasters a day. Many people in this camp are working. I can't do that because I have my children to look after.

37. Did you rent land to farm?

We rented 40 cong. We paid the landowner 9 gia of paddy and were left with 25 gia. The soil wasn't good. There was only one season. My husband did the farming himself. I didn't help him because I was busy baking cakes. He ploughed, planted and harvested, etc., without any help. He worked very hard. Someone must have envied him and told lies about him. My husband was interrogated. He couldn't stand it and he had to sign a paper saying that he was a member of the Farmers' Association. My husband couldn't write a sentence right.

38. Were there many young men left in your village when you left?

There were plenty of them. They have all come out here. They came out here to rally. They were real VC, and so they rallied. Some of them must have wanted to harm my husband, so they reported him. They asked my husband to join them before, but he refused. Then they expected that if they didn't report my husband first, he would report them.

39. How many guerrillas were in [redacted] before?

There were six or seven of them. I don't know if they were still in the village or not. They must all have come out here to rally.

40. Did the VC confiscate your indentification cards when they came to [redacted]?

Not at all. My husband still has his.

41. Did any VC troops come to [redacted]

When we first arrived there, we saw some. We saw them at about noon, but they disappeared in the evenings.

42. What did they do in [redacted]

I don't know. Today six or seven people came, then disappeared and, another day, six or seven other people came and then left again. Every now and then, at night, the VC troops came. They came in great quatity and were well armed. I don't know what type of weapons they carried. But they carried weapons as big as this column. Each time the VC troops arrived in the village, we watched them marching by, but we were also afraid of the artillery from [redacted] was still under the control of the Government. Each time the VC troops arrived in the village, I woke my children up and herded them down the trench.

43. How often did the VC troops come to your village?

They had no definite schedule. They would come once every two weeks, or once every two or five days.

44. What did the villagers say about the presence of the VC troops in your village?

They didn't say anything, but they were frightened. The VC troops didn't come often, but the guerrillas were permanent in the village. Each time the VC troops came, the villagers called each other and watched the VC troops marching to no one knew where. Sometimes, when the VC troops found the light on in some houses, they asked the villagers to put out the light. We were very afraid of mortars from [redacted] I used to wake my children up and tell them to go to the trench because of mortars, and my children asked me each time, "Where is the mortar?" I told them that the VC troops were outside and the people in [redacted] might shell the village at any time.

45. What did you do when you first came to [redacted]? Did you have to report to anyone?

No. There were guerrillas in the village, but we didn't have to report to them.

46. How did the guerrillas behave towards the people?

They were nice to the people. They called the older women "mother". They let the women move in and out of the village freely. Some women went to [redacted] to work, but the guerrillas wouldn't let the men go. They stopped the men when they tried to leave the village. They accused them of wanting to surrender to the enemy. That was why my husband and I had decided to wait until Tet to leave. There was supposed to be a few days' truce during Tet and we could leave the village without fear of being arrested.

47. How many cadres were there in your village?

I don't know. The cadres and the guerrillas wore the same type of uniforms. They wore rubber tongs, not shoes. They treated the people nicely, never cursed or shouted aloud, but they never helped the people with anything.

48. What did the villagers think about the guerrillas and the cadres?

When the airplanes were making broadcasts, the guerrillas shot at them and the people cursed the guerrillas. I myself cursed the guerrillas too. The villagers told them that "You shoot the airplanes and we will have to bear the consequences." The guerrillas replied that "We shoot the airplanes because they broadcast lies." The villagers said "But they will drop bombs on us and we will get killed." They replied "Do you think that they (Americans) have so many bombs that they will drop them at random?" The old people said "You shoot at the airplanes and then you run away. When the airplanes drop bombs, you are no longer here, but we will have to bear the consequences of your shooting. Our homes will be burned, our properties damaged and some of our people may get killed." The guerrillas didn't care, they kept on firing at the airplanes if they flew too low.

49. Was your village bombed as a result of the guerrillas' firing?

The village was bombed two or three times. These were just for warning, because each time just a few bombs were dropped and they were small bombs. A few persons were killed. Some cattle were killed also, and some properties destroyed. I was frightened and wanted to move to [redacted] but I knew no one there who could help me. We decided to move to Tay Ninh where I had my father. That operation came so suddenly that I couldn't make any preparation at all, and I came out here with nothing.

50. What was the attitude of the villagers toward the cadres?

The cadres knew how to talk well. They told us that their side would win and the Americans would lose though the Americans had plenty of everything. We listened to them and didn't dare raise any questions. Except for the old women. You see the old women weren't frightened of the VC and they talked back to the VC often. They told the VC "You say you are strong, but can you say that you are stronger than bombs and bullets? You say you are strong, but when the airplanes drop bombs, you are nowhere to be seen." The VC made propaganda about this and that, but when there was bombing they were nowhere to be seen. The people

had to bear the consequences. Those who were killed by the bombing in my village were simple civilians. If the VC were killed, they were killed in the jungle or mountains somewhere. They fired a shot and ran for their lives, while we went to a trench built in our homes. If the bomb hit our home, we would be killed. You have never seen our area. If you were there, you would see a trench in every home. It was very sad. The old women weren't frightened of the VC. They often talked back to the VC.

51. Didn't the guerrillas do anything to these women?

No, but they accused them of being opportunists. The women told the VC "Do you expect to kill them up there? How can you? They are up there and you are down here."

52. How did the VC organization in [redacted] get organized?

I don't know.

53. Was there an Autonomous Committee?

I don't know anything about it.

54. Was there a Farmers' Association?

I didn't hear about it in the village.

55. Did the VC carry out land reform in [redacted]

I didn't hear about it.

56. What help did the VC give to the villagers?

None. I tell you what I know.

57. Did the villagers mention any help they had received from the Government?

No, but according to broadcasts from the airplanes, anyone who came to the Government side would receive help. A few days later, the airplanes bombed the village. Each time the guerrillas fired at the airplanes, there was always bombing afterwards.

58. How many times has [redacted] been bombed since your coming there?

Three or four times.

59. Did you ever live in a strategic hamlet?

No.

60. Was [redacted] a combat hamlet?

No. When the Nationalist troops came, the VC fled. There was no fighting. It wasn't the same as in [redacted] where fighting broke out everytime the soldiers came close.

61. When was the first time you heard about the VC?

It was a long time ago, I don't remember. The first time I heard about the VC was after the post at [redacted] had been abandoned.

62. What were you told about the aims of the Front?

I don't know about the aims of the Front. Sometimes we were told to attend a meeting and listen to the cadres' talk. They said this and that and told us that each of us should contribute 2 piasters a month. The old women asked them why, and they replied, "To buy papers and ink." The old women asked why they needed to buy papers and ink and they said, "We need papers and ink to work with in order to fight against the Americans." They made everyone come to the meeting. The people didn't want to go for fear of the shelling.

63. When did the meeting occur?

Sometime within this year (1966).

64. How often did they hold meetings?

Once a month or once every two months.

65. What did they say in these meetings?

They told us to come and I went. I took my children along with me, but I was worried and thought to myself, where could we hide if the bombing occurred?

66. Did they say anything about the Front victories?

No. They said that the country would be unified soon. I don't think so. The villagers told them that all they cared about was to see the bombing stop.

67. How many people in [redacted] have joined the Front?

I was new in [redacted] I don't know about that. But I knew there were six or seven guerrillas, and they have all come out here to rally.

68. How many people in [redacted] have joined the Government?

I don't know.

69. Did the VC promise that they would carry out land reform later?

Yes. They said that sometime later they would confiscate the land from the landowners and distribute it to the poor.

70. Did they say when they would distribute the land to the poor?

They talked about that over a year ago, but haven't mentioned it again. The old women said "Don't anyone expect to receive any land at all."

71. Were you told why the Front people were fighting against the Nationalists?

No. Single women could attend these meetings from the beginning to the end. People like me, with children to look after, were lucky if we could hear anything at all. I had to wait for my children to go to sleep before I could go to the meeting. Sometimes the meeting was half over when I got there. Sometimes I took my children with me and they cried, so I had to leave the meeting to go home.

72. Did Front entertainment groups come to your village?

Yes, they showed movies with the Americans falling here and there and houses afire.

73. Did the villagers like to watch these shows?

Only the children liked to watch these shows.

74. Did the villagers have to pay taxes to the VC?

No. The VC didn't make anyone pay taxes to them at all.

75. Do you know who is the Chairman of the Front?

I don't know.

76. Do you know who heads the Nationalist Government?

I don't know.

77. How did you know that there would be a truce during Tet?

I heard it on the radio. Some neighbors had radios and they turned them on. According to the radio, the authorities in Saigon proclaimed a three-day cease-fire during Tet. Also, It seemed that there was a truce during previous Tets.

78. What were you told about the Nationalist Government?

The VC must have told us something about that, but I was too busy with my children, and didn't listen carefully to their lectures.

79. In your opinion, are the Front people peace-loving people?

I don't know.

80. Do you think they are patriots or traitors?

It is beyond my understanding. I can't say whether they are patriots or traitors.

81. Do you think the Front people are courageous or cowardly?

The Front people? Well, they fired at airplanes and the airplanes dropped bombs on them, but they continued to fire at the airplanes. I can't make them out.

82. Do you think they are sympathetic toward the people?

They shot at airplanes and the people shouted at them and complained, but they said nothing. They didn't maltreat the people or anything like that. I can't understand them.

83. Did they tell you about life in the North?

No.

84. Did they say anything about China and Russia?

No.

85. Did the VC send anyone in [redacted] to attend a re-education course?

Yes. While I was in [redacted] I saw the VC take some old men away for re-education. These men were released after two or three days. I don't know what kind of education they received because when we asked them, they didn't seem to know anything. They were farmers.

86. Why were they sent to re-education?

The VC told these men that the Party held a re-education course for their benefit, so that they would become enlightened and make contributions to the Front.

87. Did these men refuse to contribute to the Front?

They told the VC that they couldn't make any contribution because they had too many children to feed, but the bombing prevented them from working. The VC replied that that was the reason why the Party held an education course so that these men could become enlightened and make contributions.

88. Did these men make contributions to the Front after they had been released?

No. They told the VC that they had become enlightened, but they had nothing to contribute to the Front. They said that after the Front had restored peace, they would contribute to the Front because by then they would be able to work.

89. Did the VC kill anyone in [redacted]

Three men and one woman were killed because the VC accused them of being spies. The VC first arrested these people and then called everyone together for a meeting. Everyone in [redacted] had to attend that meeting. They accused these people of being anti-revolutionary.

90. What did the people say then?

The people pleaded with the VC to show mercy to them. They asked the VC not to kill innocent people. The VC replied that, "The Front may release the wrong persons, but never kill the wrong people."

91. In your opinion, were they really spies?

I don't know for sure, but I know that they received money from the district. After they had been killed, their wives told us that their husbands had received money from the district. I don't know what they did for the Government. I don't know how the VC knew about it. The meeting lasted for only 20 minutes. When the mothers of these men pleaded for mercy, the VC told them that "Mothers, we never kill the wrong people, we may free the wrong ones." Then they showed pictures of these four persons standing in Cu Chi District and receiving money. The VC must have agents in the district.

92. Do you think that the killing was justified?

I don't know. The VC told us that these men were spies.

93. While you were in [redacted] did you see many young men of draft age living there?

I saw many of them.

94. What did they do?

They worked to earn their living.

95. Did they work for the VC?

No.

96. Didn't the VC force them to enlist in their army?

No. The Government requires that every young man of draft age report to the recruiting office, but the VC never force them to enlist in their army. They didn't force them to report to their recruiting office or anything like that.

97. Did the VC force the people to do corvee labor for them?

Yes. The VC chose the young and healthy ones, and those whose wives wouldn't complain, to do corvee labor for them. The VC took them away for a few days or for a week.

98. Did you have to do corvee labor for the VC?

No. Women didn't have to go.

99. Did your husband have to go?

My husband is a cripple, and he was exempted. The VC chose only those with good health and those belonging to "good families". By good families they meant those with no Government ties. Families with members working for the Government were considered as "bad families" by the VC.

100. How did the VC treat families with members working for the Government?

They treated them nicely, but they asked them to call upon their members to return home to work. They urged these families to get their members home and not let them continue to be the Americans' lackeys. These families replied that they had tried, but their sons or husbands refused to come back, and there was nothing they could do about that.

101. How did the VC treat families with members working for the Front?

They were very nice to these families. They visited them often, but didn't give them anything.

102. Did the people in [redacted] have to pay taxes to the VC?

No. The rubber tappers contributed 38 piasters each a month. Many people complained that they didn't make enough to feed their children. But the VC were so persuasive that, in the end, everyone contributed 38 piasters when they came to collect it at the end of the month.

103. Where did the people in [redacted] sell their produce?

They sold their produce at the market in Ben Cat.

104. Did the people have to pay taxes on their produce when they sold it at the market?

No. But the VC levied taxes on big pigs -- 40 piasters for each one -- if they were destined to be sold at the market. But if the people killed the pig and sold the meat to the people in the village, they didn't have to pay tax.

105. Did the VC let the people go to the market?

Yes. They let the women go, but would stop the men from leaving the village.

106. How did the VC cadres behave towards each other?

They behaved very nicely towards each other. They never quarreled or fought with each other. But when the villagers quarreled with each other, they came and urged both parties to make peace with each other. When my husband got mad, he shouted at me and used strong words. Five or ten days later the VC came to our home and talked to my husband. They urged my husband not to use strong words with me any more, that he shouldn't maltreat his wife. I had to side with my husband and denied that my husband had beaten me or that he had cursed me. The VC said that they were glad that my husband wasn't the type of person who maltreated others, and so on. They told the people that they wouldn't allow them to quarrel or fight against each other.

107. How was the attitude of the people toward the cadres? Has there been any change in the people's attitude toward the cadres?

As far as I know, the people don't want to betray this or that side. What they want is to be left in peace, and be able to earn their living in peace. In the VC-controlled areas, only guilty people are arrested; the innocent are left in peace. Here, the people receive help from the Government. The Front promises to help the people also, but its promises haven't materialized yet.

108. What did the VC promise to the people?

They promised that independence would be restored during the year. When that year passed, they made another promise that peace would be restored within that year, and so on. Last year they told us that the country would be independent in July, and the Americans would withdraw to their own country by then. I don't know what month it is now, but I see the war is still here. And, last July, there was strafing and we couldn't work in the field. You see, the VC made many promises, but couldn't realize them. That was why people lost faith in them. You couldn't talk back to the VC and tell them that what they were saying wasn't true, because you didn't know whether what they were saying was true or not. You just listened to their talk and waited. Some old women -- you know, the old women weren't frightened of the VC -- complained that the VC had promised them independence again and again, but it was nowhere to be seen. The VC replied that the reason they weren't able to bring about independence was because the villagers had demanded that they stop firing at the airplanes. They told the women that they had to shoot at airplanes to defeat the Americans. They asked the people "Do you know why many people from Saigon have come up here and joined the Front? They could enlist in the Nationalist Army where they are assured of a monthly salary, and of being able to visit their families now and then. Many people in the Front haven't seen their families for years; they receive no salary. Yet, the Front is able to recruit many people to work for it. Do you know why?" The women replied that they didn't know. The VC chided them for being unenlightened. They said "Look, many people from the cities have joined the Front. Even people from the North have come here to help us restore our independence." You know, there are Northerners. The VC chided the old women for not urging their children to enlist in the VC army. The VC didn't force the young men to work for them, but they urged their parents to encourage them to join the Front. The women replied that those Northerners who came to the South must belong to well-to-do parents. They came here to visit another part of their country, but they (the old women) didn't want their children to enlist in the VC army because they were poor and they wanted their children to remain at home to work for their support.

109. What have you heard about life in the VC army?

They (VC) said the people in the VC army received no salary, and they weren't permitted to see their parents.

110. Did you meet any Northerners when you were in [redacted]

I saw many of them. Sometimes they stopped over to drink water. They spoke with some kind of accent and it was difficult to understand them. I can understand you, but I couldn't understand them. I saw the women too.

111. Why did they come to the South, do you know?

I don't know. I was told they came here to "regroup". They loved the children very much and gave them money if they had any. They told us that they missed their children, and some said they missed their nieces and nephews. When we asked them why they left their children and came here, they said they came because it was their duty. Some said they had three children, others said they had one child. Some said their husbands had gone South, and so they came South to look for them. They stayed over just for a little while, and then left because they were afraid of airplanes. Also, the people wouldn't let them stay in their houses for long, because they were afraid of cannon. The people urged them to move out of their homes in a hurry "Drink your water and go."

112. How did the villagers feel towards the Northerners?

The villagers talked to them when they talked to the villagers. When they saw the children hiding in the trenches, they said "Life is very hard isn't it? Don't worry, you bear the miseries now, and later you will find happiness." The villagers replied, "Yes, yes." What else could they say?

113. Was there a school in [redacted]

Yes. Each student had to pay 10 piasters a month, but many parents refused to send their children there for fear of the bombing.

114. Was the school run by the VC or the Government?

The school was established by the VC. It was a thatched roof house. Each student paid the teacher 10 piasters a month and one gia of paddy at the end of the year. The money and paddy were paid to the teacher, not to the VC. The teacher was a local man. He was a cripple, but well-educated, and the villagers asked him to take charge of the school. He agreed to become a teacher on the suggestion of the villagers. The VC didn't ask him to teach.

115. Did you send your children to school?

No, my children were too young.

116. Was there a first-aid station in [redacted]

No, but every ten or fifteen days they came (VC) to the village to give medical consulation to the villagers. They used the stethoscope to listen to people's breathing just as the doctors out here are doing. They were all Northerners.

117. Where did they come from?

I don't know.

118. Did they give free medicine to the villagers?

If a person wasn't very sick, he could get free medicine from them. If he was very sick, they would give him prescriptions and he could buy the medicine he needed at Ben Cat.

119. In your opinion, is the Nationalist Government sympathetic towards the people?

What do you mean by sympathetic towards the people? We were bombed and strafed often. The broadcasts from the airplanes sounded very nice, but a few days later we were bombed or strafed or shelled. If that is what you call the Government's sympathies, we can live without them. You see, I don't know where the VC had fired at airplanes, but I saw the airplanes dropping bombs on the people. Everyone complained about the bombing. Who dropped the bombs, but the Government people? The VC didn't have bombs.

120. Do you think the Government is just?

Now we are here, close to the Government, and we aren't afraid of being bombed. It is too crowded here, but we are safe from the bombing. We have no beds to sleep on. We sleep on the floor. In [redacted] we slept in the trenches. So, it is the same. Here, we can sleep in peace from evening to the next morning. In [redacted] we were often frightened by airplanes and cannons.

121. Do you think the Government is just?

I don't know. I am not well-educated enough to answer difficult questions.

122. How did you learn about what had happened outside of [redacted] when you were there?

Every now and then the VC held a meeting and told us of what had happened, or was about to happen. They told us about the truce during Tet. A few days before the operation, the VC held a meeting and told the people to hide themselves because they would soon be driven out of the village. Five or six days later, the tanks appeared. As soon as they told us that, they disappeared. We thought they were lying to us. But this time, they told us the truth. They told the villagers that the Government wanted to herd them into strategic hamlets, or some kind of hamlets, and then they urged the villagers to protest against such a move. The villagers replied that if the Government wanted to move them to the strategic hamlet, they would have to go, they couldn't resist. They also told the VC that if the Government were still in control of their area, they could stay home. Since their area had become an insecure one, they had to leave or the Government would drop bombs on them and they might get killed.

123. Did any villagers move to other VC-controlled areas?

No. The villagers went to the Ben Cat District and asked the district chief to let them move out to Ben Cat, but the district chief replied that the district couldn't absorb so many people at one time. He gave papers to only ten families to move to Ben Cat, and told the other people that they could move to the rubber plantation in [redacted] and stay there until Tet. After Tet he would move them all out to Ben Cat. But, before we could move to Ben Cat, the Americans came and brought us here.

124. Were there any newspapers in your village?

No.

125. Were the people permitted to listen to the Saigon station?

The people could turn on the Cai Luong program and listen to it. The VC weren't permitted to listen to the Cai Luong program.

If any of them was caught listening to that program, he would be criticized. As for the people, they refused to turn off the Cai Luong program. They told the VC that they bought the radio set for their enjoyment and if they wanted to listen to the Cai Luong program, they would do so.

126. Did you hear about the Chieu noi program?

I don't know about it.

127. Did you hear broadcasts urging the VC to rally to the Government?

I often heard the broadcasts urging the VC to come out to the Government.

128. Have you ever read Government leaflets?

There were plenty of leaflets all around. I read some of them. The leaflets urged the VC to rally to the Government's just cause, and promised leniency to those who came out.

129. In your opinion, why did the Americans come to Vietnam?

The VC said the Americans came here to take over Vietnam.

130. Did you think the Americans came here to take over Vietnam?

I don't know.

131. What do you think the Americans want in Vietnam?

I guess they came here to kill the Communists.

132. What had you heard about conditions in GVN-controlled areas before you left?

We were told that we should move to the Government-controlled areas where there was security, and that we would receive assistance from the American Government. The American Government would give us food and everything we needed.

133. Did anyone try to stop you when you left your village?

No.

134. What preparations did you and your family make?

We made preaprations, but, in the end, we couldn't bring anything with us. The broadcasts told us to put paddy in rice bags, and the Government would send airplanes to transport these bags to our next destination. We put paddy in bags and waited for airplanes, but no airplanes came.

135. What else would you have liked to have taken with you if you had been able to do so?

I would have liked to bring our paddy out here. I couldn't bring anything out here with me. I feel very bad about leaving my paddy behind.

136. Did you expect to leave your hamlet for a short or long time?

At first, I thought we were being taken to Bentat. I don't know when I will go back to my village because there is no one there now. I won't be able to live alone there.

137. Has anyone who came out with you returned to the village?

I don't know.

138. What would happen to you if you returned to your village now?

Why should I return to my village?

139. Would the VC do anything to you if you returned?

I don't know if the VC are still there or not. I haven't been back.

140. If the Government gave you some kind of training so that you could earn your living, what kind of training would you want?

I was a hired laborer and that was the only profession I knew. I could work as a hired laborer. A few days ago some gentlemen came and asked me if I was literate enough to teach. I told them I knew how to read and write, but didn't think myself qualified to do the teaching.

141. Do you feel safe here?

I am not afraid of the bombing and shelling here, but sanitation here isn't good. I am afraid my children may get sick because they have to sleep on the floor.

142. How would the situation in your village have to be before you would return there?

If the Government re-establishes a Nationalist post in my village, I will return there. It is easier to earn a living in my village, because we have a home there, and we can do the farming for food to eat. Here, if the Government stops giving aid to us, we will certainly die of starvation.

143. Has anyone tried to persuade you or the other refugees to go back to your village since you came here?

No.

144. Suppose you had a son, what would you hope your son's life would be?

Let the future takes care of itself; I don't know what to hope for him.

145. If you could ask the Government for three things, what would they be?

I don't know what to ask of the Government. Will you tell me what I need most?

146. You know best what you need most, I can't tell you that.

I will ask the Government to review my husband's case. He was an innocent civilian. He worked to support his children and did nothing else.

147. In your opinion, which side has the people's support now?

I don't know. The people will stay with whichever side guarantees them security and gives them help.

148. Do you think the VC can win this war?

How could they? They have no airplanes.

149. Do you think the Government can win this war?

The Government has airplanes, but to tell the truth, I don't know which side will win.

150. Are you happier now than when you were in [redacted]?

I don't know about other people, but I feel very unhappy because my husband has been arrested. We don't starve now though we couldn't bring any rice out here with us. The Government feeds us.

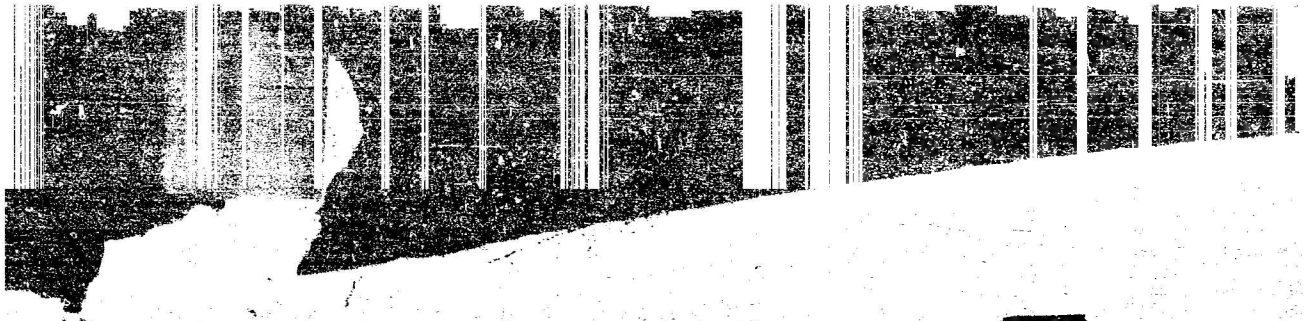
151. Was your life better before the VC took over your village?

It was the same all the time. I worked hard to earn my living. No one gave me anything.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

The interview was done in a refugee camp and the facilities there left much to be desired.

The subject was a healthy and talkative woman. She was co-operative and seemed sincere. She seemed very worried about her husband, who had been arrested by the Government during the operation.



2. [redacted]

3. From 4:[illegible] PM on January [redacted] 1966
   From 2:[illegible] to 3:30 PM on January [redacted] 1966
   From _____ to _____ on _____ 1966
   From _____ to _____ on _____ 1966
   Total time: 3 hours

   Interview based on: tape (X) hand written notes (X)

4. Place of Interview:
   Refugee Camp in Binh Duong

5. Sex of subject: Male ( ) Female (X)

6. Age of subject: 28

7. Ethnic background: Vietnamese

8. Place of birth:
   hamlet [redacted]
   village [redacted]
   district Cu Chi
   province Hau Nghia

9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee:
   hamlet [redacted]
   village Doesn't know
   district Ben Cat
   province Binh Duong

10. (a) Length of residence in last location: 1 year
    (b) Who controlled the place of residence:
    GVN ( ) VC (X) Contested ( )
    (c) Since when controlled or contested? Don't know

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No. AGR - 90

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

1. Name of Interviewer: [redacted]

2. Name of Subject : [redacted]

3. Time and Date of Interview:

From 2:00 PM to 4:30 PM on January [redacted] 1966

From 2:00 PM to 3:30 PM on January [redacted] 1966

From _____ to _____ on _____ 1966

From _____ to _____ on _____ 1966

Total time: 3 hours

Interview based on: tape (X) hand written notes (X)

4. Place of Interview:

Refugee Camp in Binh Duong

5. Sex of subject: Male ( ) Female (X)

6. Age of subject: 28

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village [redacted]

district Cu Chi

province Hau Nghia

9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee:

hamlet [redacted]

village Doesn't know

district Ben Cat

province Binh Duong

10. (a) Length of residence in last location: 1 year

(b) Who controlled the place of residence:

GVN ( ) VC (X) Contested ( )

(c) Since when controlled or contested? Don't know

11. Number of brothers ( ) and sisters (2)

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age: _____

13. Marital status: Married

14. Number of children: 4

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age: _____

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
    Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject (x)
    Brothers with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
    Wife with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
    Children with subject (x) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion: Cao Dai

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge: Cake baking

19. Economic status:
    (a) VC designation Poor class
    (b) Landowner? _____ How much land Rent ten cong

20. Education:
    Illiterate ( )
    Literate (x)
    Schooling completed: _____

21. Any relatives in VC: No

22. Any relatives in GVN: No

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by:
    (a) French No
    (b) GVN No
    (c) VC an uncle

24. When became a refugee: January [redacted] 1967

25. Where took refuge first: Refugee Camp in Binh Duong

26. Parent residence: _____

AGR

INTERVIEW

91

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(B)

THE RAND CORPORATION

INTERVIEWS CONCERNING THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR-91

Date of Interview : March [redacted] 1967

Subject's Category : Refugee: November 1966

Area of Residence : Hamlet [redacted] Village, Duc Duc District, Quang Nam Province.

This interview is for the information of US and Vietnamese official agencies and personnel on a need-to-know basis. Permission to distribute or show this interview to non-official persons requires the prior approval of The RAND Corporation and the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs.

1. Where do you come from, and how long did you live in your village?

We come from [redacted] Village, Duc Duc district, Quang Nam we were born there and had lived there all our lives. Recently we had to leave the land of our ancestors to come here.

2. When did you leave your village?

About four months ago, before Tet. First we came to the [redacted] district town to take refuge, and then we moved to this place. All the villages spreading along the foot of the mountains such as [redacted] have been falling under VC control. Only the [redacted] area, and [redacted] district town are still free.

3. Why did you leave your village?

We couldn't stand the VC.

4. How long has the village been under VC control?

It's been under VC control for two years.

5. Were there any GVN troops stationed near the village?

No. As the VC became too strong, the GVN troops were unable to keep our village. They concentrated on the [redacted] area only. Meanwhile, the VC were set free to get into the villages and throw the people into misery. On one hand, we had to submit to their many demands. On the other hand, we had to duck the bombs and shells which came from the GVN side. Ideologically, we couldn't agree with the VC. Although we were hard up because of having to pay contributions, we didn't really starve. We left because we found it hard to live in harmony with them.

6. How many children do you have?

Four. All of them are under 15.

7. What's your religion?

I'm a Buddhist.

8. Did you go to the pagoda to worship?

Yes, although the VC didn't forbid us to go to the pagoda, they tried to discourage us by saying that our duty was to fight and drive the Americans out of this country, and that it wasn't time for praying. Most of the people in the village were Buddhists, it wasn't easy to make them shake off their religion, but the VC tried to interfere with our freedom of worship.

9. How many of the people were Buddhists?

About 70 percent were Buddhists. The rest were either Caodaists, Protestants, or ancestor worshippers. The Buddhist movement was very strong, and it was hard for the VC to do anything to us.

10. Did the VC interfere with the activities of the monks?

All the monks had left the village when the VC came. The pagoda was left in the care of a housekeeper.

11. What did you do for a living in the village?

I was a farmer.

12. Did you own any land?

Yes, I have one-and-a-half mau of land and a few working cattle. I left everything back home when I moved away. I'm here empty-handed, yet I'm glad. I have no regret whatsoever.

13. How big was [redacted] village?

It had [redacted] hamlets. The whole area had fallen under VC control. The village has never been guarded by GVN regular troops. In the old days, there were a few Popular Force men and Combat Youths guarding the village, but they were unable to stand up to fight back the VC. Under GVN control, men like us had to join the Popular Force at night to guard the village, and in the daytime we were farmers working on our land.

14. What did most of the people in the village do for a living?

All of them were farmers. Our main product was rice.

15. Did the people earn enough to eat?

Yes. We never had to import rice from outside the village. We earned more than we could eat.

16. Did you buy your land?

No. I inherited most of it from my parents. I only bought a few sao.

17. Did you have to rent more land to work on?

No. I had barely enough time to cultivate my own land. There were two crops a year, you know.

18. How much paddy did you make a year?

About 400 ang.

19. How heavy is an ang of paddy?

Ten kilograms. Besides paddy, I also grew peanuts and tea in the orchard. I made enough to feed my big family.

20. Did many people in the village own land?

Almost of the people owned land. Each villager could afford at least 5 sao of land. During the ten peaceful years under the GVN control (1955-1965), not all the people worked on the land. During that time, they could make a lot of money by working at the coal mine or working as lumberjacks.

21. Since when has the land in your village yielded two crops of year?

The land has always yielded two crops a year as far as I know.

22. Did your wife help you with the farm work?

No. My wife was too busy with the kids to help. I could manage by myself with the help of the buffaloes. I also exchanged labor with the neighbors. That is, that is my neighbors would help me with my work, and I'd help them with theirs.

23. What's your education?

I quit school at grade five.

24. Where did you go to school?

In the village. The village had a four-classroom school and each hamlet had a small school for young children.

25. Have your children been going to school in this camp?

No, they haven't. We've just arrive in this place not long ago, and we've not settled down yet.

26. Who built the school in your village?

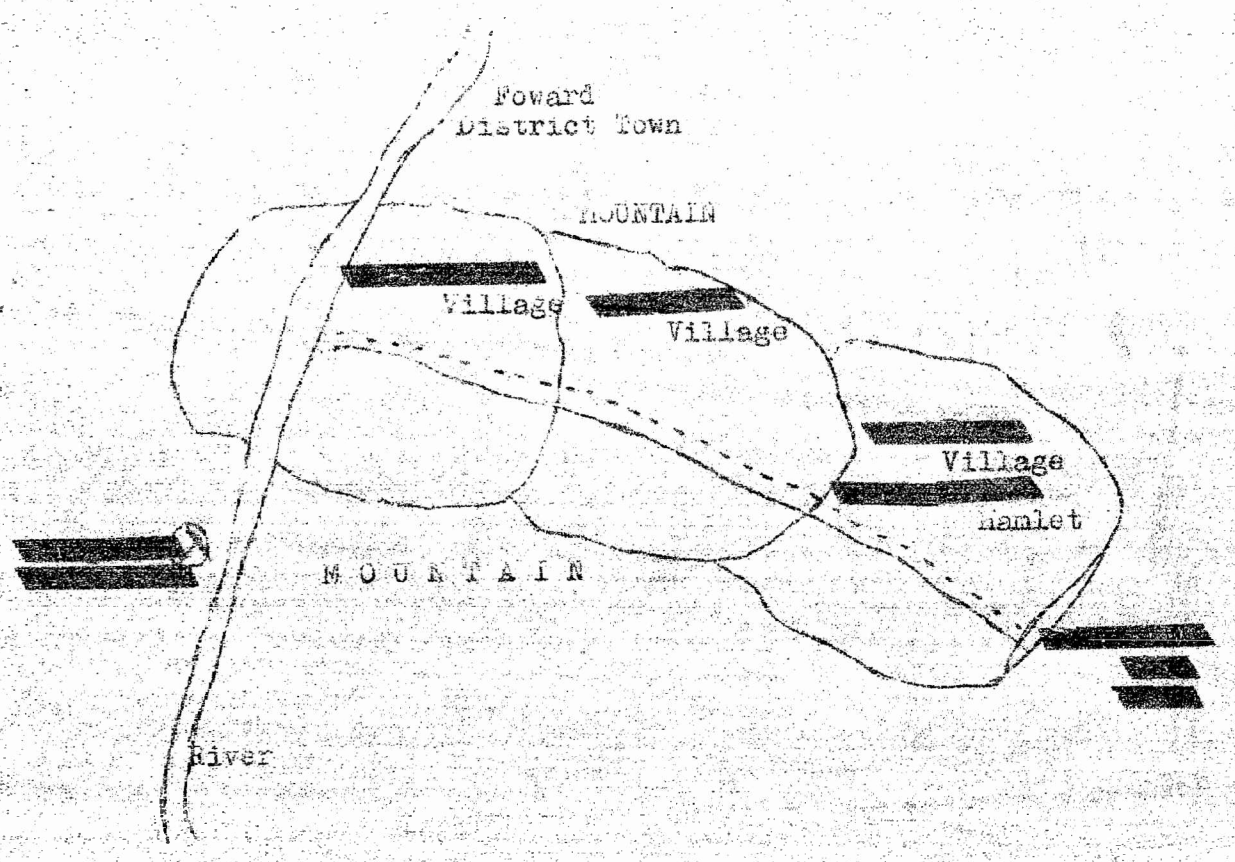
The school was built a long time ago by the GVN. It was closed when the VC came because there was no teacher. But even if there were teachers, we wouldn't send our children to school anyway, for fear of the bombs and shells. Having an education is good, but being alive is much better. We wouldn't risk our children's lives by sending them to school in the face of the bombing and shelling.

27. When did the VC take over the control of your village?

Two years ago. I remember it was the [redacted] day of the lunar new year (February 1965). The VC took advantage of the New Year cease-fire to gather up their strength. When the truce was over, they came to take over the control of the village as easily as turning their hands. Most of us wanted to run away, but as we lived in hamlet [redacted] which was far from the river and [redacted] to Que Son district, we ran to Que Son. But a week later, the VC sent us back to the village where we were stuck for eighteen months. We waited and waited for a chance to get away, but not until four months ago did the Americans carry out an operation in the village, and we asked them to help us get away.

28. How did you leave the village four months ago?

One day four months ago, the GVN and American troops landed in [redacted] near hamlet [redacted] village. All the people rushed to hamlet [redacted] and asked to be taken out of the village. At first we were promised that the aircraft would take us out, but later, due to the bad weather or whatever



it was, the aircraft wasn't available to us. So we had to walk along the unpaved road that ran from [redacted] through [redacted] villages toward the [redacted] sampan station.

29. How far was [redacted] from the river?

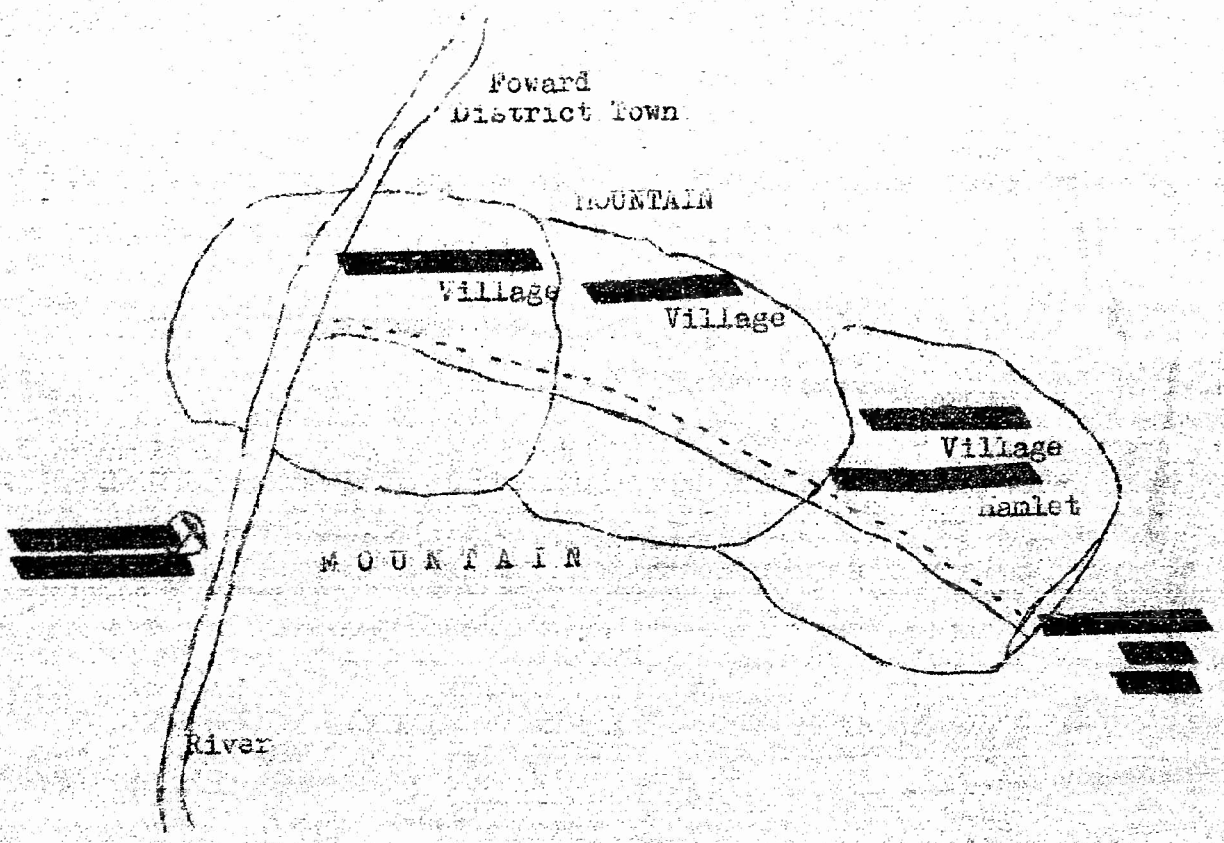
About 8km.

30. Under VC control, could the people talk to each other freely?

There was nothing to walk about.

31. Didn't you make any comments or remarks to each other about the VC?

No. We weren't free to talk. We weren't forbidden to say things or make remarks, but we just didn't do it because there was no use to make remarks in public.



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no. We weren't free to talk. We weren't forbidden to say things or make remarks, but we just didn't do it because there was no use to make remarks in public.

32. Did you ever complain to each other privately?

Yes. We sometimes got irritated with the VC's propaganda which tried to fool us that living in the VC-controlled areas was like living in paradise. We got sick of them and we would tell each other so. But if they ever heard us voice our discontentment, they would send us to some remote reform camp, and that means we had to be away from our families.

33. Did anyone in the village join the Resistance to fight against the French?

A lot of people joined the Resistance against the French during the ten years before 1954.

34. What happened to those Resistance fighters after 1954?

Some of them regrouped in the North, some stayed behind and went underground and later were arrested by the GVN.

35. Did the GVN spare former Resistance fighters who had nothing to do with the Front movement?

I don't know of any former Resistance fighters in the village who weren't hostile to the GVN.

36. How was life in the village after 1954?

Life became normal in the village after 1954. The people could live and work in peace. Production was at an all-time high. Farmers raised good crops, merchants earned good money. The children were happy. They even had toys to play with.

37. How did the GVN officials treat the people?

GVN cadres were very well-liked. They educated the people in many ways. For instance, they taught the villagers the proper table manners.

38. Did the people elect the village chief?

Yes. The village chief was a good man, and he was re-elected over and over again.

39. How long did he serve as your village chief?

Eight years.

40. Did the people elect the village council?

Yes. Members of the Council, such as the financial cadre, the secretary and so on, were also elected. Not all the members of the Council were re-elected for the second or third term as the village chief was, though.

41. What do you think of the village officials?

They were very nice people. They came from the village and served the villagers honestly.

42. What did you know about the Ngo Dinh Diem government?

We learned about the Diem government by listening to the radio, or through the Village Council.

43. What did the people think of the overthrow of the Diem government?

A number of people were glad to learn of the news. They had heard of Diem's dictatorship and oppression of the people.

44. Did the people in the village feel the effect of Mr. Diem's dictatorship?

Yes. For instance, if you were sympathetic to the Dan Lao Party or you were a Catholic, you would be better treated by the officials.

45. Didn't you say that the officials were nice people and that they were elected by the villagers?

The elections weren't organized very democratically though. All the candidates had been approved by the GVN before the election, and the people had practically no choice. They had to cast their votes for the only candidate for the position of village chief, for example.

46. Was the village chief good to the people?

Yes, he was. He was a native of the village, and he was dedicated to the village affairs. He executed the policy of the Government, and meanwhile he managed to be nice to the people.

47. What happened to those village officials after the overthrow of the Diem government?

They continued to live in the village. The people had no resentment against them whatsoever. Everybody understood that those officials had to execute the Government policy, and they didn't mean to be mean to anyone. After the Diem government was gone, they continued to work as officials and didn't leave the village until it fell under VC control.

48. Did you say that the GVN regular troops have never been stationed in or near your village?

Yes. The village was kept by the Popular Forces, such as the militia and Village Combat Youths. There was a Civil Guards' post in [redacted] village called [redacted] Post.

49. Was the village secure without GVN troops?

The village had been secure before 1964.

50. Did [redacted] village have any strategic hamlets?

Yes, the village had four strategic hamlets.

51. Did you have to contribute labor or money to the construction of the Strategic hamlet?

Yes, but not much. The GVN compensated for our time lost in the construction of the hamlet with money or rice. The GVN first sent a group of Strategic hamlet cadres to the village. These cadres were responsible for the construction of the hamlets

52. How did the people help in the construction?

The people had to dig ditches and sharpen spikes. Each person had to contribute at least two or three months of labor.

53. When was the construction of the hamlets started?

Around the beginning of 1962 or 1963. We had to build fences around our established hamlet only, we didn't really have to move anywhere. A few families who lived a little bit out of the way had to move into the hamlet. That's all.

54. Did you find it convenient to live in a Strategic Hamlet?

I found it very inconvenient.

55. Why?

We had nowhere to run if the VC ever came to attack us. The purpose of the Strategic Hamlet was to protect the people from VC attacks, but if the VC really wanted to attack us, he had no way to run, we would be trapped inside the fences. We didn't mind other small inconveniences such as having to go out or get in at a certain time, or having to give up a short cut to the fields because of the fences.

56. Were you afraid the VC might attack the hamlet?

Yes, we were very afraid of the possibility. They only had to shell into the hamlet, and all the people would be harmed.

57. Did the VC ever shell the hamlet?

No. They only fired a few shots now and then as if to make us aware of their presence in the area. We had to dig trenches to protect ourselves.

58. When did you first hear of the National Liberation Front?

I heard the name from the VC themselves. Before the VC came to the village, we had known them as Communists. We didn't know the name of their organization.

59. Did the VC ever get to the village at night to make propaganda when the village was still under GVN control?

No. Under GVN control, the people lived in the Strategic Hamlet. There were night guards who patrolled the hamlet and kept an alert ear for all the irregular noise outside the fences. Consequently, the VC didn't have a chance to get into the hamlet to make propaganda.

60. Did you say you ran to Cua Dai district when the VC tried to take over the control of the village?

Yes. As I lived in hamlet [redacted] I took my family and ran across the mountain pass toward [redacted] but the VC sent us back to our own village.

61. Did other people run also?

Yes. People from other hamlets tried to follow the creeks which ran parralel to the unpaved village road toward the river. Some of them were stopped and sent back to the village by the VC.

62. What did the people do to the people who had tried to run away besides sending them back to the village?

It depended on the individual. They wouldn't do anything to those who obeyed their orders. If anyone showed some stubbornness, he would be sent to reform. When the VC first came to the village, a lot of people were sent to reform sessions that lasted for months in some remote areas.

63. What did the VC tell the people when they first came?

When they first came, they called mass meetings during which they said: "We have come here to liberate the people. Therefore you shouldn't be afraid of us and run away from the village." They went on talking about the people's rights, and they urged the people to join them in their fight against the americans.

64. What people's rights did the VC talk about?

The rights of the people to have enough to eat and to wear, the right to govern oneself, the right to enjoy peace, and so on. They could talk, and we all knew that it was only propaganda.

65. How did the VC take over the village?

On the [redacted] day of Tet (February 1965) the VC decided to take the village. They'd been able to gather a lot of troops during the Tet cease-fire. While the local district SDC men were still enjoying the holidays, they showed up and took over easily. They didn't encounter much trouble because they outnumbered the GVN irregular troops.

66. Who were the hard-core VC cadres in the village?

They were natives of the village who had joined the VC a few years before. They led the way for the VC to take over the village. We saw them at the first mass meeting in the village.

67. Did you feel assured because somebody you knew was in power?

No. We were scared because we didn't know what to expect of them. We weren't sure what they might do to us. It wasn't until later that we learned to live with them -- that is, to be obedient. If they wanted us to go on labor-duty trips, we would obey. If they wanted us to go to the battlefields to carry the wounded fighters, we'd do it.

68. Did the VC liquidate anyone from [redacted] village?

Yes, when they first came, a number of village officials were unable to escape and thus were arrested and taken away.

69. How many were arrested by the VC exactly?

Over twenty people. They were GVN cadres of hamlet and village levels. These people never showed up in the village again. Some twenty or thirty other men were sent to reform sessions and were released after a few months.

70. Where did the VC send the people to be reformed, and how long?

The people were sent to some spots in the mountains and were retained from one to three months.

71. Did the people have to take along their own rice to the reform camps?

Yes, and when they ran out of rice, their family had to take more to them. The VC only fed the people they sent to attend study sessions to become cadres. The VC never admitted that they had liquidated anyone, but we people knew when a man was killed when he didn't get back from the reform camps after five months.

72. Did you have to attend mass meetings?

Yes, we had to.

73. Why did you have to attend mass meetings?

If we didn't go to meetings, they might accuse us of being pro-GVN, and they might send us to reform camps.

74. Where and when did the cadres usually hold meetings?

They usually held night meetings at the hamlet office headquarters -- the former village council offices.

75. Did the cadres love the people?

They acted as if they were concerned about the people. They talked softly to every one.

76. Did the people trust the cadres?

Some trusted the cadres, some didn't.

77. Why didn't some people trust the cadres?

Because after a while living with them, the people began to know the cadres better. The cadres were sweet in order to get more contributions from the people. They said since they had brought the rights to the people, the people had the duty to feed their troops and their cadres. They'd grasp anything they could get their hands on: sesame, peanut, paddy, or whatnot. Sometimes they paid with money, sometimes they bought on credit which they always forgot to pay. In short, the people had to give a lot and got nothing from the VC.

78. Did the people complain?

Yes, after a while, most of the people knew the VC's tricks, and they complained to each other. The people were very unhappy. The VC kept promising future happiness, but all the people could see for the time being was misery.

79. What did the VC tell the people about their purposes?

At mass meetings, the cadres always told the people about their victories.

80. Did the people believe what the cadres said?

No. We all knew that the cadres always exaggerated to make things look better for them. For instance, there were clashes in [redacted] which weren't far from our own village. And therefore we were able to learn the truth from the local people. Yet, when we tuned in Radio Liberation,

we always heard something different. They made a small clash sound like a big battle in which they killed hundreds of Americans and downed a lot of airplanes. We knew the truth, and we knew that the broadcast was false.

81. Were you ever sent to reform sessions?

Yes. I was often sent to attend reform sessions for some five days at a time. I was often accused of being reluctant to participate in the village activities. For instance, I would attend one mass meeting out of five, or I would protest against paying contributions when I found them too heavy.

82. What did you learn at the reform camp?

They made us learn the labor-duty policy. They told us about the fight against the Americans.

83. What else did you learn?

I can't anything else. Although we had to spend at least five days at the camp, we only had to listen to their lessons a few hours a day. We spent the rest of the day doing nothing.

84. Were a lot of people sent to reform sessions?

Yes. Most of the people from my village were pro-GVN and were very stubborn. Consequently, they were often sent to reform sessions. We almost gave up hope of moving to the GVN-controlled areas after two years living under the strict VC regime. We had begun to resign ourselves to our fate when the allied forces came to the village on an operation, and gave us the opportunity to get out.

85. What did the cadres tell the people about life in the North?

They said the North had become a Socialist State and the people were enjoying a new kind of life. Workers kept exact working hours, and everybody was well fed. Manual work had completely disappeared, everything was done by machine, the people didn't have to use their hands at all. In short, life in the North was very comfortable. The purpose of the cadres was to liberate the people of the South and turn the South into a socialist state so that we all could be as happy as the people of the North. They said in a Socialist state, everybody is equal, there was no poor and no rich.

86. Did you believe what the cadres said about the people in the North being happy?

No. Although the North is a long way from our village, we heard some truth about it. There were regroupees who came back from the North and disclosed the true situation. Words got around, you know.

87. What did the regroupees say?

They said the people in the North had to work hard, and each day a person was given two cans of rice and two piasters to buy food. The state collected everything the people made. Thus the people had a hard life. Besides, the people had to suffer death and damage from the shells pounded on them by the GVN in Central Vietnam.

88. To whom did the regroupees tell those stories?

The regroupee cadres told the other cadres about the North, and somehow the story leaked out and we learned the truth.

89. How did you know that it was the truth?

The cadres wouldn't tell lies to each other. They only lied to the people.

90. Did the village have a lot of youths over 16 years of age?

When the VC came, they turned all the youths over 16 years of age into guerrillas. When the allied forces carried out an operation in the village four months ago, some of them took their guns to the GVN troops to rally. Those who didn't rally to the GVN at that time, threw away their weapons and moved away from the village with other villagers.

91. Did any young men in the village volunteer to join the VC regular forces?

Yes. There were young men who joined the VC army, but they didn't volunteer to do so.

92. Were they forced to join?

They were given no choice. If they didn't join the army, they would be sent to reform sessions, and to go on labor-duty trips. To go on labor-duty trips was to be in worse danger than to join the army.

93. Did anyone die because of labor-duty trips?

Yes. After a few months doing labor duty in the forest, every one became ill with malaria, the skin turned yellow, the stomach began to swell and the victim died. Some left the village young and healthy, and came back looking like corpses. The cadres did all sorts of things to urge the people to go on labor-duty trips, and then when the people people came back sick, they didn't even have a word of concern. If the young men got well again, thanks to the proper care of their own families, the cadres would approach again and talked them into going on another trip. Thus young lives were sacrificed for nothing. If a laborer died on the way, the cadres would try to hide the bad news from his family, and would tell his folks vaguely that he had been transferred to some other duty.

94. Before the VC came to the village, had any youths in the village join the GVN army?

Yes, a lot of young men had been drafted into the GVN army before the VC came. Most of them were stationed in other districts. Some stayed in their home district (Duc Duc district).

95. Did anyone dodge the draft?

If a young man was his parents' only son, or he was the family's sole support, the village council would cover up for him, and he would be free of the draft.

96. How many people in the village died because of the labor-duty trips?

About ten people.

97. How many guerrillas were there in the village?

I have no idea how many the village had, but my hamlet had 8 guerrillas. Four of them have rallied to the GVN.

98. What did the guerrillas do in the hamlet?

They guarded the road.

99. Did the guerrillas fire at the aircraft?

They wouldn't dare. Whenever they fired at the aircraft the people would shout insults at them. They were told to go to attack the GVN post if they dared. The people said: "If you are so brave, why don't you go find the GVN troops to attack. Your firing at the aircraft only draws shells from the district town, and we -- the people -- have to suffer damage."

100. Weren't the people afraid of being sent to reform camps?

They couldn't possibly send all the people to reform camps.

(Note: A woman who had been listening to the conversation, now volunteered: "They were lucky we didn't beat the hell out of them for firing at the aircraft, let along sending us to reform camps." As we all laughed, the subject added:)

Everybody was afraid of the women, including the guerrillas. The women, especially the old ones, didn't care for anything. They just said what they wanted to.

(The woman cut in: "Why not? We certainly didn't enjoy living in the trenches. You know what we told them (the guerrillas)? "Your fathers be damned! Is this what you call happiness? What's so happy about having to run until you throw up all your rice? That's the way we talked to them," she concluded proudly. The subject continued:)

As they couldn't fire at the aircraft as they wanted to, they made the people beat on the empty tin barrel when the Chieu Hoi aircraft came to broadcast. Their purpose was to drown out the broadcast.

101. Who did the production work if all the young and healthy men had to join either the regular army or the guerrillas?

Who else but the women, the middle-aged and the old men? The guerrillas could help sometimes when they were off duty.

102. Did the cadres give any help to families of VC fighters or guerrillas?

They urged us to help those families, but we couldn't do so regularly. We had our own work to do.

103. Did the cadres carry out a land redistribution program?

The cadres took the land from the absentee landowners to give to the landless or every poor farmers. It looked like they wanted to do those people a big favor, but in reality, they only wanted to see all the land cultivated so that they could collect more contributions.

104. How did the receivers of the land feel?

They were too afraid of the bombs and shells to work on fields. They weren't enthusiastic about the land redistribution program at all. They wouldn't risk their lives so that the cadres could enjoy the fruit of their labor.

105. How were you classified by the VC?

Middle farmers. Those who owned from one to two mau of land were middle farmers. Rich farmers owned more than two mau of land.

106. Were there many rich farmers or landowners in your village?

There weren't any left. They had all moved away before the VC came.

107. How many kinds of contributions did you have to pay to the VC?

The major contribution was the troop support tax which was collected in paddy at harvest time. Besides that, there was the "economy jar of rice." We had to take a handful of rice out of every three cans we cooked for our meals, and put it into a jar. The cadres would come by every week to collect it. We couldn't even cheat them. They would take a look at the size of the family, and could immediately tell the amount of rice we used for our meals during the week, and so the amount of rice we should have put in the jar.

108. How did the cadres fix the rate of troop support tax?

The amount of tax a family had to pay was fixed before the paddy was planted. This practice was very unfair to all of us farmers. For instance, they would visit a field and decide that the quality of the earth of that field could yield 45 ang per sao, though really it couldn't yield more than 20 ang. We would protest, and they would democratically call a meeting of our inter-family group. In the meeting, they talked, they maneuvered, they did everything to make us agree that the land

would yield 45 ang per sao instead of 20 ang, and the tax rate was fixed accordingly. The cadres never took into consideration that the crop might be affected by a change of weather, a lack of fertilizers, or other hazards of the war. They just assumed that we farmers were working in the best of conditions. So some frightened people had to find time to work on some other piece of land to meet the quota of tax fixed by the cadres. At harvest time, most of us ended up having some 70 or 80 percent of our earnings taken away. After one or two seasons, the people got fed up and became careless. They wouldn't try to improve their ricefields any more. If a dike broke up, that's all right, they would give up that piece of land. They wouldn't bother to fix the dike. If they worked less, they would pay less tax! It really turns my stomach to think of the whole thing. Imagine! On one hand, they talked the young people into joining their army. On the other hand, they urged the people to increase production so that they could collect more taxes. Who do you think would end up working on the land but our old folks who at their age were supposed to rest and have their children attend to their needs? Strong men like me, who they couldn't lure into their army because of our big families, would be coaxed into taking long labor-duty trips. "Don't worry about your farm work," they'd say "we'll see to it that your family gets proper help." Nobody really showed up to help our families while we were away. And when we came back, sick, tired, and weak, they ignored us completely, and went on collecting tax as if we had always been home to tend our paddy.

109. How much paddy did you actually have to pay to the VC at harvest time?

Each harvest time, the VC took from me 33 ang of paddy.

110. How much paddy did you earn each crop?

I earned an average of 200 ang each season. The March crop was always worse than the August one because of the bad weather, and I usually earned less than 200 ang, but I still had to pay 33 ang in tax.

111. Do you think the tax rate was too heavy for you?

Yes, if you take into consideration the cost of raising a crop, the seeds, the feeding of our working cattle. That is not to count our labor and the effort put in to make up for the time lost while we had to go on labor-duty trips. In the end, we had very little left to eat.

112. Did you have to pay tax to the GVN before the VC came? How was the GVN tax compared to the VC one?

I can't compare the two taxes. I used to pay the GVN 150 piasters a year in tax, but I had been able to earn a lot, and nobody poked his nose into my own affairs and tried to bleed me. If the VC saw that I still had a lot more paddy left after tax than they'd expected, they would try to make us contribute for this or that cause, until we ended up empty-handed. The GVN had never done anything like that. I paid 150 piasters, and that was it. Under the GVN control a dozen pineapples had fetched as much as 70 or 80 piasters. When the VC came, the price of pineapples dropped to 3 piasters a dozen. So we just gave up growing a lot of things due to the restrictions.

113. What restrictions?

We weren't allowed to sell our produce in the GVN-controlled areas.

114. What organizations did the VC have in the village?

They had all sorts of organizations for farmers, youths, children, and women. All the children had to join the Children's Association. Farmers like me had to join the Farmers' Association.

115. Why didn't you join the Youth's Association?

Although I was young, I couldn't act like other youths because I had a big family. I wasn't able to take part in youth activities, and so I asked to be a member of the Farmers' Association instead.

116. What's the advantage of being a member of an association?

There was no advantage whatsoever. The VC organized the people in order to control us better.

117. Could a man join two or three associations at a time?

Yes. A farmer under 35 years of age could join the Youths' Association and the Farmers' Association at the same time. Men over 35 years of age only joined the Farmers' Association. Members of the Youths' Association were constantly urged to

join the army, and members of the Farmers' Association who were over 35 years of age were always urged to volunteer for labor duty. We had to pay a monthly fee of 2 piasters to the association.

118. Did the Farmers' Association cadres teach the people how to raise better crops?

No. They always urged us to increase production, but they didn't teach us any new method of cultivation.

119. What were the activities of the Youths' Association?

Young men and women were urged to volunteer for everything to set an example for others. They were urged to do labor duty or to join the army. The girls were told to join the guerrillas. The children were encouraged to take part in the digging of communication trenches, or in the propaganda . Retired men were urged to take up farm work again. Old women were told to polish the rice that the VC had collected from the people. The VC not only collected paddy from us, they also made our folks work hard to turn raw paddy into polished rice. Each family had to polish up to 100 kg of rice for them, and we'd get into trouble if we didn't meet the deadline.

120. How many girls in the village joined the guerrillas?

About two or three. Some even left the village to join their army. After a few months, they came back ridden with malaria.

121. Who were the hard-core cadres in your village?

They were villagers who had joined the VC in 1962. Although the village was still under GVN control that year, the VC sometimes appeared in the village and they had somehow forced some youngsters to go to the mountains and join them. In 1965, these young men came back to the village as cadres.

122. What positions did they hold in the village?

They became village or hamlet chiefs.

123. Were they appointed?

Yes, they haven't organized any election in the village yet.

124. What do you think of the village chief?

He urged the people to pay contributions, and then said a few words of consolation when the people were dissatisfied.

125. Were there any women cadres in the village?

Yes.

126. Who were they?

They were women in the village who had what the VC called a high spirit, dedication, and a trustworthy manner.

127. How old were they?

All of them were under 30.

128. Were they married?

Some of them were.

129. What did the women cadres do?

They also belonged to working cells. They had to polish rice, or to engage in social work, such as visiting the sick.

130. Did the village have a Party chapter?

Yes. All the cadres were Party members.

131. Did they urge men like you to join the Party?

Yes, but they didn't force us to.

132. What kind of people were urged to join the Party?

People over 20 years of age who had high spirit were invited to join the Party. The people might refuse the invitation if they didn't feel like joining the Party.

133. Did many people in the village join the Party?

That I don't know.

134. What's the relation between the Party and the NLF?

The Party is the core of the NLF. Not all front men were Party members. Only the trustworthy ones were admitted into the Party.

135. What's the relation between the Party and Hanoi?

All I know is that the Party is made up of Communists and it came into existence during the resistance period.

136. Did the people like the cadres?

The cadres served the Party and the front, not the people. Therefore the people had nothing to do with the cadres. The fact that the people were attached to the land and went on living in the village after it had slipped under VC control, didn't mean that the people liked the cadres. In order to stick to their own land, the people had to put up with lack of freedom. They weren't free to do anything with their own time. If they were told that the next day they had to go on a labor-duty trip, then they had to drop their own business to go. In other words, no one could make any personal plan if he lived in a VC-controlled village.

137. Do you think the cadres treat the people fairly?

The cadres enforced the front policy of labor-duty trips quite well. Hardly anyone could dodge that duty. I think they were unfair in the way they collected contributions. Take me, for example. I was young and strong. Besides my 15 sao of rice-field, I could still work in my orchard to grow some fruits and vegetables for more money. I worked hard for my money. I didn't [illegible] it. Then why shouldn't I be able to enjoy the fruits of my labor? The cadres always kept their eyes on me, and tried to make me pay more contributions until I had hardly anything left. I thought they were very unfair, and in the end, I abandoned my orchard, and worked only enough to keep my family alive.

138. Did the cadres ever try to help the people?

The cadres talked a lot. When someone was discouraged, they'd try to encourage him, but they never doled out any material support. It's always the other way around. The people had to support the cadres.

139. Did you have the same cadres working in the village all the time?

No. Some of the cadres were transferred after a while if they became abusive or if they tended to take the side of the people rather than of the Front.

140. Were any of your hamlet cadres dismissed because they took the side of the people?

A few cadres from my hamlet were transferred because they sympathized with the people. They didn't have the heart to force a farmer to sign a pledge to contribute an enormous amount of paddy which they knew that man couldn't afford. But if they didn't make the man sign the pledge, they were guilty of betraying the Front policy, and therefore they were dismissed. An efficient cadre had to be a heartless one. He would sweet-talk a farmer into signing a promise to contribute a large amount of paddy before the planting season. The farmer's wife would be stunned when she learned that her husband had pledged all their future earnings to the cadres, and they'd slave joylessly through the season, knowing that their children would starve although they were working hard. A few cadres were understanding, and became indignant. But if they were sympathetic to the people's suffering, they'd be sent away or dismissed.

141. Were all good cadres unconcerned about the people's welfare?

If they wanted to enforce the Party policy they had to ignore the people's welfare. I don't believe that the cadres were born heartless, but I think they considered it was more important to be a good Party member.

142. Did the cadres ever tell the people about the purposes of the Party?

We were told that the Party's main purpose was to turn all farmers into owners of the land they worked on. I'm not very well informed about the Party policy. In order to justify their exploitation of the people, the cadres had to paint rosy pictures of the future of the farmers to woo the people.

143. Were the cadres proud of their Party membership?

They never boasted about their Party membership, but they never tried to hide the fact that they were members either.

144. Were any of your friends Party members?

No.

145. How did the Party members behave?

They looked discreet and were always "on duty" with canvas bags on their back.

146. Did their families live in the village?

Yes; most of them had families in the village. Their wives often complained about the husbands neglecting the farm work. Some of the cadres quit because they couldn't stand their wives' nagging, and their families having to do without. In reality, the cadres were exploited themselves. They worked hard to collect paddy for the front, but they weren't paid a piaster for doing their duty. The only privilege they enjoyed was the exemption from labor-duty trips. Only village cadres and higher were given a few cans of rice a day. All the hamlet cadres or organization cadres had to be self-supporting.

147. Did the women like the prestige of being cadres' wives?

Psychologically, no one wanted to be poor and broke. If the husbands were cadres, they'd have no time to earn a living, and their families had to suffer. The cadres were always on duty, their families were neglected. I don't think any woman in her right mind would like to be a cadre's wife.

148. Did the cadres ever quarrel with each other?

No.

149. What was the people's attitude toward the cadres?

I don't think the people trusted the cadres very much. There was nothing pleasant about meeting the cadres. A meeting with the cadres always resulted in the people's having to increase production, to go on labor-duty trips, to carry the wounded fighters, to pledge a huge contribution, or to dig communication trenches that took a man four or five days to do. The cadres demanded a lot from the people, and in return they offered no consolation whatsoever. The people tried to dodge labor duty as much as they could. "Please understand my situation," a man would plead to the cadres, "I'm simply frightened of the bombing and shelling. I spend practically all the

time in the trench. If I'm away from home, who's going to protect my family? My children might get killed if I'm not around to push them into the trench." In short, we tried to find every excuse to dodge labor duty. We actually weren't that nervous about the bombing and shelling, although we were afraid of them, but we acted as if we were so nervous and obsessed about the attacks that we weren't able to do any work at all. But the cadres were unbeatable. If they failed to persuade us during a large meeting, they would arrange smaller meetings among the men in the inter-family group, and they would coax us into doing what they wanted. It was very depressing to have to live in the village. For years, no one could afford to smile. The VC had a magic touch that could turn good into evil. The innocent children lost their smile because of lack of food. Rosy-skinned young men came home pale, weak, and ridden with malaria after a few months on labor duty. The girls also had to go on labor-duty trips. They had to carry heavy loads of paddy just like the men, and they would come home sick. The parents were unhappy and cranky. Not a pleasant word was heard in the village month after month. I found it was silly of the cadres to tear down all the tile-roofed houses which they called the remains of a feudal era, and whose owners they called wicked landowners, the people's exploiters. I wonder how they would feel if they saw the "capitalists" living happily in Hoi An and Danang? The VC tried to classify the people into several different classes, and tended to prefer the poor classes to the richer ones. At first the poor farmers were glad to get more land from the VC. It didn't take them long to get disgusted with their new status for if they had more land, they were supposed to earn more and therefore had to pay more contributions.

150. Has the people's attitude toward the cadres ever been changed?

The people had lived under the GVN ten years before the VC came. Life had been cheerful and easy. Almost all the families in the hamlet owned bicycles. The village was lively with traffic. Public buses ran on the village road. Sound trucks from the Psywar Department used to come to entertain the people. When the VC came, the road was dug up and even bicycles couldn't pass.

151. Did the VC cadres promise the people anything?

They promised that unification would soon be achieved and the people's rights would soon be restored if the people did their utmost to support the front. They repeated the words so many times that all the children knew them by heart.

152. Did you believe what the cadres said?

(Note: The old women who sat near the interview table, chewing betle nut, now cut in. "I'm telling you. I believed them so much that I actually lived in the underground trench for them." The subject answered.)

Let's not joke. We really didn't believe a word the cadres said. What have we got to give to the front so that it might defeat the Americans? While the VC carried one bag of rice at a time, the helicopters could unload tons of it at once. How could anyone use sheer human force to fight against modern civilization? While the Americans had uncountable amounts of ammunition, the VC had to be stingy with every one of their bullets. Not could anyone fight against the fat capitalists, which means the Americans, with an empty stomach?

153. Did you talk like that to other villagers?

Yes. I used to talk like that to trusted friends, but I did not dare let the cadres hear a word I said. We all found life too miserable. The cadres promised future happiness. But to us, present happiness was also important. We didn't like to sacrifice our present happiness for some vaguely defined future one. We knew we wouldn't live to see any happiness if things went on that way. We were too vulnerable. Young men dropped dead like flies, and what would their families be told? They'd be told that their boys had been transferred to some unnamed unit somewhere.

154. What are you talking about? Where did you see the young men drop dead like flies?

There was a battle in [redacted] village not very long ago, just a few months before we left the village. So many VC were killed that there was no time to bury them properly. Five or six bodies were shoved into one hole. Wounded laborers crawled as far as my village to ask for help.

155. Did you ever have to go on labor-duty trips?

All the men my age had to join the guerrillas or to go on labor-duty trips. A man was supposed to serve three months every year doing labor duty. He might have to do one long three-month trip, or three short one-month trips.

156. How many times did you go on labor-duty trips?

During the 18 months the VC controlled my village, I made only two trips. A one-month trip and a ten-day trip. I was often sick, and thus I was excused several times.

157. What did you do during the trips?

I had to carry rice from one place to another. Rice which the VC collected or bought from the people was taken from the villages to some temporary caches by the laborers. From the temporary caches, the rice would be taken to the permanent caches by the hard-core VC. Men like me had no way to know the location of the real caches.

158. How far did you have to travel?

My longest trip took 15 nights from the village to the destination. We only walked at night and rested in the daytime. We usually started at 5 pm when the sun reached the mountain in the west, and stopped at 1 or 2 am. We found the trip very hard. We weren't supposed to have any light. Our bare feet kept stepping on sharp stones until they bled.

159. Did you ever have to transport the wounded fighters?

Yes. Before attacking a certain area, the VC would post laborers in the nearby village. After the battle, the wounded fighters were carried to the laborers who in turn had to transport them to another place.

160. When did you have to transport the wounded fighters?

Not very long ago, after the battle of [redacted] village. I didn't have to go to [redacted] I lived in Hamlet [redacted] but was told to go to Hamlet [redacted] and wait for the wounded fighters to be carried to me by the laborers from the neighboring villages. From Hamlet [redacted] I had to take the wounded to a cave in the mountain and leave them there. Some wounded fighters were too heavy, and were actually dragged along by the laborers. There was no medicine or even water to relieve their pain and thirst. Some quartermasters managed to cook up some rice soup and each man would get a spoonful. It was a pitiful sight. Sometimes a shell zoomed by, the laborers would throw the wounded fighters on the ground, in the rain, to run for their lives. These wounded were exposed to the cold, and lack

of medicine, and eventually died. The luckier victims were taken to some mountain caves or abandoned huts. Laborers from other villages would come there to evacuate them to some unknown places.

161. How did the people feel about being in the VC army after they'd seen those scenes?

It was all horrible. Some wounded fighters complained that they had been cheated. They said in the North they'd been told that the South didn't have enough capable men to reconstruct the country, therefore their service was needed. They had had no idea that they would be exposed to malaria and to the bombings and shellings. They'd thought they would be treated like VIP's in the South instead of being led to a land of death.

162. Did any of the Northern fighters rally to the GVN?

I don't know any personally, but when I was back there I heard of a certain Mr. [redacted] having rallied to the GVN. I was told here, that Mr. [redacted] was living at the Chieu hoi Center.

163. What did the people think of having to go on labor-duty trips?

It was an ordeal the people had to bear. No one could tell whether he would come back in one piece. It was a risky business, but the people had no way to back out. The people had no right to do anything. They couldn't even keep their dogs. Let me tell you this story. Last year, the cadres ordered all the people to kill their dogs saying that if the Americans came, and the VC troops wanted to counter-attack, they'd be exposed by the barking of the dogs. Therefore, all dogs should be killed. They only said that. Actually, we knew they wanted us to kill the dogs so that they could creep into our yards to eavesdrop on our conversations. Otherwise, why should the people's dogs be killed, and the cadres' dogs be spared? Those who protested, would be told to pack up ten days' supply of rice and take the dog along to a reform session. It was the women that had the loudest voice. They'd say to the cadres' faces: "Whoever kills my dog has to clean after my children, has to come to my house and take the place of the dog." Or: "Dogs aren't warmongers, why kill them?" They'd be sentenced to 7 days of forced labor -- digging communication trenches. Dogs are such faithful animals, one can't help being attached to them. Some people cried when they had to kill their dogs. It's been a relief to leave the

village. We'd lived on the edge of our nerve for a long time. The VC bragged about democracy and independence, but all we could see was hell. With the blessing of my ancestors, I was born healthy and have grown to be a strong man, but I wouldn't use my strength to serve such a regime. I realize that I have a duty to serve my fellow human beings -- but certainly not any regime.

164. What did the VC do to control the people's movement?

If you wanted to move from one VC controlled village to another, you had to tell the local cadres. Although they gave you the permission to go, they tried to discourage you: "Do you have to go? What if something's going to happen tomorrow, how will you get back?" Travelling to GVN-controlled areas was absolutely forbidden, except for political reasons. Once in a while, the VC ordered the people to go to the district town to call back their relatives who were serving in the GVN army, or to appeal to the GVN authorities to stop bombings and shellings in the villages. The people took advantage of the order to pay visits to their relatives; others would shout, "Down with the Communists!" as soon as they got to the GVN-controlled area.

165. Were the people allowed to go to the GVN-controlled marketplaces to shop?

The VC sent their own people to [redacted] market to buy things which weren't available in the village, and resell them to the people.

166. When you were in the village, what did you hear about life in the VC army?

I heard it was very hard.

167. Who told you that?

Even the cadres admitted that. During a labor-duty trip, for example, the cadres who accompanied us for a distance would sometimes tell us about the hardships that VC fighters had to put up with: irregular meals, walking on rocky mountain paths, existing on 2 cans of rice and 2 piasters' worth of food a day. How could anyone buy anything but salt with 2 piasters a day? A fighter was given no money for cigarettes. He was told to rely on the people, but what did the people have to rely on?

I heard the army even had to do production work in order to have something to eat while fighting. If the crop failed, the fighters had to make do with less rice -- one and a half cans a day -- for the whole season. Sometimes they ran out of rice and had to eat corn, and even corn was hard to find. They had to eat only one meal a day. The cadres told us all about it. They didn't try to paint a rosy picture of the fighter's life. They described the fighters' hardships so vividly so as to appeal to the compassion of the people and thus draw more contributions from them.

168. Were there any disabled veterans living in your village?

Yes, that's the VC policy. They collected paddy from the people to feed the healthy fighters, and when a fighter was wounded or could no longer fight, he'd be dumped on the laps of the people.

169. How many wounded fighters were there in your village?

Three. One had lost his right hand, another was wounded on one arm, and the third was only slightly wounded. They were taken care of by the so-called "fighters' mothers": plain old women who could hardly afford to feed an extra mouth in the family. The wounded fighters had to help out with the daily work, but they weren't able to make enough to support themselves. In the end, they had to depend on the people's charity.

170. Were they natives of the village?

No, they came from other villages.

171. What could they do to earn money?

They could weave baskets if both of their hands were useable, they could sweep the house and the yard, or they could watch the chickens. Whatever they did, they couldn't earn enough money to feed themselves. The VC authorities didn't even take a look at them or give them any compensation.

172. How old were they?

About my age (33).

173. How many fighters who were natives of your village had been killed in action?

We only know of three who had been killed. There might be more, but we don't know.

174. When you lived in the village, which soldiers did you think had more chance to survive, the VC's or the GVN's?

I've always thought that the GVN soldiers have a better chance to survive. Besides, a GVN soldier is able to feed his family with his pay. A VC fighter was given hardly enough to eat, let alone to feed his family. If he were sick or wounded, he wouldn't have proper medical care.

175. Didn't the cadres promise to help families of VC fighters?

No. Everyone had his own business to take care of. Families of VC fighters had to try to do without their men. Once a man left his family to join the VC army, he had decided to abandon his family.

176. In the battlefields, soldiers of which side had a better chance to survive?

In the battlefield, I think both sides were taking equal risk when fire was exchanged. While moving, however, the GVN soldiers were better off because they moved from place to place by vehicles or aircraft, while the VC had to walk on foot with heavy loads of ammunition or rice on their backs. The VC resorted to guerrilla warfare, which put a lot of hardships on its members. The GVN fought an open war, thus gave its soldiers a better deal as far as material comfort was concerned.

177. Which side has been winning in your area?

When I was in the village, I was ordered to transport the wounded three times, and everytime I found that the VC had been defeated. The last time took place 4 months ago in [redacted] village, and it was also the biggest defeat of all.

178. What kind of fighters did you have to transport?

The wounded North Vietnamese fighters.

179. Where were they stationed?

Somewhere in the mountains. I don't know for sure. The mountains were their domain.

180. How did your find their weapons?

They had a lot of different kinds of weapons, but they didn't have enough ammunition.

181. Did the VC troops often come to your village?

Yes, they usually passed by the village on their mission trips. Sometimes they stayed for five days.

182. Where did they live when they stayed in the village?

They lived in the people's houses.

183. Did the people invite them to stay in their houses?

No, they just came and stayed. They said the army was the people's army, therefore the people had to see to it that the fighters had a place to live when they passed by the village. They usually chose the houses near the edge of the forest.

184. Did any of them ever stay in your house?

Yes.

185. Did you have to cook for them?

No. They each had two cans of rice and two piasters a day to live on, so they didn't have to depend on us. But if our garden had any vegetables, they'd try to make us give them some to add to their meals.

186. How did they behave toward the people?

They were nice people. If they found the house dirty, they'd find a broom and sweep it. If the children cried, they'd try to sooth them. They went out of their way to please the people with small actions.

187. Did they ever confide in you?

Not much. They only told us some of their adventures. For instance, when they climbed up a steep mountain with the help of a rope, and suddenly the rope broke, two or three men fell

down and broke their bones, and thus others had to carry their stuff for them. If they were gravely wounded, others had to carry them. If they were able to walk a little, they could lean on their fellow fighters during the journey. They told us about their passage across the suspension bridges, or through the thick forests etc,--all the stories of hardships.

188. When did they say they had arrived in the South?

They said they had come South in 1962.

189. Where did they say they had operated?

They didn't say where, but I think they operated all over the place. They only passed by the village two or three times a year.

190. How many of them came to the village at a time?

About a company of them.

191. What did the people think of them?

The people felt sorry for them. They were a long way from home and had to put up with a lot of hardships in return for nothing. When they were wounded, for instance, they'd be neglected. All of them had malaria, yet they still had to work hard. The sorrier the people felt for these fighters, the more they came to despise the Government of the North for having sent those boys to the South.

192. Why did the people feel sorry for those boys? Did the boys ever complain?

No. The healthy ones never complained. On the contrary, they acted brave and idealistic. Only the wounded ones complained and felt sorry for themselves.

193. What exactly did the wounded fighters say to the people?

They said the Party had told them before they left home that the South needed them to help reconstruct the country and help liberate the people. They hadn't been told of the hardships they'd have to bear. The very sight of them made the people feel sorry for them. They looked thin and wan and undernourished.

194. Did you mean that the healthy fighters showed higher spirit?

The spirit was not uniform. Some of them had been forced to g go South, and these, of course, didn't have high spirit.

195. How could you tell which ones had been forced to go South?

By looking at them I could tell that half of them had been forced to go South. They certainly didn't show any high spirits although they didn't complain. They didn't complain, but they kept sighing all the time. You could tell they were tired and fed up. I've seen sick fighters coaxed into keeping up with his unit by other fighters. They had to keep pace with their units until they dropped to the ground, delirious with malaria fever.

196. If things were that bad, how did the VC keep their spirit high?

The political cadres were very clever. They kept talking, encouraging, and trying to keep the men's spirit high.

197. Has the people's attitude toward the VC troops ever changed?

The people used to adore the fighters who had fought in the Resistance against the French, but they've become fed up with the present VC fighters. It wasn't that the people had anything against those boys, but the cadres were really a pain in the people's necks. They kept telling the people to contribute to the support of the troops until the people were sick of the word "troops." Wherever the troops went, food became rare and expensive. The presence of the troops sometimes brought bombs and shells upon the village.

198. How could the GVN detect the presence of the troops in the village?

The GVN had informers.

199. How did the VC treat families of GVN soldiers?

These families were told to call their men home. The cadres said that if the GVN wouldn't come home some of these days they might be killed when the GVN was defeated. One after another, families of GVN soldiers managed to sneak away to join their men in the GVN-controlled areas.

200. Have the VC activities been changed recent years?

I don't know much about the activities of the troops. They only walked in the mountains. Only if they wanted to stop and rest, did they come to the village for a few days.

201. Did the cadres ever mention the VC defeats?

No, the cadres always told stories of victories. They always cited the number of enemy dead and wounded, but they seldom mentioned theirs. When they did, they only told lies. For instance, after the [redacted] battle, they announced: "The friendly forces lost 5 dead and 20 wounded." Five dead indeed! It took us laborers more than 5 days to transport the wounded and bury the dead. As for stories of victories that took place elsewhere, we just let the cadres' words came in one ear and go out the other.

202. Did the village have any hospital or medical station?

The village had a medical station which had a maternity ward. There were some private midwives practicing in the village, but the VC first ordered them to charge only 50 piasters per childbirth, then tried to get them to serve at the medical station.

203. How many midwives were there in the village, and where had they been trained?

They had been trained in Hoi An and had worked many years for the professional midwives and learned how to take care of the sick. There were four of them in the village. The people relied a lot on them as the village offered no alternative.

204. Were you ever sent to the district town to demand a stop to the shelling of the village?

No. Only women and old men were sent to the district town for that purpose. They went in groups of 50 each time. When the GVN authorities saw them, they put up signs such as: "Down with Ho Chi Minh!" "Down with the Communists!" -- and the people would echo the same slogan. Some people managed to have a private word with the GVN authorities, asking them to return to the village and bring peace back to the people. The VC didn't say anything when the people came home bringing no good news.

205. Do you think the GVN is concerned about the people?

I think the GVN is very good to the people. The people were fed when they were hungry or thirsty. The VC, on the contrary, only made a lot of promises. They'd promise water in the future, although the people are thirsty now. No one likes to chase a future that's vague and remote. The only thing that counts is the present happiness that's being denied to them. What is happiness? Happiness is being well-fed and well-clothed, being free to think and worship, to move where you want, to buy and sell what you want, to exercise your rights, to be an individual. The VC are a bunch of immoral dictators. Besides denying the people their basic freedoms, they also interfered with our family traditions. Relatives were no longer free to pay visits to each other. The people were forbidden to visit and take care of their ancestors' gravesites. Family ties broke loose, children grew up unable to recognize their cousins and uncles. The traditional family get-together on the anniversary of the death of a parent was dismissed as a wasteful practice. The people, in the opinion of the cadres, ought to save their resources for the support of the troops. The only thing they have any respect for is their Party.

207. What do you think of the GVN officials?

During the ten years under GVN control, life in the village went on in order. From the inter-family groups, to the hamlet authorities, to the village authorities, the government machinery ran smoothly. The officials were good people. They didn't take bribes or anything like that. I don't know much about the GVN officials in Duc Duc district and in this area. I haven't had any contact with them.

208. When you were in the village, could you get mail from Danang or from Hoi An?

Mail carried by hand could reach the village. There was no postal service.

209. Which radio station did you usually listen to?

I listened to Saigon Radio or London broadcasts occasionally. Saigon Radio also gave news of victories which were believable if we took into consideration the help the GVN got from the allies.

210. Did you like the London broadcasts?

A listened to the news only occasionally, not all the time. When the village came under VC control, batteries became scarce, and no one listened to the radio.

211. What did the cadres tell you about life in the North or in Red China?

The cadres always said that the North and Red China were like lips and teeth. If the lips opened, the teeth would get cold. The North as well as the Front had a lot of confidence in Red China and Russia. When Cabot Lodge became Premier of Russia (Sic!), he advocated the Revisionist policy. Red China didn't like the idea, and the split began to take place. The VC always boasted that they got help from Russia and Red China, but if those countries were too busy fighting each other, where could they find time to pay attention to North Vietnam?

212. Which country did the VC take sides with?

The VC always praised the strength of Red China. They said Red China had a lot of people, but they didn't mention the dispute between Red China and Russia.

213. Have you ever heard of the Chieu hoi program?

Yes. Leaflets were dropped in the village, and aerial broadcasts about the Chieu hoi program took place frequently. Everybody knew about the program. Later, the VC ordered the people to beat on the tin barrels, or on the wooden fish to drown out the voice of the broadcast. But they had no way to stop the people from reading the leaflets. Everyone had at least two or three safe-conduct passes in his pocket in case he got a chance to get away from the village. The children stuck them up on the walls, yet the VC didn't say a thing.

214. Did anyone respond to the Chieu hoi appeals?

Yes. A lot of VC guerrillas in [redacted] have rallied to the GVN. They didn't do so all at once, but one fellow at a time. Some carried weapons, some just the safe-conduct pass. A went to Hoi An once last year. My friends in Hoi An told me to quit the village for good and stay in Hoi An to look for employment. It was a very good opportunity for me to free myself from the VC, but A had no heart to leave my family behind.

215. What did the VC say about the Chieu Hoi program?

The VC didn't say anything about the Chieu Hoi program. In my opinion, over two-thirds of the VC cadres wanted to rally. Except for a few hard-core cadres, most of the village and hamlet cadres were locally recruited. These people had to abandon their families to serve the front for nothing. They've gotten fed up and wanted to desert.

216. Why didn't they desert?

They hadn't had a chance until the last operation carried out by the GVN troops.

217. Was the village often attacked by the GVN?

It was often bombed and shelled.

218. How often?

Every few days. Houses were burned for hours at a time. The people suffered a lot of damage, only two or three houses out of ten have been spared.

219. Why was your village attacked so often?

My village was situated between the mountains, and there were troops and caches in those mountains which the GVN wanted to attack. Aircraft often bombed the mountain paths at night when it knew that the troops were moving.

220. What did the VC say about the bombing and shelling?

They said the Americans were cruel, that the Americans meant to burn all the houses and leave the people homeless.

221. Did the people agree with the cadres?

No. If the Americans meant to be cruel to the people why didn't they bomb and shell the village three years ago, when the village was still under GVN control? Why did they have to wait until the VC wandered around to pour bombs on us? It's all because of the VC. The GVN has always treated the people properly. Without the VC, my village would have become a cheerful little town instead of a devastated area.

222. Did the VC suffer from the bombing and shelling at all?

Yes, a lot of them have been killed by the bombs and shells. In fact, more of them were killed than the people. The people had deep trenches to protect themselves, but the VC's trenches were shallow and vulnerable.

223. Did the people feel safe in the trenches?

The trenches shielded the people very well from the bombs and shells, but the more trenches the people had to dig, the worse they thought of the VC. " So this is liberation," they'd say. "The more we're liberated, the deeper we go underground." After a heavy bombing attack, at least two or three people got killed.

224. Did the people try to move to any other places to avoid the bombs and shells?

The people used to run toward the creeks to take refuge. The children usually played around the creek areas. We had to watch over them and order them to duck into the trenches at the sound of the aircraft.

225. Were the people ever warned in advance of an attack?

Yes, about half-a-day before one attack, leaflets were dropped to warn the people to move away from the area.

226. Did all the VC run away when they read the warning?

The VC seldom lived in the village, they lived in the mountains

227. Has the village ever been sprayed with chemical products to kill the leaves?

No. I heard the cadres mention the spraying of poisonous chemicals to kill the leaves, but no such operation has ever taken place in my area.

228. Who else besides the Americans are helping the GVN?

I heard about the Philippines, South Korea, Japan. There were five countries mentioned in the leaflets, but I've forgotten their names.

229. What did the VC say about these countries?

They said the Allied forces tried to kill the people by bombing the villages.

230. Who did the cadres say their allies were?

They said their allies were Russia and Red China.

231. Have you ever heard of the bombing of the North?

Yes, I heard from Radio Hanoi that the North had been bombed, and that between 800 and 1000 airplanes had been shot down.

232. Did you believe what the broadcast said?

No. If that many airplanes had been shot down, where did the Americans get the aircraft to fly overhead all the time? The VC also boasted that some helicopters or jet fighters had been shot down in our neighboring villages, but we found out that wasn't true.

233. In your opinion, did the bombing of the North have any effect on the war in the South?

If what they said was true about the relations between the North and Red China, I think Red China would move troops in to help if the North was in distress, and to release the Northern troops to take care of the war in the South. But I think the VC will suffer if the North is ruined.

234. What made you decide to become a refugee?

I've found the VC system very unjust. Although the VC advocated democracy and equality, they practiced the opposite. They tried to lead the people to distinguish between classes, and imply that only laborers were real contributors to the welfare of the society. To me, it's immoral to dismiss other people's contributions to society. Society is like a hammock, made up of several interwoven threads. Each thread has its own function without which a hammock wouldn't be perfect. Each person in a society has his own work to do. A physician has his, which is different from that of the midwive, whose function is different from that of a farmer, and so on, and so on. People of different functions have to depend on each other to live, but the VC tended to dismiss the importance of

this interdependence. We have to admit that some jobs require high-level thinking. Therefore, they should bring in more money. It's absurd to consider that all jobs are the same, and that all the people -- no matter what they do -- should earn the same thing. The VC are truly men of no family, no religion, no country. When a man hesitated to join the VC army because of his old parents, the cadres would tell him: " Go ahead, don't worry, your parents will be taken care of by the cadres and the Farmers' Association." When he's gone, hardly anybody really took a look at his helpless parents. "Earn your own living!" the cadres would say. To the cadres, "earn your own living" meant going to the field and doing production work yourself. If you were too weak to do so, that's just too bad. If you had too much land to be able to till it yourself, that's just too bad. The cadres wouldn't let you hire any laborers. When the land was left idle because someone had been unable to till it, the cadres would give that land to landless or poorer farmers, tell them to grow paddy on it, and at harvest time invent all sorts of taxes to collect. In short, the main reason I decided to leave was the fact that I was unable to adapt myself in a VC-controlled society. Their ideal is too different from mine. I've chosen the GVN-controlled area not because it is a paradise. Here I have to put up with a lot of material shortages. Yet I'm satisfied.

235. Why do you think others left the village to take refuge in the GVN-controlled areas?

Some of them were afraid of the bombing and shelling. They also left because they didn't like the VC.

236. Had you ever taken refuge elsewhere before this time?

When the VC first came, we ran to [redacted] (Que Son district), and then to [redacted] back to [redacted] and we ended up going back to the village.

237. When you were in the village, did you know how life was in the GVN-controlled areas?

We all remembered how life had been under GVN control. We also heard from others who had been in the district town what life was like there. They said they'd trade a month of their life in the VC-controlled area to one day in the GVN-controlled place.

238. Did anyone try to hold you back when you were about to leave the village?

No.

239. Where were the cadres at that time?

They'd all gone into hiding. They always ran faster than anyone when there were troubles.

240. When and how did you leave the village?

I remember it was on the [redacted] day of the [redacted] lunar month (early November 1966). I was working on the field near the village's main road, and my children were playing near a creek at the road, when I saw helicopters land troops at [redacted] So we were trapped in between. There had to be a lot of troops, I thought, because 50 helicopters kept landing and then taking off for more troops. I rushed home, packed up, and took my family to the village pagoda. A lot of other people did the same thing. The following day, an American major went to the pagoda with an interpreter, asking the caretaker's permission to use the pagoda as a temporary commanding headquarters. The caretaker agreed. The interpreter promised that we'd have transportation to the GVN-controlled areas. We waited and waited. The weather was bad, and it rained. When the Americans said that it was impossible to take us away from the village by aircraft, we were terrified and the interpreter was also disappointed. He said he'd throw in his gun and uniform if he failed to get the people out of that place. He said as a Vietnamese he had no heart to see us suffer. So he urged us to cry. We did, and we cried real tears-- tears of fear and of disappointment. The Americans were moved. They promised to escort us to the river in [redacted] village where we could take the boats to the district town. We didn't depart until the [redacted] of the month.

241. How many people left at that time?

There were 2009 people altogether, including infants.

242. Did anyone stay behind?

About one-third of the population stayed behind.

243. Did anything happen on the way to the river?

Yes, beyond [redacted] post, we were sniped at and about ten people were killed. The [redacted] ferry had to make two trips to take us all to [redacted] ferry station, [redacted] from the district town, where we were greeted by the Chu Lai troops. They called the district chief and warned him of our arrival. We walked [redacted] toward the district town where we were received by the GVN authorities. Refugees, who had been there long before us, put us up. We stayed in Duc Duc district town for two months. Life was hard because there were too many refugees from other villages pouring in. A friend of mine went to this area and found this vacant room. It was a week before Tet ([redacted] February 1967) when we came here. Three families have settled temporarily in this room. Most of the people in camp have been here for two years. A lot of them are working for the Americans.

244. Have you applied for a job with the Americans?

Not yet.

245. How many villagers out of [redacted] have left the village?

All of hamlet [redacted] left. Half of hamlet [redacted] stayed behind. It was the same with hamlet [redacted] and hamlet [redacted]

246. Why did some people choose to stay behind?

The main reason, I think, was that they lived too far from the main road, a little out of the way, and the troops on operation couldn't reach them. If they'd had their choice, I think they all would've left. This was the first time since the VC took control of the village that the GVN and allied troops had carried out an operation in the village and given a chance to get out.

247. Have the GVN authorities done anything for you?

Not yet. It's been a month since we came here, but we haven't received anything from the GVN yet.

248. Do you have an ID card?

Yes. I've always kept the ID card issued by the GVN a long time ago.

249. Didn't the VC take it away from you?

No.

250. Has anyone who came here at the same time found a job yet?

No. Only three families came here at the same time, and none of us has found a job.

251. Why do you think the Americans have come to this country?

I think they've come to help us liberate the country. The Americans are like the elders in a big family. They're responsible for the welfare of the rest of the family.

252. Do you think the Americans are like the French in the old days?

No. The Americans have come to the aid of this country disinterestedly. They came here because we're a member of the free bloc.

253. Would you like to return to your village now?

Of course I'd like to return to the village, but only under favorable conditions. I won't go back until it's peaceful again.

254. This is a picture of a ladder. The top rung represents the best life in the village you could imagine, and the bottom rung the worst. Before the VC took over the control of your village, where did you find your life?

Before the VC came, I was at rung 4. My life was easy and comfortable as an upper-middle farmer.

255. Where were you when the village was under VC control?

I dropped to rung 7. I was unable to produce much because of the bombing and shelling, yet I had to contribute a lot to the VC. So my family had to do with less than we used to. I wasn't the only one in the village who became worse off when the VC came. Other people were in the same situation. It was hard to earn a living, and when you did earn something, the VC would come and collect it all.

256. Where are you now?

At rung 8. I was able to pocket some two or three thousand piasters. I've started to worry because we'll soon run out of money and I haven't been able to get a job yet.

257. Describe the best life you could imagine in the village.

The happiest person in the village is the one who always has a hut full of paddy. He always has money to spend for himself and his family. He'd have to work, but he doesn't mind that. His children would be sent to town to get a good education -- like my brother, who's going to graduate from high school in [redacted] next year if he passes the final examination.

258. Describe the worst life you could imagine.

To be short of everything. Without enough rice to eat or clothes to wear, yet having to toil all year-round. Right now the people in the village are leading the worst kind of life, and I predict that in three years, no trace of the happy past will be found in the village.

259. What do you hope for your children?

My children are still young, my only hope is to be able to send them to school.

260. If you could ask the GVN three things, what would you ask?

If the GVN is concerned about us refugees, we'll be very thankful. Now that we're here homeless and broke, there's nothing better than a job to earn money, and a house to live in. Those are the basic things, and I'd ask that of my government. As for my children, when we get settled down and have a job, we'll send the children to school to get an education.

261. In your opinion, how much longer will the war last?

I don't think this war will be able to stretch beyond two or three years. This has become an open war between the Communist and the Capitalist camps. This can't last long, or all the people will be killed. I have a feeling that the end of the war is near. The VC have been able to put up with the war for a long time, but they're wearing themselves out, while the Allies' build-up is overwhelming. How could anyone fight something with nothing?

262. Which side do you think is winning in Quang Nam?

as it
It looks to me/the GVN is winning. The VC are getting worse off. There's a saying: "The country is strong when its people are wealthy." How could the VC be strong, if the people who live under their control are getting poorer and poorer?

263. In your opinion, which side do most of the people support?

Most of the people, I think, long for a life under GVN control. No one wants to lead a hard life. The Communists only bring misery to the people.

264. What will become of the people if the Front wins the war?

The people will be thrown into worse misery. Generation after generation of people will have to work for the government. I don't think the people will stand the regime for long. There will be dissidents, and there will be unrest.

265. What will become of the people if the GVN wins?

I can imagine the smiles on the faces of the people when they all could return to their ricefields and orchards. People of all talents will be appreciated.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

The subject was a young, wealthy, and serious-looking farmer. He talked fluently as if he had been trained by the VC, but denied having ever worked for them. He seemed strongly anti-Communist, which is understandable because he was a Buddhist, and the Buddhists were well organized in his village. He was cooperative and intelligent. He loved to use big words to describe simple things. He jumped from one subject to another and often left a sentence unfinished.

The interview was conducted in his room, with the children playing noisily around, and a betle-chewing woman adding an occasional funny remark.

No. AGR -91

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

1. Name of Interviewer: [redacted] 22

2. Name of Subject : [redacted]

3. Time and Date of Interview:

   From 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm on March [redacted] 1966

   From 9:30 am to 12:00 am on March [redacted] 1966

   From _____ to _____ on _____ 1966

   From _____ to _____ on _____ 1966

   Total time: 5 hours 30 minutes

   Interview based on: tape (X) hand written notes ( )

4. Place of Interview:

   [redacted] Refugee Camp

5. Sex of subject: Male (X) Female ( )

6. Age of subject: 33

7. Ethnic background: Vietnamese

8. Place of birth:

   hamlet [redacted]

   village [redacted]

   district Duc Duc

   province Quang Nam

9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee:

   hamlet Same

   village _____

   district _____

   province _____

10. (a) Length of residence in last location: _____

    (b) Who controlled the place of residence:

    GVN ( ) VC (X) Contested ( )

    (c) Since when controlled or contested? February 1965

11. Number of brothers (2) and sisters (2)

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age: 2

13. Marital status: Middle

14. Number of children: 4

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age: 4

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject (X) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject (X) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion: Buddhist

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge: Farmer

19. Economic status:
(a) VC designation Middle farmers
(b) Landowner? Yes How much land 1½ mau

20. Education:
Illiterate ( )
Literate (X)
Schooling completed: 5th grade

21. Any relatives in VC: Yes

22. Any relatives in GVN: Yes

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by:
(a) French
(b) GVN
(c) VC

24. When became a refugee: November 1966

25. Where took refuge first: Duc Duc District

26. Parent residence: Hoa Khanh Buddhist Camp

AGR

INTERVIEW

92

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(B)

THE RAND CORPORATION

INTERVIEWS CONCERNING THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT OF SOUTH VIETNAM

File No. AGR-92

Date of Interview : March [redacted] 1967

Subject's Category : Refugee: November 1966.

Area Left : Hamlet [redacted]
[redacted] Village
Duc Duc District
Quang Nam Province.

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1. Where were you born?

Hamlet [redacted] Village, Duc Duc District. I always lived in the village unit four months ago.

2. Is this the first time you took refuge outside of your village?

Yes, this is the first time.

3. When was your village taken by the VC?

They took over the control of the village on the 7th day of the New (Lunar) Year 1965 (February 1965).

4. Do you have any brothers and sisters?

No, I'm the only child in the family. I have a lot of cousins, if you're interested in knowing.

5. How many children do you have?

I have four children: three boys and one girl. My first son is 13 this year.

6. Are your wife and children here with you?

Three of my children and my wife are here. When the VC first came to the village in February 1965, I smuggled my oldest boy out of the village and sent him to Saigon. He's being taken care of by the [redacted] in Saigon.

7. Who in the [redacted] is taking care of him?

He lives in the [redacted]

8. How did you know about the [redacted]

I am the Duc Duc District [redacted] I know about the [redacted]

9. What did you do for a living?

I was a farmer.

10. What's your education?

I quit school at the 5th grade. I was my parents' only son, and I was spoiled. When I was a teenager, I preferred travelling around to going to school. I travelled as far as Phu Yen. That's enough to make the people frown and call me the village playboy. At 22, I got married and settled down to be a farmer. Well, after quitting school, I took French lessons for three years. My uncle was an interpreter for the French, and he thought I should become one also. I never became an interpreter though. Pretty soon, the Japanese came, and then the Viet Minh.

11. Do you have relatives working for the VC or the GVN?

I have no relative working for the VC. A cousin of mine is serving in the ARVN.

12. Do you have any relative killed by the French, the GVN, or the VC?

No, I, myself, was arrested by the VC once, but none of my relatives has been killed by anybody.

13. Why were you arrested?

When the VC came to the village in February 1965, the people began to lose their freedom of thought. As I had many friends in [redacted] some worked for the Information Service, some were in the Police Force, and so we plotted with each other to make a copy of the Village Autonomous Council's seal. With this false seal, I manufactured authorizations for whoever wished to leave the village. Nine people had left before I was discovered and arrested. I was kept prisoner for five months.

14. When were you released?

I was released in November 1965. I went on living in the village with my family until November 1966, when I joined over two thousand villagers going to the district town to take refuge.

15. Were most of the people in your village well-off, average, or poor?

Although paddy was the main product of the village, the people could, between seasons, grow pineapple, beetle nuts, or become retail merchants of cinnamon to get more money. In short, everybody led a comfortable life. Everyone had enough to eat and to wear.

16. How much land did you own?

I had two mau of ricefield.

17. Were you able to work on it all by yourself?

I had buffaloes to help me plow the field. As to other tasks, such as planting, weeding, building dikes, etc, I could get others to help me in a labor exchange agreement. Others would help me today, I'd help them tomorrow. That's the way we got things done in the country.

18. When did you become the District Buddhist leader?

After the Geneva Agreement, all the Viet Minh regrouped in the North, and the GVN took over the South, we people were given freedom of worship, the Buddhist Youths' Association. I lived in my village, but I often travelled to Hoi An and to other villages in the district to conduct the activities of the Buddhist Youths.

19. Tell me something about the Buddhist Youths' movement.

Each village had a so-called Buddhist Family. Buddhist children or young men or women could join the Family. Each age group had its own activities. All the activities were based on the spirit of Buddha's teachings.

20. How many members did the village's Buddhist Family have?

There were about 200 members. About 50 were under 15 years old, 130 were in the 15-18 age group, and 50 were in the 19-25 age group.

21. How many families were there in the whole district?

The district had 11 villages, thus it had 11 families.

22. What other religions were practiced in the village?

Protestantism and Caodaism. There was no Catholic in my village. Most of the people were Buddhist, however. About 60 percent of the people were Buddhist, the rest were ancestor worshippers, Protestants, and Caodaists.

23. What happened to the Village Buddhist Family when the VC came?

When the VC first came, they immediately declared that the Liberation Front respected the people's freedom of worship. They didn't say a thing about the Buddhist Family, but they secretly tried to destroy us by organizing the so-called Liberation Youths, a group to lure the young people away from the Family. Of course, a person could join two different organizations, but the VC always tried to hold meetings of the Liberation Youths on the first and fifteenth days of the lunar month, so as to prevent the Buddhist youths from going to pagodas. Young men and women were told to join the village guerrilla force. Youths were lured into the Pioneer Youths, which the VC flatteringly called their right hands, and the Anti-American Youths, whose job was to be first-aid nurses. Those whose knowledge about Buddhism was shallow were easily lured away from the Family by the VC. They were soon converted to Communism. But the VC couldn't annihilate the Buddhist movement in [redacted] Village altogether. The people in the village had been Buddhists for many decades. No matter how hard the VC tried, they couldn't make the people shake off their faith. The VC argued impatiently: "You cannot drive the Americans out of this country by beating on the wooden fish and chanting your prayers". The Communists couldn't stand us Buddhists. What they believed was contrary to what we believed.

24. Under the Diem Government, to what religious group did the village chief belong?

The Village Chief, then, was a CaoDaist.

25. Under the Diem Government, did the people elect their village officials?

The people didn't elect the village officials. Members of the Village Council were appointed by the District Authorities with the approval of the village notables, and representatives of different citizen groups.

26. How was the village's educational situation?

Most of the villagers were literate. I think we were doing very well educationally. Almost all the children were sent to school. The Village used to have a Public School, and each hamlet had a classroom for younger children. The Hamlet schools were financed by students' parents. The village school was run by the Government.

27. Were you free to talk to your friends?

I usually talked or discussed things with my Buddhist friends. I had no time to talk to others. As a Buddhist Youth Leader, I kept a busy schedule. Besides, I had to work for a living also.

28. Who was the most respected person in the village?

The village oriental medicine practitioner was the most respected person. The people always sought his wise advise. He was also a member of the Village Buddhist Committee. A Confucian scholar, he often wrote poems, and was considered the most learned man in the village. He came from a wealthy family, and thus, was able to help the poor people.

29. What happened to him when the VC came?

He had left the village before the VC came. He left after the big flood of October 1964 for Hoi An, where he continued to practice oriental medicine.

30. Who was the most informed man in the village?

The most knowledgeable man in the village was Mr. [redacted]. He read a lot of history books, and used to compare the events of the past with what happened in the present time. He was an interesting man. Just before the VC came, he had moved his family to Saigon.

31. So, a lot of people had left the village before the VC came?

Yes. After the flood, the village became rather insecure, so those who were pro-GVN or who had a lot money had left before the VC took over the control of the village.

32. How was life in the village before 1954?

During the Resistance period, life was terribly hard in the village. We were under the control of the Viet Minh then. We worked in groups, and were paid wages. The crops kept failing during those years, and we were very hard up. A lot of people went hungry, and thus, were very dissatisfied with the Viet Minh and their social system.

33. How was life in the village under GVN control?

When the GVN took over the control of the village after the Geneva Accord, life became balanced. The people could work in peace, and everyone was happy.

34. How did the GVN officials behave toward the people?

Only a few officials didn't treat the people right. They sometimes beat up or shouted at the people.

35. Why did they beat up or shout at the people?

I don't know why. I don't know if the victims had done something wrong, or it was the officials' idea of governing the people.

36. Didn't the people elect those officials?

When the GVN first gained control of South Vietnam, the Village Council members were elected by the people democratically. But a few years later, when the security began to be threatened by the VC who operated secretly, village officials were no longer elected by the people, but were appointed by the District Authorities.

37. How many time did the people in the village go to the polls?

I remember we went to the polls once to elect an assembly man, and another time in the referendum to vote Emperor Bao Dai out of office, and Ngo Dinh Diem into office. Then, later, to elect a National Assembly; I've forgotten what kind of Assembly it was.

38. Did you vote recently to elect the Constituent Assembly?

No, we were still struck in the VC-controlled areas when the rest of the country elected the recent Constituent Assembly.

39. Were the elections organized democratically?

When the people went to the polls, they could vote for the man of their choice. I think that was pretty democratic. Only the campaign carried out before the election by the National Revolutionary Movement cadres wasn't fair to some candidates. In the end, however, all the elected officials won the hearts of the people.

40. What did the elected officials do for the people?

Once in a while, an elected official came to talk to the people in the village. He'd ask about the people's aspirations, and take notes. He said he'd see to it that the people's wishes be made known to the district and provincial authorities.

41. Have you ever lived in a Strategic Hamlet?

Yes, for three years, between 1962 and 1965.

42. Did you have to contribute money or labor to the building of the Strategic Hamlet?

In 1962, the people were made to take an active part in the building of the Strategic Hamlets. A man had to contribute about one month's labor. We had to dig ditches, to build fences, to carry steel poles from the district town to the village to build another layer of fence, to sharpen spikes, to help families who had to move into the boundaries of the Hamlet. Building materials were provided by the GVN, so we didn't have to buy anything. At first, we had to provide the bamboo poles for the fences, but the GVN later paid each family 2500 piasters.

43. How did the people like living in a Strategic Hamlet?

At first, the people were dissatisfied, especially those who had been forced to move into the Hamlet, leaving behind their own orchards. But when the people were told that the purpose of the Strategic Hamlet was to assure the people's security, nobody complained anymore.

44. Did you like living in a Strategic Hamlet?

At first, the hours we had to keep bothered us a bit, but after a few months, we got used to the idea, and it became our habit to go to the field at a certain time and come back before the Hamlet gate was closed. I liked the feeling of security provided by the Strategic Hamlet. It gave us the opportunity to live closer together, and all the Communist elements were left out.

45. What happened to the Strategic Hamlet when the VC came?

The VC didn't try to destroy the Hamlet or anything like that, but when the fences became rotten, for example, no one cared to mend them.

46. Were you satisfied with your life before the VC came?

Yes, I was happy, and well liked by my fellow villagers. As a Buddhist Youths' leader, I was respected.

47. Did you feel then that you had a lot of opportunity to improve your life?

No. I felt that my life was at its peak. The crops were good, I earned a lot of money, but I couldn't become richer because I entertained a lot. Besides, I had to travel. I enjoyed myself well, however, and I was very satisfied.

48. How was your life under VC control?

When the VC came, I had to contribute a lot to them. I wasn't the only one in the village who became worse off under VC control. Our standard of living dropped some 70 or 80 percent.

49. When was the first time you heard of the Front?

It was during the Diem Regime that I first heard that some places in the South were being disturbed by the Communists. Some Communists also appeared in Xuyen Phu and Dien Ban Districts in Quang Nam. As for my village, it was very safe then. The people in the village were well educated in the Nationalist line and no one worked openly or secretly for the Communists.

50. When did the VC first operate secretly in your village?

The VC had never worked secretly in my village before February 1965, when they completely took over the control of the place. Before then, the villagers met the VC once in a while in the mountains when they went for wood.

51. What happened to the GVN officials when the VC took over the control of the village?

When the VC came, a number of officials were able to run away to the GVN-controlled areas. Those who stayed behind were arrested by the VC.

52. How many were arrested by the VC?

About 60 people were arrested and never showed up again. This number included Popular force men as well as village officials.

53. What's the population of the village?

The village had over 6000 people.

54. How did the VC take over the control of the village?

It was only a week after the New Year (Tet), the Popular Force men were still enjoying the holidays and were neglecting their job of defending the village. The VC took advantage of the occasion to take over the village. They sent an overwhelming force to the place, and just took over the control.

55. Did any fighting take place?

The GVN force only fired a few shots while retreating. It was attacked by surprise and was overwhelmed by the VC.

56. What did the VC first do when they took over the village?

About five days after they had taken control of the village, they started to proselyte the very poor farmers into cooperating with them. They invited these people to join them and work as cadres for them.

57. Who were the hard-core cadres?

The VC's hard-core cadres were all regroupees, or those who had left the village in 1962 to join the VC in the mountains. All these cadres were natives of the village. The people knew them well.

58. Did the VC do anything to you?

They didn't trust me, but they didn't do anything to me. They knew I disliked them.

59. Did the VC say anything about your being a Buddhist Youths' leader?

They told us once: "We don't want to interfere with your religious activities, but the National Liberation Front requests your cooperation in the task of driving out the Americans and saving this country."
It was hard to ask us to cooperate with the Communists. We Buddhists have always known that Buddhism and Communism cannot go hand in hand. As devout Buddhists, we were naturally anti-Communist. We had to resist Communism in order to defend our religion.

60. Did any of the youths agree with you?

I believe that, deep in their hearts, they all were devout Buddhists. But in the face of the Communist threat, they had to play-act, they had to pretend that they agreed with the cadres in order to save their skin, and wait for the day when they could leave the village and seek freedom elsewhere. A small number of young

men between 17 and 20 years of age, however, when they joined the village guerrillas, were taken in by the cadres' propaganda and forgot completely that they were Buddhists. But they were only a small number. Other youths joined the VC's various people's organizations only reluctantly. They usually chose to join the guerrillas in order to avoid having to go on labor duty trips, which were more dangerous.

61. Did the youths still come to Buddhist Family meetings when the village was under VC control?

As I told you, the VC tried hard to interfere with our schedule of activities, but the youths often took time to come to us leaders, individually, to talk about various matters concerning our faith.

62. What did the cadres say in their propaganda that lured some of your Buddhist family members to their side?

They said: "You are too young to be religious. Now that the country needs you, you ought to join us to drive the Americans away. Besides, when the Revolution is completed, there won't be any religion." They proceeded to convince the youths that, sooner or later, the Revolution would win, and there won't be any religion in this world.

63. Where were you when the dispute between the Buddhists and the GVN authorities took place in Danang?

I was in the VC-controlled area then. I know nothing about it.

64. What did the VC tell the people about the purposes of the Front?

They said the purposes of the Front were to fight the Americans and save this country, to achieve a revolution, and to reunify North and South Vietnam.

65. What did the VC say about the Americans?

They said the Americans wanted to take over this country.

66. What did the VC say about the GVN?

They said the GVN was an American puppet.

67. Did the people believe what the VC said?

The people never believed the VC's propaganda. The people could tell the difference between the French troops in the old days, and the American troops nowadays. The French were colonialists. They came to Vietnam with the purpose of taking over this country. Wherever they went, the people were beaten up or mistreated. The Americans, on the contrary, are very nice to the people. They've come here to help us fight against the Communists disinterestedly. They've never tried to exploit the people, they only helped. They didn't try to govern us, they didn't interfere with the rights of the GVN authorities to govern. To us people, the GVN is really the people's government. I don't know about other people, but the people of [redacted] Village are aware of the role of the GVN and they also know about the validity of the Geneva Accord.

68. What do you know about the Geneva Accord?

The Accord was signed by the French and the North Vietnamese troops. The Accord specified that a general election would be held in two years to enable the Vietnamese to choose their own government, but North Vietnam has maliciously refused to organize the election. As long as the general election can't be held, the country remains divided, and the Geneva Accord remains valid.

69. Did North Vietnam really refuse to organize a general election?

Yes, a general election was supposed to be held on July 20, 1956, two years after the signing of the Accord, but North Vietnam refused to have anything to do with the election. It started to send troops to the South to disturb the peace of the people, instead.

70. Who told you all about that?

I learned all about it from the study sessions held regularly twice a month in my village.

71. Who sponsored those study sessions?

The Village Information Service organized those study sessions to educate the people politically. I read and learned a lot of things from materials passed around by the Republican youths.

72. Do you think the VC want peace?

Outwardly, they always talked about peace and how they longed for peace to come soon, but actually, they tried hard to prolong this war.

73. What will they gain by prolonging this war?

It's beyond my understanding. I can't figure out why they want to prolong this war, but I'm certain that they aren't fools. The only fact I'm aware of is that the longer they stretch the war, the more miserable the people become. All the people in the VC-controlled areas have been reduced to a life below subsistence level, for the VC's war is the so-called people's war. To me, people's war means a war financed by the people. The people in the VC-controlled areas have to go without food and clothes, so that the VC could carry out their war. As the people are poor, it's hard for the VC to win. They kept on promising "next year" as the year of victory. Next year never comes. They boasted of victories in distant places, but under our nose, they were defeated pitifully. Take, for example, the battle of [redacted] which was only a few kilometers from my own village, last October (1966). The [redacted] Post was kept by one company of GVN troops, while the VC force was two regiments. Yet they were defeated. They lost some one thousand killed. After that battle, all the people became fed up with the VC, and disgusted with what they said.

74. Did all the people come to mass meetings?

When the VC first took over the control of the village, nobody missed a mass meeting. Six months before we left the village, less than one percent of the villagers went to meetings, or took part in VC activities.

75. What did the VC tell the people at meetings?

The main theme was always "contributions and service" they asked the people to render to the Front. If this month they decide to collect troop support taxes, then all the people could hear is troop support taxes and nothing else. All the activities in the village would be oriented toward that purpose: all the songs, plays, discussions, etc would take the theme of the month.

76. Were any people sent away for re-education?

Do you mean study sessions? Well, study sessions were usually held in the hamlets to educate the people about Communist policy. Only selected people were sent away to attend training courses for cadres.

77. How many were sent away to attend training courses for cadres?

A lot of people -- most of them were poor or very poor farmers.

78. Were you ever sent to reform camp?

I was imprisoned for five months.

79. Where were you sent?

[redacted] Village, Duc Duc District, [redacted] walk from my village.

80. How many were imprisoned at the same time as you?

There were about two hundred prisoners at the camp.

81. What kind of people were they?

They came from various villages. They were either suspects or former GVN officials and cadres. I was accused of being a spy. I had forged a seal and made out false authorizations for those who wished to leave the village.

82. How many were able to leave the village with the forged authorizations?

Five. One of the men is in Saigon; a man and a woman are in Hoi An; one has enlisted in the A.V.N. and is stationed in Danang; another man is working at the Chieu Hoi Service of Dai Loc District. The news leaked out before I had a chance to leave myself.

83. What did the VC make you do at the camp?

I was ordered to do production work: clearing hilly land for cultivation, growing potatoes and manioc for them. We had to attend a political study session every month. The sessions lasted three months each time, and we learned about "our strength as compared to that of the enemy."

84. What did you learn?

They said a lot of things, but I was too upset to pay any attention.

85. Were there many young men over 18 years of age in the village when the VC came?

I don't know the exact number of young men in the village, but I know there were a lot of them. Some youths in my hamlet were told to join the VC army, but they deserted home after a few months.

86. Why did they desert home?

They had to attend a training course. After the training, they were sent on an operation. They deserted when the operation was being carried out.

87. What did the local cadres do to those deserters?

The cadres didn't do anything. On the contrary, the deserters were welcomed into the village guerrilla force. There had not been enough men in the guerrilla force, and the cadres were glad to have these men back. Instead of reporting them to the district military authorities, they tried to protect them.

88. Before the VC came, did anyone join the GVN army?

Yes. About 20 men in my hamlet joined the GVN army: the Popular Force, or the Combat Youths.

89. Did the men join the VC voluntarily?

A small number joined voluntarily. Most of others were forced to join.

90. How did the parents feel?

Parents of volunteers were proselyted and, thus, were enthusiastic about their sons joining the VC army. Most of the other families, who were forced to let their sons go, were very unhappy. They didn't want to see their sons dead in the battlefields. But they had no choice.

91. Were families of VC fighters helped by the cadres?

They weren't given any material help, but once in a while, the hamlet or village cadres would drop in to visit them.

92. What happened to families of GVN soldiers?

These families were classified as suspects. Their every move was watched by the cadres, and they had less freedom of movement.

93. Did the fact that a lot of young men have to join the army, affect the village economic life?

Ofcourse, it did. We lost a lot of labor to the VC army. During the VC rule, a lot of ricefields in the village were left idle because there weren't enough men to work on them. Under GVN control, there had not been an inch of land left idle.

94. Did any men dodge the VC draft?

The best they could do was to volunteer for the village or hamlet guerrilla forces. As a guerrilla, a man didn't have to do labor duty, go on labor duty, go on labor duty trips, or fight anyone. That's why most of the young men wanted to be guerrillas. They could help their families a bit in the daytime. At night, they'd carry their weapons to guard the village.

95. Did the VC carry out a land distribution program in the village?

The first thing they did in the village when they came was to confiscate the land of absentee owners and redistribute it to the very poor farmers. Some rich farmers, who stayed in the village, didn't care to till all of their ricefields because of the heavy taxation. The Farmers' Association would take the land left idle by the rich farmers to give to the poorer farmers.

96. Were the recipients of the land redistribution program satisfied?

At first, they were happy and enthusiastic. But when the VC's troop support tax policy was made public, these people saw they had been deceived. A lot of them gave back the land to the Farmers' Association.

97. Did the Farmers' Association accept the land back?

Yes, it did, and then gave the land to the production units of the VC army, who undertook the task of cultivating it to provide paddy for the troops.

98. How much land did the VC work in the village?

About 40 mau.

99. How much land in the village did the people work?

About 3000 mau.

100. How many kinds of taxes did you have to pay the VC?

Troop support tax was the heaviest; it snatched away half of our earnings or more. Besides, we had to make small contributions for the support of the local guerrillas, the disabled veterans. Twice a month, the cadres came to our house to collect the "economy rice" we had been obliged to put in a jar for them, a handful from each of our meals. Every family, in short, had to give them about 2 an of paddy a month in petty contributions.

101. Did you always pay contributions in paddy?

Most of the time, we paid in paddy.

102. What did the people think of having to pay taxes?

All the people thought the taxes were too high. They said they couldn't live very long if they had to pay heavy taxes all the time.

103. Did most of the people have enough to eat after taxes?

No. A lot of people had to be in debt to the VC, for if they paid all the taxes they had to pay, there wouldn't be anything left to eat.

104. How did the VC fix the tax rate?

They sent cadres to the fields to take a look and decide how much a family had to pay. If they decided that I should pay 100kg of paddy, then, at harvest time, I had to give them 100kg.

105. How much paddy did you actually pay them last?

One hundred and twenty kilogram.

106. How much did you earn?

My family earned 120 an -- that is, 1200 kilograms.

107. Could the people sell their produce in the GVN-controlled market places?

No.

108. Could the people go shopping in the GVN-controlled areas?

All necessary things, such as petroleum, mam, cotton and so on could be found in the local market. They were furnished by local merchants, who had the permission to travel to the GVN-controlled areas to buy those things.

109. How high was the cost of living in the village?

(fish sauce)
Mam and salt were expensive, but rice and pork were cheap. A lot of people raised pigs, but couldn't sell them outside the village; that's why pork was cheap.

110. Did the people supply the VC troops with food?

No, besides the paddy we had to contribut under various forms of taxes, we didn't have to supply other kinds of food.

111. Did the VC buy food from the people?

They did. They also bought groceries in the marketplaces, just like anyone else.

112. Who was the highest ranking cadre in the village?

The secretary of the Village Party Chapter was the highest ranking cadre.

113. Did the people have confidence in him?

I don't think so, he was too young.

114. Where did he come from?

He joined the VC in the mountains in 1962. He came from another village. He was about 25. There was a village chief, but I was told that the Chapter Secretary ranked higher than the village chief.

115. Were there any women cadres?

Yes. There were women cadres, youth cadres, and so on. To be a cadre, you didn't have to be literate. You only had to be enthusiastic, to take part in all activities, and to talk well. Most of the cadres were very poor farmers, who didn't know how to read and write.

116. What role did the Party Chapter play in the village?

The Party Chapter was the leader. It directed all activitie of the people in the village. Even the Village Chief didn't have as much power as the Party Chapter Secretary.

117. How did the Chapter Secretary behave toward the people?

He was correct.

118. How was the village administration organized?

From what I know, the Party Chapter had the leadership. Next came the Village Autonomous Committee, then the Village Liberation Front. It was the Front which organized the people into various groups: Children's Group, Women's Association, Youth' Group etc.

119. What's the advantage of being a member of a group?

I didn't see any advantage. It was only a waste of time to have to go to meetings.

120. Did the people like the cadres?

Most of the people disagreed with the cadres. As I told you, most of the cadres were illiterate farmers. Their knowledge was limited and their language unsophisticated. Therefore, they were unable to gain the people's respect and confidence. Of course, some people did like the cadres, but they made up only a small number.

121. Were the cadres honest or corrupt?

I don't know.

122. Were there any changes of cadres while the village was under VC control?

Yes. Some cadres served only a few months and then were discarded because they didn't do their best, or because the cadres had found out that they had relatives serving the GVN. There was no change among the hard-core cadres.

123. Did the cadres ever quarrel with each other?

I don't know.

124. Was the people's attitude toward the cadres ever changed?

The people looked down on the low-ranking cadres. They made fun of them -- behind their backs, of course -- for their ignorance. Some of the cadres couldn't even sign their names, yet dared stand before the people to preach Communism. How on earth could they command the people's respect?

125. Did you ever have to go on labor-duty trips for the VC?

Yes, I took a few short labor-duty trips.

126. How short?

Three days at a time.

127. How often did the people have to go on labor-duty trips?

There were about three calls for duty trips each month. It was up to us to find a way to dodge them. In the end, no one could avoid them altogether.

128. What did you have to do?

We had to carry rice from the village to the mountain. The whole trip took three days.

129. Did you carry rice to the VC's caches?

We laborers only carried rice to the temporary caches. The VC would later take the rice to some other places.

130. Did you find the trips hard ?

Yes. We had to climb steep hills, cross streams, with a load on our back. Those who carried rice on their backs would take two an (20kg), those who carried with a pole and two loads at the ends had to take 3 an. As I preferred the pole, I had to carry 3 an each time.

131. Did all the people in the village have to go on labor-duty trips?

All except the cadres and the guerrillas.

132. Do you think it was fair?

No. I don't mind the village cadres being exempted from labor-duty trips because they had jobs to do at home, but the hamlet and, especially, inter-family cadres should be sent on labor-duty trips. These people didn't have anything important to do for the village, yet they were exempted, while we plain people had to do all the dirty work. Higher ranking cadres usually promoted their

relatives to the rank of cadre in order to avoid labor-duty trips. That's what made us mad. They always cried out: "We cadres are no different from the people. We also go on labor-duty trips, to serve the troops at the rear or in the front." But that was only talk. Actually, they didn't have to do anything heavy. They just sat at home and ordered the people around.

133. Did the VC build Combat Hamlets in your village?

Yes.

134. Were Combat Hamlets like the old Strategic Hamlets?

No. The VC ordered us to build fences around a small group of houses. Each group was an inter-family unit. The purpose of the fences was to make it hard for the GVN troops to advance if they ever came to attack the village. Another purpose, which they didn't mention, was to make it hard for the GVN troops to advance if they ever came to attack the village. Another purpose, which they didn't mention, was to make it hard for the people to sneak away from the village.

135. Did the people like living in Combat Hamlets?

No. The fences were a nuisance. They made it hard for the people to walk from place to place. Some of the fences cut right through the people's orchard, which caused a lot of inconveniences. The building of the fences also cost the people a lot of material and effort. In the face of enemy attacks, however, the combat fences didn't have any effect at all in stopping short enemy advances. Experience of other villages had proven so, yet the VC insisted that people had to build fences for them. We people really had no choice.

136. What did the VC do to control the people's movement?

They posted guerrillas at the gates between the hamlets. No one could get out of his hamlet without passing through VC check points. Strangers from outside the village had to show papers permitting them to visit the place. We didn't have to ask for permission to move from hamlet to hamlet, provided that we didn't go out of the village.

137. What did the VC do to call those who had left the village to come back?

If you had a relative who had left the village to seek refuge in the GVN-controlled area, they'd give you permission to travel to the GVN-controlled area to persuade your relative to come back.

138. Did anyone come back to the village as the result of the proselyting?

No. The people kept asking for permission to go to the GVN-controlled areas to see their relatives. They'd say, yes, to the VC when they were asked to tell their relatives at home, (but actually they never did, in spite of the VC's threat), that some day a general attack would take place, and those who lived in the GVN areas would be punished.

139. When you were in the village, what did you know about life in the VC army?

We know that the VC army lived on the support of the people, and the people's ability to support was limited; therefore, they had to be leading a pretty hard life. I think their life is getting harder and harder because the number of fighters keeps growing.

140. How do you know that the number of fighters keeps growing?

They kept motivating young men to join their army, and I've seen, with my own eyes, a lot of new recruits who had been sent to my village for training. Thus, I thought their strength must have been increased, and the amount of taxes the people had to pay was limited, therefore, the fighters' life must be very hard. The cadres, however, enjoyed better food, better clothing, and enough medicine when they got sick.

141. Did you see any disabled veterans in your village?

Yes. The VC sent their crippled fighters to certain families in the village -- those whom they trusted were dedicated to the Revolution.

142. Weren't those crippled fighters natives of the village?

No. The VC never sent crippled fighters to their native villages for fear that other young men might be afraid to join the army, and that healthy fighters might be discouraged if they knew that when they were crippled, their families had to bear the burden. The VC always promised their fighters: "If some day you become crippled, your foster mothers among the people will welcome you into their homes." They would proceed to cite some examples of fighter A and B being taken care of by Mrs. D and C.

143. Were the "foster mothers" paid to take care of the crippled fighters?

No. They had to give shelter to the crippled fighters. In return, these men had to do whatever they could to help around the house.

144. Did any crippled fighters return to visit their families in your village?

Yes. Those who were slightly wounded and could still work were allowed to return to live with their families and help their wives or parents make a living. Badly crippled fighters, who were unable to do anything worthwhile, would be kept in their special camp, or would be sent to the foster mothers. These men weren't allow to get in touch with their families, therefore, they wouldn't have any visitor from home. The VC didn't want the people to know that their sons had been crippled. If anyone inquired about the whereabouts of his boys, the VC would tell him that his boy was fighting in Quang Ngai or Binh Dinh, while they knew that the boy was spending his days in the next village with whatever remained of his body.

145. While you were in the village, which army -- the GVN or the VC -- offered a better chance of survival?

It's always better to be in the GVN army, because, even if you died, you'd have a decent burial, while the VC used you, and when you were killed, they'd shove your body into a hole with several corpses.

145. Did you ever see Northern fighters in your village?

Yes. Most of the units that passed by my village were made up of Northerners. I saw a lot of them last year. They used to come by every two or three months to rest in the village.

147. Why did they choose your village as a place to rest?

Although my village was only [redacted] away from the [redacted] Post, there were a lot of trees to protect them from being spotted by the aircraft, the land was good, and food was plentiful. That's why the units chose my village as a place to rest after an operation, to warm up their training, or to study politics.

148. What was the name of the unit which visited your village most often?

I don't know the names of the units. I only know that they were Northerners, who came to South Vietnam by way of Laos. It was a regular unit. There were also provincial or district units, who often stopped by my village to rest.

149. Didn't you talk to them?

Very seldom. I'd exchange a few words of politeness if I had to. I was prejudiced against them and often tried to avoid their company.

150. What do you think of their morale?

Some of them were pretty pessimistic.

151. What made you think so?

The Northern fighters usually talked to the people and described how it was hard for them to say good-bye to their folks to go South. Some of them sold their warm clothes to the villagers, saying that they had no hope of going back to the North, therefore, they no longer needed the clothes, that they never knew when they were going to die in the South, so they might as well get some money to fill their stomaches. They'd talk about their families in the North, and wonder if their folks would be told of their death.

152. Did you really hear them say so?

Yes, when a unit came to my village, they broke up into cells. Each cell of two or three men stayed with a family. My family had to house them sometimes, and in the winter nights, cold winds blew through the village. We'd sit by the fire and they'd reminisce about their lives in the cold North. They'd sigh and complain about the hardships they had to bear in the South. They said their folks at home might as well consider them dead for they had no hope of returning to the North. My heart overflowed with pity and compassion for them. I wanted so much to condemn the VC out loud, to tell them that they were being taken advantage of shamelessly by the Communists, and that they were following the wrong path. But I was too afraid of the cadres to tell them what I thought. Those boys had been cheated. They told me that, before they left the North, the cadres had told them that most of the South had been liberated, they only had to take care of a few insecure spots, but when they arrived, they saw only the contrary. In the North, they had been told that the people in South were living in misery, yet the people whom they met in the newly liberated areas were all better off than most of the people in the North: half of the families in a village owned bicycles, about one-third owned radio sets. Women were dressed in multi-colored nylon clothes, while the people of the North only wore crude cotton. They said the people in the South were able to celebrate the anniversaries of the deaths of their ancestors with special meals, and to celebrate Tet in good clothes. The people of the North had to overlook all these occasions for lack of money and material.

153. What would those fighters think if they saw the way the people in the GVN-controlled towns live?

They'd throw away their guns, that's what they'd do. If the people in the liberated areas could impress them, the high standard of living of the people in towns would certainly overwhelm them.

154. How old were most of those fighters?

Between 17 and 30 years old. Most of them had been students before they were drafted to be sent South. They were terribly deceived by the VC propaganda. They had thought that only the cities were GVN-controlled and all the rural areas were in the hands of the VC. They found out, to their sorrow, that

They had to hide most of the time in the mountainous areas, and they were unable to sleep and eat in peace for fear of the bombing and shelling. They had to be on the alert all the time as if the God of Death was always by their sides. They became jumpy and unhappy. I pitied their lot. I pitied them for they had been cheated. I hate Communism, but I think Communists, who had realized that they were in the wrong, should be pitied.

155. Did the cadres ever tell the people about their defeats?

Never. The cadres always told the people how badly the GVN forces had been beaten by them. I remember, Summer 1966, the regular units who were resting in my village got the order to go to fight against the Allied Forces in [redacted] villages of Duc Tan District. When they got back to the village after the battle, each platoon had about 9 or 10 man left, and the fighters' complaints about the defeat reached the ears of the people. If we waited for the cadres' official report, we'd surely get wild tales about the enormous number of GVN soldiers killed, the amount of war booty, etc. The true fact we could see with our own eyes was that they left as a crowd, and came back only a few.

156. Did the village have a school?

The VC always urged the people to send their children to school. They always talked about the importance of being cultured. But the people wouldn't risk the lives of their children. They refused to let their kids go anywhere, under the threat of the bombs and shells.

157. Did the village ha a hospital for the people?

No. The village had a civilian medical station, serving civilian war victims. The people had to contribute five piasters a month per person to keep the station going. If a man was wounded, he might be taken to the station where the nurse would give him medicine, but he had to pay for it. The station had a poor stock of medicine. Most of the people had to seek the care of the private nurses, although each had to contribute money for the upkeep of the station.

158. How was the public health service in the village under GVN control?

When the GVN was still around, each Strategic Hamlet had a medical station. Public health people came every week to distribute medicine to the people, give injections to those who were sick. The village also had a maternity station where the village women could find satisfactory service and drugs for their use.

159. When the VC came, did they continue to make use of the GVN-built medical station?

The GVN-built medical station and maternity/were hospital situated in the open, therefore, the VC didn't dare make use of them.

160. When you were in the village, did you know what was going on in Saigon?

Not very well. I could listen to Radio Saigon once in a while, but it's hard to keep up with the news.

161. Didn't people who travelled to the GVN-controlled areas usually bring back news?

These people didn't dare say much for fear the VC might accuse them of being pro-GVN.

162. When you were in the village, did you know who headed the GVN?

Yes, I knew that General Nguyen Cao Ky was Chairman of the Executive Committee. I learned that from the VC in their propaganda against the GVN.

163. Do you think the GVN is strong?

I think the GVN is strong on every front: military, political, and cultural. The GVN has won the support of the majority of the people. In addition to that, it has the help of the Allied forces. All the nations in the Free World are helping the GVN, either materially or morally. Our Allies are giving us support in a disinterested manner.

164. Do you think the GVN is for the people or against the people?

The people can judge whether the GVN is for the them or not. When the people were sick, the GVN sent them drugs. When the people needed clothes, the GVN sent them cotton clothes. Right now, the GVN's Chieu Hoi program, which advocates generosity toward former VC cadres and fighters, is another proof of the GVN virtue. No one but the GVN could forgive cadres who had dipped their hands in the blood of GVN people. When a VC repented, he would be welcomed back to the right way with open arms. The GVN's generous policy really impresses me.

165. Do you think the GVN is clean or corrupt?

The GVN policy is correct and civilized. If there were any corruption or shortcomings of any kind, it's not the fault of the policy, but it is the fault of the individuals who execute the policy.

166. Do you think there are a lot of corrupt GVN officials?

I'm sure there are some who are corrupt.

167. Do you think the GVN is wise?

I think the GVN is very wise in its general policy, but that doesn't mean that the GVN doesn't have any shortcomings. Take, for example, the refugee policy. Refugees who had fled the VC-controlled areas to seek freedom under the GVN protection should be helped because they had left everything behind to come here empty-handed. Yet the GVN authorities, for one reason or another, have not seen to it that the poor refugees are provided for. A lot of neglected refugees have thought of going back to their villages, not because they love the VC, but if they go on living in the GVN-controlled areas, they'd starve to death. It's been exactly our situation since we left our village to seek refuge in Duc Duc District Town. I don't believe that the GVN lacks the means to support us. I believe that it's the GVN cadres' lack of imagination which has caused us trouble. A lot of us have been thrown into a situation of misery: not enough rice to eat, no straw mats to shield us from the chill of winter nights.

168. Thus do you think the GVN officials have not done their best to serve the people?

I don't think the GVN officials lack good will, I think they are not very well organized. When I first set foot the district town with some 2000 other refugees from my village, we were warmly met by the district chief and other officials. We were given some money and pots and pans to start with, and some wheat to eat. But the aid didn't come regularly enough. Well, we got wheat pretty often, but we couldn't get used to eating wheat. We're rice-eating people. Some of us got sick eating wheat. We don't blame the GVN officials. They were very nice to us, but it was their being badly organized that deprived us of the support which we were entitled to.

169. Did you often listen to the radio when you were in the village?

Not often enough to keep up with the news. I was forced to listen to Radio Liberation and tried to figure out what was going on taking into consideration that the VC liked to lie, exaggerate, or just reverse the truth. I dared not listen to Saigon Radio, even secretly, because the guerrillas liked to spy on the people at night to see if we listened to enemy broadcast Sometimes, I tuned in Saigon Radio, and pressed my ear on the set to listen, but if I heard a sound, I had to shut off the set. I didn't have nerve to repeat the practice for fear that if I did it all the time, I might be caught.

170. What did you have as entertainment in the village?

Every few months, the VC organized a cultural night. The district's Entertainment Group would come to give song and dance performances. Not many people dared come to the show for fear of the aircraft. Besides, the theme of the songs and plays was nothing new: it's always an effort to make the people to produce more.

171. Did the cadres ever tell the people about life in the North?

Yes, we heard about life in the North and in Red China all the time. We were told that the people in the North lived in a paradise, and the people in Red China were even better off. I don't know what the VC meant by

"paradise". To me,it means hell. I have no way to be sure how the people in the North really live, but by looking at the Northern troops and their coarse clothes, their primitive looking knapsacks, canteens, etc; and the way they were impressed by the "high" standard of living of the people in our villages,showed that they had been very miserable in the North. They had a hard life, both spiritually and materially.

172. Did you hear anything about the relations between Red China and Russia?

In the village, I sometimes tuned in Peking Radio and heard the Chinese condemn Kosygin's Revisionism as a pro-American ideology. That's all I know.

173. Which side are the Vietnamese Communists with?

The Vietnamese Communists side with Red China. I've seen with my eyes that all the weapons and ammunition the VC were using were made in Red China. The VC also praised Mao's thoughts. Although they never mentioned Russia and its policy, I know they sided with Red China, by using its weapons and praising its policy. There's one thing that has puzzled me: that is, I've never heard the Russians say anything against Red China over Moscow broacasts.

174. Did you ask the cadres about it?

I asked the cadres why Peking Radio kept picking on the Russians. They told me that some of the Russian leaders were Revisionists,who tended to be friendly with the Americans. The Chinese only accused these few Russian reactionaries. The fact that Moscow Radio didn't say anything against Red China meant that not all the people in Russia were Revisionists. Thus, the cadres concluded, only a few people in Russia were Revisionists, and most of the other people were following the right path.

175. Did GVN troops often carry out operations in your village?

They did only once, last November, and we took advantage of the occasion to flee the VC.

176. What was the purpose of the operation if the GVN troops didn't want to keep the territory?

I don't know. I asked the interpreter who followed the American troops to the village, and he said that [redacted] Village was important because it was near [redacted] and that the GVN knew that the people of [redacted] were strongly pro-GVN, therefore, they wanted to provide us with an opportunity to get out of the grips of the VC.

177. Did the people resent the GVN for the bombing and shelling of their village?

Each time the people suffered damage from a bombing or shelling attack, I saw them resent the VC even more. They said it was because of the VC that the village was attacked. If the VC had let the village alone, in the control of the GVN, the people wouldn't have to put up with the bombing and shelling. They told the VC that: "If you're so talented, why don't you go right to Danang to fight the GVN? What's the use of firing at the recon planes with your rifles and then run away and let the people bear all the damage? Because, when you fire at the planes, you make them think that this place is full of Communists. That's not fair!" So, the more the village was attacked, the more the people blamed it on the VC.

178. What did the cadres say to the people about the whole thing?

The cadres were always propagandists. They said: "See, the GVN didn't like you, the Americans didn't like you. You could see for yourselves that the shells were American made, and the ones who shot them were GVN soldiers. You people ought to increase your hatred against the GVN and the American troops. They are your true enemy. They are the cause of your misery."

179. How much damage did the people suffer from each bombing or shelling attack?

Each attack usually resulted in three dead and a few houses burned to the ground.

180. How often was the village attacked?

It wasn't regular. Sometimes, the village was attacked twice a month, sometimes five times a month.

181. Did the VC suffer from the attacks?

I found that the people suffered more than the VC from the bombing and shelling attacks. If, by chance, a bomb or a shell fell on the VC spot, some five or ten of them would be killed. But that didn't happen often.

182. Were the people ever warned in advance of the attacks?

Never.

183. Do you think the people should be warned in advance?

It might be a good idea to save the people from sudden death, but if the GVN gave advance warnings, all the VC would go into hiding, and what's the use of attacking then?

184. Have you seen or heard of the spraying of chemical products to kill the leaves?

Such operations have never taken place in my village. But I heard from the VC that several places in Duc Duc District had been sprayed, a lot of trees and cattle were killed. We reasoned to ourselves that if the Americans ever sprayed chemicals to clear up a dense area, it was to destroy the VC and their caches in that place. Why didn't the Americans spray all over the place to kill the people if they had wanted to? Why did they only select a few spots? They had to have intelligence that these particular spots were full of VC and VC caches.

185. When was the first time you saw the Americans?

Before the VC took over the control of my village, I had often travelled to Hoi An and I saw a lot Americans there.

186. What did you think of the Americans then?

I knew that both the GVN and the Americans were anti-Communists. If Vietnam dropped into the hands of the Communists, the whole Southeast Asia would fall also. If the Communists were strong in the East, the West would be threatened. Therefore, all the people of the Free World cooperated with the GVN to fight against the Communists. The Americans were the friendliest ally Vietnam ever had.

187. What did the VC say about the Americans?

The VC always said that Americans were invaders.

188. Did they mean that the Americans were like the French in the old days?

They said the Americans were even worse than the French in the old days. They said the Americans used their money and wealth to trample on our honor. Thus, the Americans were more malicious than the French. But we people didn't believe what the cadres said. Many of us had travelled between Danang and Hoi An and we had met the Americans. We found that the Americans were innocent of any malice. They went on helping us disinterestedly.

189. Do you think the Americans interfere with our national affairs?

That, I don't know.

190. Who else besides the Americans are helping the GVN?

The Philippines, South Korea, Nationalist China. These countries are members of the Free World, who are concerned about our welfare.

191. In your opinion, which side is stronger, the GVN with their allies, or the VC with theirs?

In my opinion, this war is the war between two ideologies. Vietnam happens to be the battlefield where clashes between the Free World and the Communist Bloc take place. The Free World is twice as large as the Communist World,

and the Communists,themselves,are not living in harmony with each other: Red China is in disagreement with Russia, Yougoslavia separates itself from the Communist Bloc, etc. So,the Free World,of course,has the upper hand. In my opinion, the Free World will win, and Communism will be annihilated. Communism goes against the progress of mankind, it won't last long. Instead of freeing the people, the Communists suppress the people's freedoms.

192. Have you ever heard of the bombing of the North?

In the village, I often heard over Radio Hanoi that the North was being bombed. The broadcast gave daily results of the air attacks: The number of downed planes. Thanks to that boasting, I've learned about the bombing of the North.

193. Do you think those attacks have had any effect on North Vietnam?

Yes. The Americans tried to destroy the economy of the North so that it won't be able to supply the Front in the South. The Front is nothing,but a monster - child of Ho Chi Minh. Since the bombings are the result of the Communist aggression in the South, I think the people in the North are resenting the Communists for disturbing the peace of the people in the South, and thus brought damage to the North. If the North didn't send troops to the South to fight the GVN, the North wouldn't have been bombed. Those who caused trouble, earned trouble.

194. What made you decide to leave your village to seek refuge here?

Since the VC took over the control of my village, I've lost freedom of thought. I couldn't go on living in a place where I had to discard my feelings, my personal thoughts, and had to follow one line of thinking: the materialistic thinking. I longed to be free. I couldn't agree with their way of life: no family, no religion, no fatherland! So I grabbed the first chance that came my way to come to the GVN-controlled areas to breathe the air of freedom.

195. Have your children joined the Buddhist Family here?

Here in this camp, we could go to the pagoda to worship on the first and the fifteenth of the lunar month. That's what makes us very happy. But as we're still new here, we can't think of sending our children to school or to the Buddhist Family until we're settled down.

196. Who manages this camp?

The director is Venerable [redacted]. He's been away for some time now. He's in Nha Trang. Ven. [redacted] is taking care of the place for him.

197. There's a rumor that some VC cadres have infiltrated into the Buddhist ranks to cause disturbances. What do you think?

I think that rumor has been invented by those who hate Buddhism. The Buddhist organization, in my opinion, is very close-knit, it'd be very hard for the VC cadres to infiltrate. They wouldn't be interested in learning the teachings of Buddha anyway. I don't think our organization has the power to appoint province chiefs, or make anyone a major or a colonel.
The VC, or anyone with political ambition who chose the Buddhist organization as a stepping stone, have made a grave mistake. Our leaders, Venerable Tri Quang and a lot of other monks who live in various provinces, are wise men. They'd see to it that no man could take advantage of the Buddhist organization for personal interests. I've talked to some monks and they have assured me that the VC didn't have a chance to take advantage of the recent struggle between the Buddhists and the government in Danang. Why? Because the VC were busy saving their skin. While the struggle was taking place, GVN units also carried out operations against the VC in various places. I've heard some people in the GVN areas accuse the Buddhists of being pro-Communist, while the VC in the liberated areas labeled us pro-American. Why should the Buddhists be victims of both sides? It's understandable that the VC couldn't stand the Buddhists because we don't believe what they believe. They are afraid of us because we are wiser and more mature. I can say that our leaders are more mature than the leaders of the GVN or the leaders of the Communists. Why? Buddhism has been in existence for 2500 years, while Communism only 35 years!

198. What's the Buddhists' stand? What do they think of the war?

Just take a look at the ARVN. How many percent of it are made up of Buddhists? Anyone could see for himself that some 70 or 80 percent of the GVN soldiers are Buddhists. This means that the Buddhists are on the GVN side. Buddhists are strongly anti-Communist. No one can deny that. Everywhere I went, saw district chiefs, government officials, who claimed to be Buddhists. Thus, we Buddhists actively take part in all anti-Communist activities of the GVN.

199. What is Venerable Tri Quang's stand?

Venerable Tri Quang's only hope is to see peace in this country, to see the people live in abundance and practice the benevolent teachings of Buddha, to see this killing stop.

200. He wants to see peace in this country, but under what conditions?

Under the condition that the North stop being Communist.

201. How can the North stop being Communist?

That, I don't know.

202. This is the picture of a ladder. The first rung on top represents the best life you could imagine in the village. The 10th rung at bottom represents the worst life. Where were you before the VC came to the village?

At the third rung.

203. When the VC got control of your village, where were you?

Everybody, including me, dropped to the bottom rung.

204. Where are you now?

I can't tell you exactly where I am now. Materially, I'm at the bottom, but morally, I'm on top.

205. Describe the best life you could imagine.

The best life I could imagine for my family and me is to be free to worship, to have a bicycle, a watch, a transistor radio, and a tin-roofed house. My children would have colorful clothes to wear, and would be able to finish grade school at least.

206. Describe the worst life you could imagine.

That is to be unemployed, unable to provide for one's family. The children would be hungry and have nothing to wear. The grown-ups would be forbidden to worship.

207. If you could ask the GVN 3 things, what would you ask?

First, I'd ask the GVN for a place to live, then a job to earn money to feed my family. That's all I want to ask. If I have a place to live and a job to earn money, other things might be realized.

208. What do you want to do?

I'd like to work as a clerk in a government or private organization, or I'd like to be a grade-school teacher. I have a friend who's a policeman in Hoi An and who is helping me get a job as a policeman. I have sent in the application. Everything cost me nearly 2000piasters. I hope I'll get the job.

209. Do you want to be a policeman?

Right now, I have nothing to do and I need the money. Coming from the VC-controlled areas is just like getting out of a dark room into the sunlight. It's too bright and I can't see a thing. There might be a lot of things I can do, but I just don't know the right places to go. Now that I've spent a considerable amount of money toward getting this job, I might as well stick to it. It's not that I've paid a bribe. I had to spend money taking pictures, buying stamps, travelling to Hoi An. That's all, yet it has cost me nearly 2000 piasters.

210. What do you wish for your children?

I hope my children will have a decent education. I wish they all will finish high school. Nowadays, an education is necessary for everyone who wants to live decently.

211. How much longer do you think this war will last?

I have no idea.

212. Which side do you think is winning in Quang Nam?

The GVN side is winning, of course. Last year or the year before, the VC dared attack the GVN and allied forces with regiment-size troops. But the American firepower has overwhelmed them. This year, the VC have been forced to go back to guerrilla warfare, yet anywhere they moved, bombs and shells poured on their heads. Big battles had taken place during the rainy seasons of the years before, but nothing took place last rainy season. The VC claimed that they depended on the support of the people, yet a lot of people have tried to take refuge in the GVN-controlled areas, leaving the ricefields behind in the villages. If the VC lose the support of the people, they'll starve some day. If they were hungry, they'd have no hope to win.

Interviewer's Comments

The Subject was the leader of the group of three families of refugees from [redacted] Village, Duc Duc District, who came to this [redacted] in February 1967. He was cooperative, talkative, and seemed sincere.

No. AGR 22

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

1. Name of Interviewer: [redacted]
2. Name of Subject [redacted]
3. Time and Date of Interview:
   From 1 PM to 6 PM on March [redacted] 1966
   From _____ to _____ on _____ 1966
   From _____ to _____ on _____ 1966
   From _____ to _____ on _____ 1966
   Total time: _____
   Interview based on: tape (XX) hand written notes ( )
4. Place of Interview:
   [redacted] Refugee Camp [redacted]
5. Sex of subject: Male (XX) Female ( )
6. Age of subject: 36
7. Ethnic background: Vietnamese
8. Place of birth:
   hamlet Hamlet [redacted]
   village [redacted]
   district Duc Duc
   province Quang Nam
9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee:
   hamlet same as #8
   village _____
   district _____
   province _____
10. (a) Length of residence in last location: _____
    (b) Who controlled the place of residence:
    GVN ( ) VC (XX) Contested ( )
    (c) Since when controlled ~~xxxcontestedx~~ February 1965

11. Number of brothers ( ) and sisters ( )

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age: _____

13. Marital status: married

14. Number of children: 4 (3 boys, 1 girl)

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age: none

16. Persons with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
    Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
    Brothers with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
    Wife with subject (XX) or not with subject ( )
    Children with subject (XX) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion: Buddhism

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge: farmer

19. Economic status:
    (a) VC designation middle farmers
    (b) Landowner? _____ How much land 2 mau

20. Education:
    Illiterate ( )
    Literate ( )
    Schooling completed: grade IV

21. Any relatives in VC: no

22. Any relatives in GVN: yes

23. Any relatives (How many? Where?) killed by:
    (a) French
    (b) GVN = none
    (c) VC

24. When became a refugee November 1966

25. Where took refuge first: Duc Duc District Town

26. Present residence: [redacted] Refugee Camp

AGR

INTERVIEW

93

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THE RAND CORPORATION

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INTERVIEWS CONCERNING THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR-93

Date of Interview : March [redacted] 1967

Subject's Category : Refugee: 1964

Area Left : [redacted] Hamlet

[redacted] Village

Duc Duc District

Quang Nam Province

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1. Where do you come from?

I come from [redacted] Village, Duc Duc District, formerly called Que Son District. I was born there 54 years ago, and have always lived there.

2. How long has [redacted] Village been under VC control?

This is the third year under VC control. The VC came in 1964, I've forgotten the exact date.

3. Do you have any brothers and sisters?

My two brothers died when they were young, and I have no sister.

4. Do you have any children?

I have two. The oldest is 14 years old.

5. What's your religion?

I worship my ancestors. My wife is a Buddhist.

6. What did you do for a living in the village?

Before the VC came to the village, I used to fetch wood in the mountain to sell in the market places. Under VC control, I worked on the land.

7. How were you classified by the VC?

I don't know. I left the village four days after it had fallen under VC control. I went to [redacted] to stay. It was a GVN-controlled area.

8. What did you do in [redacted]

I took my family there. We bought a sampan, and the whole family lived on it. In the daytime, my wife fished and grew manioc on a piece of wild land, while I took passengers across the river to earn some money.

9. Why did you leave [redacted] to come to this place?

I lived in [redacted] for three years. Life became harder and harder for us. There are six persons in my family, including my nephews. The sampan was too small. Three or four members of the family had to sleep in the people's houses. We were unable to earn enough money to feed the children. At last, I told the Village Council, who also took refuge in [redacted] that I had to leave again.

10. Did you have any land in the village?

I own three sao of ricefield in the village.

11. Did you ever go to school?

No.

12. Did you send your children to school?

Yes.

13. Do you have any relatives living in the VC-controlled areas?

No.

14. When did you leave [redacted]

I left during Tet Holidays with some 30 other sampans. We came across an American post, and the Americans told us to move on. They said we had to stop moving our sampans at night. So we did. They sent cables to other GVN authorities, and we were allowed to move without any trouble. At [redacted] I sold the sampan for a couple of hundred piasters, and here I am, trying to find a job to make a living. I've been here about a week. The camp chief here told me that the camp has been filled up, and that we could settle temporarily in a corner of this hall (the camp's Buddhist auditorium).

15. How large is [redacted] Village?

It has [redacted] hamlets.

16. How did it fall into the hands of the VC?

Under the Diem regime, all [redacted] hamlets were in the hands of the GVN. After the fall of Mr. Diem, the VC kept pushing in. First, they came to [redacted] Hamlet. The people kept running toward the river, to [redacted] Hamlets.

17. Did any fighting take place?

No. When the GVN troops came on operation, the VC would run into the mountains. They came out again when the GVN troops withdrew.

18. What's the name of your hamlet?

It's [redacted] Hamlet. It was nearest to the [redacted], that's why the VC came down easily.

19. Did other people move away from the hamlet when the VC came?

Yes. A lot of people ran to [redacted] Hamlets, some moved on to [redacted] or to Duc Duc District town.

20. Why did you move away?

We had met refugees from [redacted] Village, who told us about the hardships the people in the liberated villages had to bear: being sent to reform camps, going on labor-duty trips, paying troop-support taxes, and so on. So, as soon as the VC appeared, I took my family to [redacted] Hamlet and bought a sampan, thinking that if I still had to move on, a sampan would be the best means of transportation. My Village Council later moved to [redacted] to seek refuge, so I moved to [redacted] too.

21. Didn't the VC try to stop the people from moving away?

They didn't allow us to go, but we left anyway.

22. When did the Village Council move to [redacted]

I've forgotten exactly when. The Village Council members used to work in the village, but slept in [redacted] away by waterway.

23. Did you get help from the GVN in [redacted]

No. Once in a while, the government sent some aid to the Village Council, and we would get a few cans of rice. The GVN wasn't supposed to take care of us. We were refugees by our own choice.

24. Did all the people leave the village?

No. About one-third left the village. Those who stayed behind would try to sneak out one by one. For instance, the husband would leave first, and send for his wife and children later. Hardly anyone could live with the VC. They worked the people to death, and collected half of their earnings.

25. In [redacted], did you meet any villager who came out after living with the VC for a while?

Yes. People kept coming one by one as I've told you. When they came to [redacted] they had to report to the Village Council about their activities in the village. If anyone had cooperated with the VC, the Village Council would take note to check if he was trying to work as a spy for the VC. The guy had to spend at least one month in [redacted] to clear his record before he was allowed to go anywhere he wanted.

26. How was your life in the village before the VC came?

Under the Diem Regime, I led a hard life, but it wasn't too bad. Later, it was impossible to live with the VC.

27. Were there any GVN troops stationed in your village under the Diem Regime?

Yes. When Mr. Diem was still alive, all [redacted] hamlets of the village were intact.

28. Were the VC afraid of the GVN troops then?

I don't know if they were afraid of the GVN troops, but I didn't see any of them around.

29. Did you ever live in a Strategic Hamlet?

Yes. Each hamlet had a Strategic Hamlet.

30. Did you have to contribute labor or material in the building of the Strategic Hamlet?

Yes. Each of us had to contribute 20 bamboo poles, 2.5 m long each. These poles were used to build fences and easily rotted out, we had to re-supply them. People were also ordered to dig communication trenches, sharpen and plant spikes. It took us three months to finish building the Strategic Hamlet.

31. How long did you live in the Strategic Hamlet?

I lived in it over a year, then the VC came. So I left the village.

32. Did the people complain about having to build the Strategic hamlet?

No one complained. The GVN authorities told us that we had to built a Strategic Hamlet in order to protect ourselves, so we did. Each family had to contribute three months of labor and some one thousand piasters to buy bamboo poles.

33. Did you have to move your family into the hamlet?

No. We stayed where we were. The Hamlet fences were built around us. Some people who lived in remote corners had to move in.

34. Did these people complain?

No. They were given money by the GVN to move in. They were lucky to be able to live in a secure place, what was there to complain about? They would get in worse trouble if they insisted on living outside the Strategic Hamlet.

35. Did you find it convenient to live in a Strategic Hamlet?

Yes. I didn't mind going to work at 7 a.m. and coming back at 7 p.m. I wasn't the only one who had to do so. All the people wanted was peace. We'd rather live in the Strategic Hamlet and submit to some rules than in the VC-controlled areas. What we heard about life in the liberated areas, as told by the refugees, frightened us.

36. Did the VC ever try to attack the Strategic Hamlet?

They sometimes did, but the Popular Force men drove them away every time.

37. Did the VC ever try to sneak into the Hamlet and motivate the youths to join them?

No. The village youths were clever enough to avoid staying in places where the VC could easily come. Most of the youths spent their nights in [redacted] or joined the ARVN.

38. Did any youths join the VC army?

When the VC first came to [redacted] Village, they took away six young men.

39. How old were those men?

About 17 or 18. They'd joined the GVN's Popular Force.

40. What did the VC do to them?

I don't know.

41. When were they arrested by the VC?

May or June 1966.

42. Didn't you say your village had been taken by the VC in 1954?

Yes, but these Popular Force men were stationed in the [redacted] Post. There was a clash with the VC. Two VC were killed, while six Popular Force men were captured.

43. Did you meet the villagers who moved to [redacted] after you?

I did.

44. What did they tell you about the village?

They said, every now and then, the VC held a propaganda meeting. They told the people to stay in the village to work and they promised to help also.

45. Did the VC actually help the people?

No. If they had helped, the people wouldn't have to leave. The VC talked a lot, and did nothing for the people.

46. Did the VC organize the village farmers?

Yes. Farmers had to join the Farmers' Association.

47. What was the advantage of joining the Farmers' Association?

There was no advantage whatsoever. Nobody got paid for being a member.

48. Did the VC collect agricultural tax from the people?

Yes, a farmer had to pay five percent or seven percent of his earnings to the VC.

49. That wasn't too bad, was it?

That was bad. Five percent means half-and-half, and seven percent means you keep 70 an and they get 30 an.

50. Is that what you mean by percent?

Yes.

51. What other kinds of taxes did you have to pay?

There were "economy rice," "Resistance rice," and a lot of other kinds of "rice" we had to contribute. In the end, a man hardly had anything left to eat. The VC exploited the people shamelessly. The people didn't dare wear good clothes for fear the VC might call them loafers instead of workers. They had to wear rubber sandals, instead of the Japanese-styled rubber slippers bought in the GVN-controlled marketplaces, or the VC would accuse them of contributing to the GVN economy.

52. Did the people have to go on labor-duty trips?

No one could avoid labor-duty trips. The men were usually ordered to carry rice to a spot five or six day's walk from the village. No one met them at the destination. They just

left the rice there, and went home. Some people even had to go for two months. They didn't say where they had gone , but they said they had to start early every day, and walk until sundown. Some people escaped from the village as soon as they got back from a labor-duty trip. During the trip, their food consisted of rice mixed with manioc and rock salt. A man was given one-and-a-half cans of rice a day. You know, no farmer could survive on one-and-a-half cans of rice a day and work as hard as he did. The laborers had to pick vegetables along the roads to fill up their stomachs.

53. While the men went on labor-duty trips, did someone help their wives do , the farm work?

No. The women managed as much as they could by themselves. The VC didn't give them any help. Before the men went away, the VC always promised to send some people to help their wives do the farm work, but they never kept their promise.

54. Did the people like the cadres?

I don't think so. I don't think anyone could like the VC, although no one dared say he hated the VC.

55. Whom did the people support?

I think the people supported the GVN.

56. Why did the people like the GVN better?

Because, under GVN control, the people could do anything they liked, they could eat whatever they wanted to eat, wear whatever they wanted to wear.

57. Why did some people still like to stay behind in the village?

Those people were stuck: they had children serving the VC, so they were afraid of being arrested by the GVN authorities. Most of the time, however, those children wouldn't let the parents move to the GVN-controlled areas.

58. What did the VC do during their first three days in the village?

Nothing. They were still very disorganized then. My wife

was frightened. She shut herself up in a room all day long. I finally decided to take the family away from the village. I was afraid the GVN troops might come, and we would get caught in between. I arranged to meet the Village Chief in [redacted] Hamlet beforehand and told him of my intention to evacuate. I didn't want to risk being killed by the GVN troops when I took my wife and children out of a VC-controlled hamlet. Most of the people did the same thing I did. One of the members sneaked out of the village, and warned the GVN authorities of his family's arrival.

59. If the VC happened to know that one member of a family had gotten away from the village, what would they do to the rest of the family?

If the husband went away for a month, for instance, the VC would know then that he had gotten to the GVN-controlled areas. They would send his wife to reform camp for four or five days. The family would be watched constantly for months. Some men had to wait four or five months before their wives and children could get a chance to join them in the GVN-controlled areas.

60. What were the women told at reform camps?

I asked them, and they said they had had to listen to the VC talk an hour each day, but they didn't pay any attention and didn't remember a thing.

61. Why did the people want to leave the village?

They couldn't live with the VC. The taxes were too heavy, and it was too hard to go on labor-duty trips. There wasn't any medicine when one was sick. One had to work on the field at night for fear of the aircraft. The damage caused by the shelling and bombing was also great.

62. Did the people resent the GVN for inflicting damage on them?

They didn't say, but they usually used that as an excuse to leave the village. Some even said they were thankful to the GVN for burning their houses and providing them with an excuse to seek freedom. Most of the people took advantage of the bombing and shelling attacks to get away, for, in that turmoil, no one paid attention to others. Even the VC had to run for their lives.

63. Did the VC allow the people to go to pagodas or church?

The Christians weren't allowed to go to church. The village didn't have a church, the people had to go to the GVN-controlled village to worship, the VC dismissed it as "too much trouble."

64. Were the people allowed to take their produce to sell in the GVN-controlled marketplaces?

No. They posted guards everywhere to stop the people from taking their produce to sell outside the village. If they caught you carrying three an of paddy out of the village, they'd send you to the reform camp for three days.

65. How far was the reform camp?

I don't know. The people told me it was in the [redacted] half a day's walk from the village. The camp was nothing but a cave. The people had to stay there. The cadres showed up an hour a day to give a lesson, and left some pots and pans and some rock salt for the people to cook their own meals. The people had to bring along their own rice to eat.

66. Where did the people get the money to buy other necessities?

The people just had to put up with the little they had. Even if they succeeded in getting to the GVN-controlled areas, the GVN authorities wouldn't allow them to buy anything for fear they might try to supply the VC.

67. Where did the village cadres come from?

Parents of the youths who had left their families to join the VC in 1960 or 1962, were invited by the VC to work as village cadres.

68. How did the cadres treat the people?

From what the people told me, the cadres were very sweet. They talked well, although they didn't do anything for the people. Fours days after I left the village, I met a new refugee. He told me that, as soon as I left, the cadres came to my house to carry my paddy away. I had a hen and nine little chicks, they took them too. They tore down my house to get the thatch. I

was mad to hear that. I asked my neighbors why they didn't help themselves with my paddy instead of letting those dirty cadres enjoy it. My neighbors said: "No Sir, even if we were starving and your paddy was rotting, we wouldn't dare touch it. It's too much trouble. The cadres might ask if we had had permission from you, and why we didn't tell them about your leaving the village."

69. What did the cadres tell the people about the Americans?

The cadres told the people not to move to the GVN-controlled areas and become slaves for the Americans. The woman who told me about it commented: "We didn't pay any attention to their propaganda. We just wanted to move out of the village."

70. What did the cadres say about the purpose of the Americans in Vietnam?

I don't know.

71. What did the cadres say about the GVN?

I don't know. The people didn't tell me what the cadres said about the GVN.

72. Did the cadres tell the people how they would be treated by GVN authorities if they ever got to the GVN-controlled areas?

The cadres said if anyone moved to the GVN-controlled areas, he'd be forced to become a slave laborer. Some people said to themselves that if they had to do labor duty for the GVN, they wouldn't have to do it all the time as they had to for the VC. It was true that the GVN sometimes asked the people to do labor duty, but the people got paid for doing it. For instance, once in [redacted] I was asked to go on labor duty for the GVN troops, and I got paid.

73. How many youths over 16 years of age were still in the village when the VC took over the control of the place?

I don't know exactly, but I don't think there were many of them left. As soon as the neighboring villages were taken by the VC, the youths in my village packed up and moved to [redacted]. They'd rather volunteer to join the GVN's Popular Force in [redacted]

74. Did the VC carry out a land redistribution program in your village?

I don't know.

75. What organizations did the VC have for the people in the village?

I don't know.

76. Have you heard that there were VC troops in the village?

The VC troops weren't stationed in the village, they only passed by once in a while. Sometimes, some people could get away and inform the GVN authorities about the presence of VC troops in the village. More often than not, the GVN authorities knew nothing about it without informers.

77. When the VC troops did come to the village, did they stay in the people's houses?

No.

78. Were they Northerners or Southerners?

Some were Northerners, some were Southerners.

79. Did the VC ever bring wounded fighters to the village?

Never. I talked to some villagers who had taken part in the labor-duty trip in [redacted] Village) last year (1966). They described how they had helped carry the wounded VC fighters, that there were some 800 dead and wounded VC. Laborers were also killed and wounded by bombs and stray bullets. A lot of VC troops planned to attack the [redacted] Post in [redacted] Village. The Post was kept by the [redacted] and [redacted] (Regt?) soldiers.

The attack lasted three days. The Post was located [redacted] so the GVN soldiers kept creeping uphill and getting killed by the grenades. On the second day of the attack, the aircraft came and strafed around the post. Countless number of VC got killed in that air attack. I know it's true because I also saw the scene with my own eyes a few days later. When the VC had withdrawn, the GVN authorities asked people like me to go on a labor-duty trip: cleaning up the battlefield. I got there and I saw dead bodies lying around. They all wore short-

sleeved shirts. Arms, hands and feet had been blown off and were hanging on the bushes. We had to dig holes and shove the bodies in. It was around May 1966. It took us two days to do the cleaning. The VC fighters must have come from the North: their bodies were big -- as big as that man over there. (Note: Subject pointed at a male Vietnamese interviewer who was conducting another interview nearby.) We also found bodies of laborers who had been killed in the strafing.

80. How much damage did the GVN soldiers suffer?

I heard there were six dead. What moved us most was the fact that a lot of laborers had been killed. These laborers weren't natives of [redacted] Village. They probably were recruited in other villages and were on two or three-months duty. I wasn't the first one who got to the battlefield to do the cleaning. Another group had arrived a day ahead and had started, yet I still found the scene horrible. There were about 40 men in my group, and we worked from dawn to dusk. The poor GVN soldiers were so tired they couldn't even move. They had put up with a lot during the attack, and they had to go hungry because food supplies didn't come. The authorities mentioned about paying us, but we refused to get paid. We weren't forced to do labor duty. We volunteered to do the job, to lend a helping hand to the GVN soldiers in the post, for if we didn't help, they'd have to do the clean-up themselves.

81. Were there any wounded fighters among the bodies?

No. Even if there had been wounded, they would have been dead when I got there, two days after the VC withdrawal. I've never seen so much blood in my life.

82. What did the people feel about this battle?

We shuddered whenever we thought of it.

83. Would anyone be willing to let their children join the VC army after seeing that scene?

No one in his right mind would want his children to join the VC. I'm not trying to be cynical, but to die as a GVN soldier is still better then to live as a VC. If a GVN soldier died, his family would be compensated with money, his body would be properly buried. A VC alive is dragging his wasted body from mountain to mountain. He survived on two cans of rice a day, and when he dies his body is thrown into a common grave.

84. What did the people say about the morale of the Northern fighters?

They said those fighters were really dare-devils, that they thought nothing of death. Just looking at the way they kept creeping up the hill in spite of the grenades, the people could tell that they were very brave.

85. Where did the VC-recruited laborers carry the bodies?

They said they were in charge of burying dead bodies. They said they didn't even have time to dig proper holes, they just shoved several bodies into a common hole, and didn't even bother to straighten the corpses' legs and arms. The people I talked to didn't carry wounded fighters, but they said that a lot of wounded laborers were left behind, and they managed to crawl to the nearby villages to seek help. They would have to depend on the people's charity. If the people gave them food, they'd eat. If they died, the people would bury them. No VC would take a look at them when they were unable to work. When they were healthy, they were flirted at by the cadres and sweet-talked into doing labor duty for them. When they fell, the cadres treated them like dirt. That's why the people would try to leave their VC-controlled villages at any price. No one wanted to sacrifice himself for the VC. The people would leave even if the VC offered them gold to eat.

86. How do you find the VC strength in Quang Nam?

They're weak, that's obvious. Just take a look at the battle in [redacted] they came in thousands, and dropped like rotten branches. I have a nephew who was a soldier at that post. On the day of the attack, he was detailed to stand guard outside the post. When he heard the VC shout, "Advance!" he plunged himself into the river to swim home. If he had stayed, he would have been killed, because he was outside with no walls to protect him. I'm glad he got away.

87. Did the GVN or Allied forces ever carry on any operation in your village after it had fallen into VC hands?

Last January, the American troops came to be stationed in [redacted] post, and they carried out an operation in the village. Before that, no GVN or allied troops had ever set foot in the village.

88. What other countries besides the USA are helping the GVN?

I don't know. I'm too busy making a living to pay any attention to those things.

89 Have you gotten any help from the GVN since you left your village?

When I first came to [redacted] I got two bags of rice and a bag of black wheat. That's all.

90. Why did you leave [redacted] and go to Duc District Town?

Life became too hard for us in [redacted] I didn't earn much money taking passengers across the river. So I decided to go to Duc Duc to apply for an authorization to move to [redacted] There were some 30 sampans that left [redacted] at the same time. At Duc Duc, the authorities telephoned the Americans in a post along the riverside. The Americans searched our sampans, and let us go. Through the interpreter, they learned that we were refugees. They cabled to other posts along out route, and we got to [redacted] safely. I sold my sampan for a few hundred piasters and took my family to this place hoping to find a job soon.

91. Have you found a job?

Not yet. I've been living off the people here. I met some villagers from [redacted] and each gave me a few cans of rice to live on.

92. If you could ask three things from the GVN, what would you ask?

Now that I've come all the way to this place, all I wish is to have a place to live and a job to earn money.

93. What do you wish for your children?

I wish them to have some education so that it would be easier for them to find jobs. I want them to be very happy, but it's beyond our reach.

94. What do you think a happy life should be?

I don't know.

95. Do you want to be rich?

I don't dare think of being rich. It's beyond me. I'll be happy if I have a little money to do some trading for profit. It's no use to wish for wealth. How could men like me become rich?

96. This is the picture of a ladder. The top rung represents the best kind of life in the village, the bottom rung, or rung No. 10, represents the most miserable kind. Do you understand what I mean?

Sure. The top is the man who owns a lot of ricefields and his house is full of servants. The guy at the bottom is me.

97. Do you mean no one else in the village was poorer than you?

Yes, there were poorer people. Well, my life in the village was at rung No. 9 then! The guy at No. 10 didn't even have a roof to duck under. Although I was poor, I still had a hut and a bed to sleep in, while that No. 10 guy had to sleep on the ground. Other than that, I was no better off than he was. I had very little land, yet I couldn't make any money on the side because I wasn't allowed to go to the mountain to fetch wood or burn charcoal. Very few people were better off then No. 6 though. Everybody was rather poor. The 6, 5, 4, were those who owned more than two mau of land. They were employers of Nos. 8, 9, and 10. Without the last three categories, they had to let their land idle because they, themselves, couldn't work it all. So it was sort of interdependence, you see!

98. Where on the ladder are you now?

At No. 10, where else? No money, no house, miserable!

99. Do you want to go back to your village?

I wouldn't go back there unless everything is peaceful again. If the war stopped today, I'd get back to the village tomorrow.

100. When do you think the war will be over?

I don't know. What I said about the war being over, I meant as an example. That is, if the war's over today, I'll get back to the village tomorrow. But if things remain this way, I wouldn't go back there if I were given a piece of gold.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

The subject was a job seeker. He came to Danang because it was too hard for him to make a living in [redacted]. He left his native village in 1964, and has never lived under VC control. What he said about the VC in the village was, therefore, only hearsay. He seemed sincere and cooperative.

QUESTIONNAIRE II

No. AGR: 93

For Refugees

1. Name of Interviewer: [redacted] 22

2. Name of Subject: [redacted]

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3. Time and Date of Interview:

From 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. on March [redacted] 1967

From _____ to _____ on _____ 1967

From _____ to _____ on _____ 1967

From _____ to _____ on _____ 1967

Total time: 3 hours

Interview based on: tape (X) hand written notes ( )

4. Place of Interview: [redacted] Refugee camp

5. Sex of subject: Male (X) Female ( )

6. Age of subject: 54

7. Ethnic background: Vietnamese

8. Place of birth:

hamlet [redacted]

village [redacted]

district Duc Duc

province Quang Nam

9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee:

hamlet [redacted]

village [redacted]

district Duc Duc

province Quang Nam

10. (a) Length of residence in last location: 54 years

(b) Who controlled the place of residence:

GVN ( ) VC (X) Contested ( )

(c) Since when controlled or contested? 1964

[redacted]

11. Number of brothers (0) and sisters (0)

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age: _____

13. Marital status: Married

14. Number of children: 2

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age: none

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject (X) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject (X) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion: Ancestor worship

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge: Farmer

19. Economic status:
(a) VC designation Very Poor Farmers
(b) Landowner No How much land _____

20. Education:
Illiterate (X)
Literate ( )
Schooling completed: _____

21. Any relatives in VC: No

22. Any relatives in GVN: Yes

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by:
(a) French None
(b) GVN "
(c) VC "

24. When became a refugee: 1964

25. Where took refuge first: [redacted] Area

26. Present residence: [redacted] Camp
Hoa Vang District
[redacted]

AGR

INTERVIEW

94

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THE RAND CORPORATION

INTERVIEWS CONCERNING THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR-94

Date of Interview : March [redacted] 1967

Subject's Category : Refugee: January 1967

Area Left : [redacted] Village
Duy Xuyen District
Quang Nam Province

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1. Where did you come from?

I came from [redacted] Village, Duy Xuyen District, Quang Nam.

2. When did the VC take over the control of your village?

A few months after the flood of August 1965. The GVN was still around shortly after the flood, the people were still supplied with food. The VC didn't come until November 1965. As my family was large, and I could only weave baskets and work on the land a little bit to earn a living, I was afraid my family might starve if we moved to the GVN-controlled areas. So we just had to put up with the VC and try to do our best to make a living in the village. But the VC paid no heed to the welfare of the people. They shot at this and that, and thus drew fire from the GVN all the time. As we lived near the village road, we could no longer stand the insecurity. Ten families got together and decided to move out, but seven were stopped by the VC. My family and two others got away. We came first to Hoi An, and then to this place. We weren't able to take along anything. I came here a month and a half ago and lived temporarily with the people in this camp. Later on, it was too inconvenient to live with our hosts all the time, so we got some thatch and made a hut to live in.

3. Do you have any brothers and sisters?

One of my two brothers is working in Hoi An. Another one is still in the village with my father. I have a sister who's in the hospital now.

4. Do you have any children?

Yes, I have four, between the age of two and twelve. My wife and children are all here with me.

5. What's your religion?

I worship my ancestors.

6. Did you own land in the village?

No. I was given a few sao of ricefield, but I didn't corn much paddy. My main occupation was basket weaving.

7. How were you classified by the VC?

Poor Farmers.

8. Did you ever go to school?

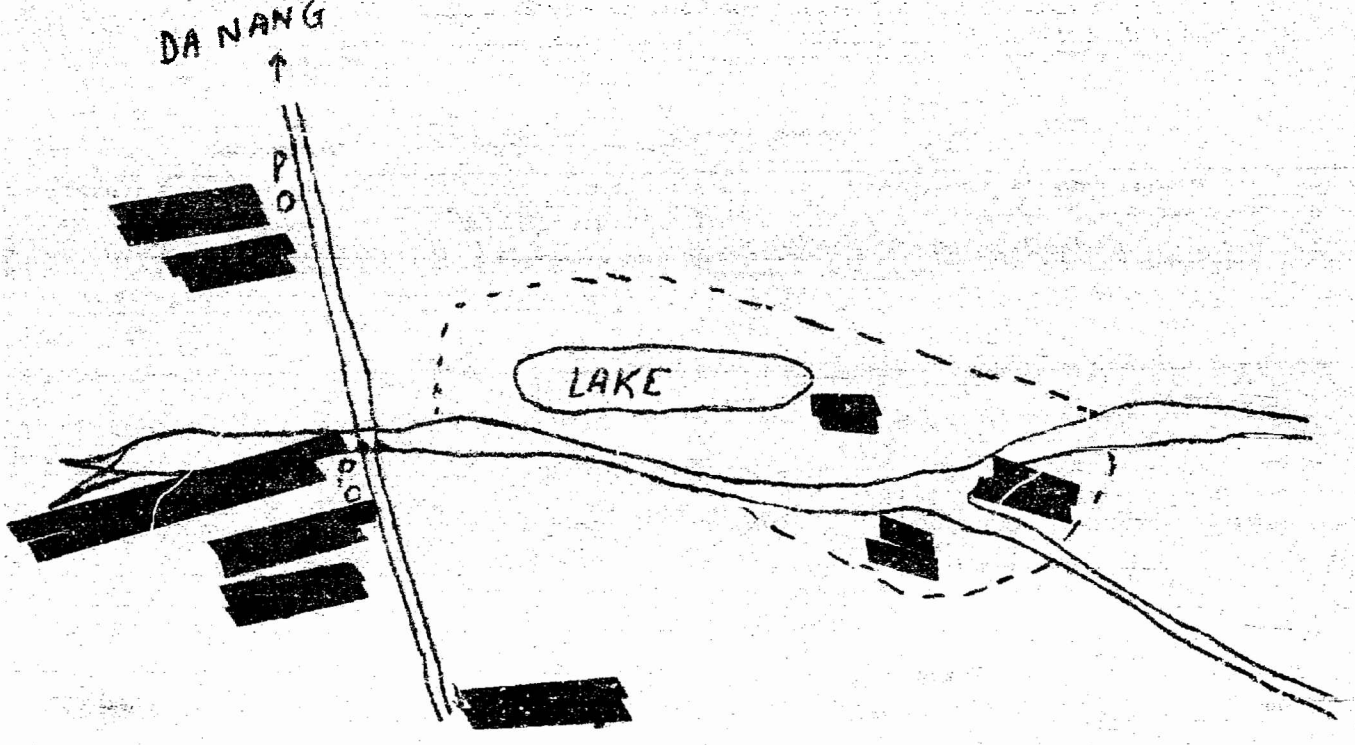
No, but I know how to read and write.

9. When did you come to this camp?

Before Tet. It was around January 1967. I'm not living in this camp. I built a little hut on public land just outside the camp to live.

10. How big was [redacted] Village?

The village was long and thin. It was situated along the [redacted] River. The people lived in [redacted] hamlets, and the rest of the village was swampy ricefield. There was a large lake cutting through Hamlets [redacted]



11. Did the GVN have any post in the village?

No, but not too far from the village there were two posts. The [redacted] was near the bridge, and the [redacted] a few kilometers away. Both posts were located along the [redacted] Road. Both were kept by soldiers from the [redacted] Bn.

12. How many people were there in your village?

Over [redacted] voters.

13. Do you mean there were over [redacted] people over 18 years of age?

Yes.

14. How many families were there in your hamlet?

I don't know exactly. A lot of them have left since the VC came. Those who could afford it left early. The poorer people had to stay behind and try to make a living on the land or by basket weaving.

15. When did the VC take over the village?

They took over my hamlet in 1965, but Hamlets [redacted] had been lost to them earlier, in 1964.

16. Did anyone in Hamlet [redacted] move to your hamlet?

Yes. After those hamlets were taken by the VC, some people moved up to Hamlet [redacted] A lot, though, still stayed behind with their land.

17. Did you ever visit Hamlet [redacted] when they were under VC control?

No.

18. How was your life in the village?

It was hard to make a living, and the taxes were too heavy. I was given a few sao of public land to till, but there were six mouths to feed in the family. I earned about 20 an in the August harvest, and 10 an in the March harvest. I kept those 30 an for the rainy days. I wove baskets for sale in the marketplaces to get money for rice.

19. Did you live in your village during the Diem regime?

No. When the Diem Government moved the people to Dong Thap Muoi, I went with them and spent three years there. It was in 1956. Then I moved to Phan Thiet for a few more years before I returned to the village in 1964 or 1963 -- I've forgotten which year. Back in the village, I found the people's life had been improved. There were more buffaloes and good fertilizers.

20. Did the village have a Village Council?

Yes, but when Hamlet [redacted] were taken by the VC, the Village Council only held office in [redacted]

21. What did the people say when the Village Council deserted them?

The people didn't say anything. Those who had worked for the GVN moved away with the Council. Other people stayed where they were.

22. Why did the GVN let the VC take over Hamlets [redacted]

I guess the GVN troops were rather weak at that time. They moved up to take Hamlet [redacted] only a few months later, and they had no trouble doing so.

23. Did you ever live in a Strategic Hamlet?

Yes, I spent two years in a Strategic Hamlet.

24. Did the VC destroy the Strategic Hamlet when they came?

No.

25. Did you have to contribute labor and money to the building of the Strategic Hamlet?

As soon as I came back from Phan Thiet, the Strategic Hamlet project was started. I did help build the fences.

26. Did the VC ever sneak into the Strategic Hamlet to make propaganda?

No. After the VC had taken Hamlets [redacted] the Village Council, whose office was in Hamlet [redacted] moved to [redacted]

The VC moved over to Hamlet [redacted] a few months later and made use of the office facilities. They arrested a few militia men, and took over the control of the rest of the village.

27. Were you in the village on the day the VC took control of your hamlet?

Yes, I was in Hamlet [redacted]

28. Did any fighting take place?

No. They fired a few shots, and called the people to a meeting and announced that the village was in their hands.

29. Did the VC put anyone up to be village head?

They had their own hard-core cadres whom they made village officials.

30. Did the VC arrest anyone?

Yes, they arrested some people who had worked for the GVN and hadn't had time to escape.

31. How many did they arrest?

They arrested three or four people. They killed one right in the village.

32. Did the people see the killing?

The killing took place in Hamlet [redacted] A lot of people saw it.

33. Why did the VC kill that man?

They accused him of having taken bribes from the people.

34. Was that man really guilty of having taken bribes from the people?

I don't know. I didn't live in the village long enough to know.

35. Was that man a member of the Village Council?

No, he belonged to a Buddhist organization.

36. What's the religion of most of the people in the village?

There were a lot of Buddhists and ancestor worshippers. There were also some Christians.

37. Did you find a lot of people who came from your village here in this camp?

Yes, there are about 150 people. Most of the refugees from my village are in Hoi An, weaving baskets for a living.

38. Do you make good money weaving baskets?

No, because bamboo is very expensive.

39. Did the VC station their troops in the village?

No. If they did, the troops would only stay in Hamlet [redacted] Hamlet [redacted] was too close to the paved road which was under GVN control. Ever since the VC took over the village, I never left my hamlet, I didn't know what happened in other places.

40. Did the VC often hold propaganda meetings in your hamlet?

At first, they called meetings very often two or three times a month. Later on, there was a meeting each month.

41. Did all the people go to meetings?

Nobody showed up when the VC called secret meetings. But when the VC officially took over the village, the people had to come to meetings, unless they had good excuses, such as bad weather or the roads being too muddy.

42. What did the cadres usually tell the people at meetings?

They said a lot of things. They said they would try to keep security for the people to make a living in peace.

43. What did they say about their purposes?

They said their purpose was to liberate the people, to develop the rural areas, to redistribute land to the people, etc.

44. Did the VC redistribute land to the people?

They did.

45. Were you given any land?

The Diem Government gave me 4 sao of ricefield. At that time, my family had had only two mouths to feed: me and my wife. When the VC came, they took away my land and then organized a land redistribution day. Landless farmers like me were gathered and were told to pick a number. The one who picked the No. 1 ticket was the first to choose a piece of land. I happened to be No. 100 so I didn't have any choice. I was given 4 sao of land, which wasn't any better than the piece given me by the GVN.

46. Were the cadres and guerrillas nice to the people?

They had to beg for a living. They told the people that the Front's purpose was to liberate the people, and it was up to the people to feed them. They moved from block to block to make propaganda and collect a few an or rice. If a family looked well-off to them, they'd stay for lunch or dinner. If a family looked poor, their visit wouldn't last very long.

47. What else did they say about the Front?

They said the Front was fighting the Americans, that it wanted this country to have one government instead of two. We didn't see them do us any good at all. They kept sniping at trucks and cars on the road, and the GVN force kept shelling the village. Who else but the people had to bear all the damage?

48. Do you know who the leader of the Front is?

The cadres told us the name once, but I've forgotten what it was.

49. Do you think the Front is peace loving?

I don't think the VC are peace-loving people.

50. Do you think the VC are patriotic?

The people in the liberated areas have to live under the bombs, shells, and bullets fired by both sides. Nobody really cared for us people. I remember how we were so happy during Tet 1966 because of the cease-fire. We felt so good being able to

leave the trenches for a few days and breathing the fresh air. But on the third day of Tet, they ordered us to go on labor-duty trip carrying rice for them. They just didn't care how we felt. They had no love for the people at all.

51. Were the VC well-disciplined?

Yes, they were. They never took anything from the people, only begged for it.

52. What did the VC say about the GVN?

I don't know what they said, I minded my own business.

53. What did the VC say about the GVN?

They said the GVN was being fed by the Americans, because the GVN served the Americans. But the Front served the people, therefore, the people ought to feed the Front. Whatever they said, they always returned to the subject of the people feeding the Front.

54. What did they say about North Vietnam?

They said North Vietnam was a Socialist state, where the people were very happy. They only had to work a certain number of hours a day.

55. Did you people believe what the VC said?

We listened to them as to what they wanted to say. We never contradicted them. But we thought to ourselves that we had known them too well to be fooled now. We knew the Communists always lived in hiding and ate off the people's hands.

56. What did the VC say about Red China?

I didn't hear them say anything about Red China.

57. What about Russia?

Never heard about it.

58. Did the VC send anyone to reform camps?

Yes. If they suspected that a man had been a National Revolutionary (GVN) cadre, they would send him to reform camp. See: they took over the village in October, and in November they started sending people to reform camps.

59. What did the people think of that?

The people were afraid, of course. They were afraid for the fate of the victims. You know, people in the rural areas have a lot of children. If a father was taken away, the rest of his family would get into trouble.

60. What did the people say?

The people were concerned about the families of the victims, but they didn't say anything.

61. Were there many youths over 16 years of age in your hamlet?

They all had left the hamlet before the VC came.

62. Where did they move?

They moved to the GVN-controlled areas and got enlisted into the ARVN.

63. How many were still in the village when the VC came?

There were a few left, but they tried to get away.

64. Did they ask the youths to join their army?

They surely did. Even the women were talked into joining their army. All the youths over 16 years of age were invited to education sessions over and over again until they consented to join the VC army.

65. How many in your hamlet were persuaded to join the VC?

Four. They had been sent to education sessions several times, each session lasted from three to four days. Two of them have left the VC and are now in Hoi An.

66. Were all four male?

No. Two boys and two girls. One boy and one girl have left the VC.

67. Did they join the VC army?

I don't know. I was told that they seved in the battlefields, but I don't know in what capacity.

68. Did your hamlet have any guerrillas?

Yes. They were natives of the hamlet who had been forced to be guerrillas. Each hamlet had two or three guerrillas.

69. Were you a guerrilla?

No. I'm too old.

70. How old were the guerrillas?

They were young unmarried men.

71. Did anyone from your hamlet serve in the VC units?

Yes. My bloc had one guy serving in some VC unit away from the village.

72. Did the guerrillas get paid?

They were given two cans of rice each a day.

73. Were you a member of the Farmers' Association?

Yes, I had to be one.

74. Did members of the Farmers' Association get help from the cadres?

What did the cadres have to help us? They didn't have any tractors. We still had to use plows and picks.

75. What's the use of joining the Association?

We had to join the Association and go to meetings and listen to them tell us to increase production.

76. Did the cadres do anything to families of GVN soldiers?

Members of those families were sent to educational sessions very often where they were told to call their relatives home.

77. Did anyone call his relatives home?

Everybody said "yes" to the cadres, but no one called his relatives home. The people would rather go to educational sessions once every four or five days. Those families were usually well-to-do, they didn't have to work hard, and their being sent to educational sessions didn't bother them much.

78. How many of such families were there in your hamlet?

Four. Two families have succeeded in getting out of the village.

79. Did the VC control the movement of the people?

Yes. They built fences all over the place. The people could only get out of the hamlet through one gate. Those who intended to escape had to pretend that they were taking a walk, wearing ordinary clothes, carry nothing. Once they got out of the gate, they just had to move quickly away.

80. Did the cadres give any help to families of VC fighters?

What did they have to help?

81. Did the cadres promise anything to the men before they joined the army?

They ordered other farmers to contribute half a day's work to those families. They themselves didn't give any help. They didn't have any way to help: they had no tractors, no buffaloes.

82. Where did the VC get land to distribute to the poor?

They distributed public land to the poor farmers. If I left behind one mau of land, for instance, they'd confiscate it and redistribute to those who were capable of producing more paddy. At harvest time, they collected a percentage of the earnings to feed the guerrillas.

83. Were the people glad to get more land?

Sometimes it was no use to own too much land. Take my hamlet, for example: there were only a few pairs of buffaloes. Those who owned them had at least two mau or more of land. By the time they finished plowing their fields, it was too late for us to start. We had to work with our hands, and we were unable to prepare a large field for planting. The people would be happy if they were given land and also the use of tractors. Without tractors or buffaloes, there was no use of having more land than one could work on. Under the GVN control, the farmers' life was at its best. The government made loans to the people to buy working cattle; tractors could be rented. Under VC control, we only had our hands to work with.

84. Did you have to pay troop support tax?

I didn't earn enough paddy to pay troop support tax. As I told you earlier, I only earned 30 an of paddy a year, and there were 6 mouths to feed in the family. But the VC taxed the income earned from basket weaving. Each year my family had to pay them 270 piasters.

85. Do you consider the rate reasonable?

I think it was too heavy. Three of us worked on basket weaving, and only earned from 70 to 80 piasters a day. We considered the rate too heavy.

86. Had you had to pay tax to the GVN before the VC came?

Yes. I had had to pay 250 piasters a year, but my income had been higher.

87. Did the VC allow the people to sell their produce outside the village?

Yes. the people could take their produce, except rice, to sell at the highway. The VC imposed tight control over the merchants, and collected a sales tax.

88. Did the VC organize the women?

Yes. Women had to join the Women's Association. They were called mothers or sisters of fighters. The VC, once in a while, ordered the women to raise funds for the fighters.

89. Did fighters often come to the hamlet?

Once in a while, a unit stopped by the village after an operation. Fighters seldom came to Hamlets [redacted] because they were too close to the highway.

90. Where were the units stationed?

That, I don't know.

91. Who were the village cadres?

They were natives of the village.

92. How did they become cadres?

I don't know.

93. Were any of them regroupees?

No.

94. Were any of them Northerners?

No.

95. How did the cadres treat the people?

The cadres were young, and their manner was crude. The old folks in the village were hurt because the cadres didn't show proper respect to them.

96. Did the village have a Party Chapter?

I don't know.

97. Did you know the Chapter's Secretary?

No. I guess they had all sorts of Party Chapters, but they didn't stay in my hamlet.

98. How did the VC collect taxes in your hamlet if they hardly showed up there?

They sent men to estimate the amount of paddy each family was about to earn each season, and fix the tax rate. At harvest time, they sent men to collect.

99. What would happen if a man failed to fill his quota?

He would be sent to re-education until he paid all the tax fixed by the cadres.

100. Did the people like the cadres?

No. The people had lived with the GVN before and they had had an easy time. Ever since the VC came, they have had a lot of difficulties doing farm work. It took too long to prepare the fields without the help of buffaloes. The crops weren't good because we failed to plant on time. Besides that, the VC kept sniping at the highway, the people had to beg them to stop and let the people work in peace. The VC argued: "Our job is to fight the enemy, and yours is to produce. Why don't you mind your own business? You want to fulfill your duty, what about us?" There was nothing the people could do. For each shot of the VC's rifles, the GVN post replied with a mortar shell. The people hated the VC for this. Those who were lucky, got away. Others had to stay behind and try to make a living under the rain of bullets and bombs.

101. Did you have to go on labor-duty trips?

Yes.

102. How long did each trip last?

From one to two months. Short trips lasted from two to five days. Men of my age had to go on one-month trips. Other men went on shorter trips. Young men who had refused to join their army had to go on two or three-month trips.

103. What did you do?

We had to carry rice from place to place. Sometimes, we had to carry the wounded fighters.

104. Did you ever have to carry wounded fighters?

Never. I was ordered to carry wounded fighters once, but once, but because of the flood and because there were more laborers than needed, I was sent home!

105. What did the people think of having to go on labor-duty trips?

Nobody liked to go on labor-duty trips. We had to walk in the mountain, carrying heavy loads. We were given rotten rice to eat. Upon return, everybody got sick with malaria and malnutrition.

106. How many laborers had to go together on each trip?

Some fifty laborers.

107. How far did you have to go?

On a one-month trip, I had to walk some 50 kilometers each way.

108. Who helped your family when you were away?

Nobody.

109. How many times did you go on labor-duty trips?

Just once.

110. Did you get sick when you came back?

No. I travelled a lot, but I never got sick.

111. Could you refuse to do labor duty?

No one could refuse. The VC would keep on sending we to reform camp until we volunteered to do labor duty.

112. Was your village often bombed and shelled?

Yes, each time the VC sniped at the vehicles on the highway, the village got a shower of bombs and shells.

113. Who suffered most from the bombing and shelling?

The people, of course. There wasn't a house left in the whole village. The VC had nothing to lose. They hid themselves in the trenches whenever the two posts shelled the village.

114. Did the cadres urge the people to go to the post and protest against the shelling?

Then the Buddhist Association was still powerful, the cadres urged the Buddhists to stage protest demonstrations against the posts' shellings.

Why did the cadres pick the Buddhists?

Because the Buddhists outnumbered the Christians and ancestor worshippers. The VC ordered the people to carry the victims of the bombings and shellings to the posts to protest. If anyone refused to take the body of his loved one to the post, he wouldn't get the permission to bury it. Usually, the people carried their dead and wounded past the village gate, and/returned. Later on, the VC had to send spies to watch the people, and we had to go to the posts and tell the GVN authorities the truth: "We, the people of such and such village, are the victims of the post's shelling. We'd like the GVN authorities to do something for us." The authorities made some inquiries and then sent us on home.

116. Didn't you ask the post to stop shelling?

No. We didn't want to the whipped by the GVN soldiers.

117. Did the people complain to each other?

The people's misery was nothing new.

118. Did any clash between the GVN and the VC troops take place in or near your village?

Yes, there was a clash in April 1966 in the village.

119. What happened?

The GVN troops carried an operation to Hamlet [redacted] where they met with the VC. The fighting lasted from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m.

120. Who was defeated?

No one was defeated. After the clash, both sides claimed victory. We people were hiding in the trenches during the clash. When we got out, we saw countless numbers of bodies lying around. The GVN troops carried away some seven or eight dead. The VC sufferedheavier damage.

121. What unit did the VC belong to?

They were of a regular unit.

122. Were they stationed in Hamlet [redacted]

I don't know when they got to Hamlet [redacted] but apparently the GVN troops found it out, and carried out an operation in the village on time.

123. What did the VC tell the people after the clash?

They said they had won.

124. Did the people believe what the VC said?

On one hand, the VC said they had won, on the other hand, we had seen a lot of dead. We really didn't know what to believe.

125. Did the people suffer any damage?

Some people in Hamlet [redacted] were killed.

126. Did the village have a hospital?

No.

127. Did the village have a school for the children?

Yes, but the people didn't dare send their children to school. I don't know about Hamlets [redacted] but no one in Hamlets [redacted] and [redacted] sent his children to school.

128. When you were in the village, did you hear news from the GVN-controlled areas?

Yes, we listened secretly to the radio sometimes.

129. Do you know who the leader of the GVN is?

I heard the name, but I've forgotten it.

130. What do you know about the purpose of the GVN?

I am only a plain, ignorant citizen. I don't know anything.

131. Which side do you think is stronger, the GVN or the VC?

I found that the GVN is stronger.

132. Even if it has failed to keep your village?

I don't know. We people always remembered the nine years of the Diem Government during which we all were able to make a living in peace. We didn't know why Mr. Diem was overthrown, but since his death we have been threatened by the VC.

153. How did the Village Council officials treat the people?

I don't know. I didn't live in the village long enough when the Village Council was still around to know.

134. Which program on the Saigon radio did you like to listen to?

I didn't listen to the radio often enough to know.

135. When you were in the village, did you read newspapers?

No. There weren't any newspapers to read.

136. While in the village, did you ever hear of the Chieu Hoi program?

Yes, we read leaflets.

137. Did the VC allow you to read leaflets?

They couldn't keep an eye on us all the time.

138. Do you know of any VC fighters or guerrillas who have rallied to the GVN?

A few guerrillas who were natives of [redacted] Village have left the VC ranks to rally to the GVN. They have joined the ARVN. They had joined the VC when their village was liberated. Later on, they found life too hard, so they just quit.

139. Was the village ever sprayed with chemicals?

Never.

140. Have you ever heard of such an operation?

I've heard of it, but I haven't seen any.

141. Who told you about it?

The VC. They said that in some villages North of the province, the Americans sprayed poisonous chemicals to kill the trees and to make the people sick. The reason was that the VC position was so strong in those areas that the Americans failed to get in. Consequently, the Americans tried chemical warfare against their enemy. The VC ended by advising the people to plant potato and manioc, for they said the edible roots grew underground and, therefore, wouldn't be affected by the chemicals.

142. Did the Americans ever get to your village?

Never.

143. Who helped you to get out of the village?

We gave advance warning to the soldiers at [redacted] that on such and such day nine families would come out. We asked them not to shoot us. But only four families could get away. Five others were arrested by the VC and were sent to reform camps.

144. Why were those five families arrested, while you got away?

Because they were clumsy. They lit their lamps to pack their things. Once the VC saw the light, they knew that something was going on. As for me, I slept in the trench until dawn, and then took my family to the highway where the GVN soldiers were on hand to greet us. We didn't take along anything.

145. How could you get away so easily?

From my house, I could see the Nga Tu Post. It was only [redacted] between my house and the highway. It was too bad the others couldn't get away. We had planned together for months. We had planned to use our sampans to move from our houses to the tip of the lake, and then cross the ricefield to the highway. When the news of the other families' arrest broke out, I gave up the plan, and took my family to the highway on foot instead.

146. Where did you take refuge first?

We walked to [redacted] Post and then moved to this place to live temporarily with the refugees here. I've applied for a piece of government land to build a hut to live/because it's too crowded to live in the refugees' home, and we couldn't take advantage of their hospitality all the time. Two of the families have moved to Hoi An.

147. Did you receive anygift from the GVN or the Americans?

The Americans bring gifts to this camp very often, but we didn't receive anything ourselves because we are not living within the boundary of this camp. The Americans often brought firewood, rice, and wheat to the people here.

148. Why did you decide to leave the village?

It wasn't safe to live in the village. The two GVN posts kept shelling us. No house in the hamlet was left intact. We asked them to stop shelling, but they wouldn't listen to us. Besides, the VC kept ordering us to go on labor duty trips and making us pay contributions. It was impossible to make a living if you had to be away three months out of a year. All these things added up to make life unbearable for us. We just had to leave.

149. Where did most refugees from your village go?

They went everywhere: Hoi An, Da Nang, Hoa Khanh, etc.

150. Have any of them gone back to the village?

Not yet.

151. Do you want to go back to the village?

Nor until the village is pacified by the GVN. What's the use of going back now?

152. Do you still have your GVN ID card?

Yes. Most of the people in the village still keep their ID cards. We could travel in the GVN controlled areas without trouble.

153. Have you found a job yet?

Not yet. I'd like to work for the Americans, but I have no connection. I don't know how to get the job.

154. What are you doing for a living?

We are still weaving baskets and earn about 60 piasters a day.

155. How many refugees are there in this camp?

I don't know.

156. Are you afraid of a VC attack here?

No. I haven't even heard a sound of gunfire. It's so peaceful here.

157. Have you heard news from your village?

No.

158. Did you ever see any foreigners when you were in the village?

No.

159. Who else besides the Americans are helping the GVN fight the VC?

I know the GVN has other allies, but I've forgotten the names of the countries.

160. What do you wish for yourself now?

I wish the GVN would soon defeat the VC, so that we could return to the village and make a living in peace. If the VC ever win this war, we'll never go back to the village.

161. What will become of the people if the VC win the war?

We'll be wandering around all our lives.

162. What do you wish your son to be?

It was partly because of the children that I decided to leave the village. Now that I'm in the secure area, I hope to find a job soon and send my children to school to get an education. If they are literate, they won't be too miserable.

163. Which side do you think is having the support of the people of your village?

All the people supported the GVN. No one liked those damned VC, who were good for nothing except sniping at the vehicles on the highway and drawing shells to the village.

164. What more do you think the GVN should do for the people?

I know that the GVN is very helpful to the refugees. I don't know what more it could do because I'm rather new here.

165. What should the GVN do to earn more support from the people?

I think the GVN loves the people. That's why we left the VC to join the GVN. While the VC harrassed the people, the GVN is concerned about them.

166. This is the picture of a ladder. The bottom rung or rung No. 10 represents the worst life you could imagine in the village. The top rung represents the best life. Where were you when the GVN was still in control of your village?

At rung No. 9. I was poor, but there were poorer people.

167. At which rung did you find most of the people in the village?

Between 5 and 10.

168. Where were you when the VC got control of your village?

At No. 10.

169. Where are you now?

At No. 10.

170. If you could ask three things from the GVN, what would you ask?

First I'd ask the government to have mercy on me and let me stay here to make a living. Secondly, I'd be glad to receive any kind of help at all from the GVN.

171. Have you applied for a job?

I can't. In order to get a job, I have to be recommended by two non-commissioned officers. As all the soldiers I know are privates, I don't know what to do.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

The interview was conducted in a refugee's home at the Catholic Camp. It was hot, dusty, and noisy. The subject looked bored and was unwilling to answer questions.

No. AGR 94

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

1. Name of Interviewer: [redacted] 22

2. Name of Subject : [redacted] copy

3. Time and Date of Interview:

   From 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 on March 1967

   From _____ to _____ on _____ 1966

   From _____ to _____ on _____ 1966

   From _____ to _____ on _____ 1966

   Total time: 3 hours

   Interview based on: tape (X) hand written notes ( )

4. Place of Interview:

   [redacted] Catholic Refugee Camp

5. Sex of subject: Male (X) Female ( )

6. Age of subject: (1929) 38

7. Ethnic background: Vietnamese

8. Place of birth:

   hamlet _____

   village [redacted]

   district Duy Xuyen

   province Quang Nam

9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee:

   hamlet _____

   village [redacted]

   district _____

   province _____

10. (a) Length of residence in last location: 38 years

    (b) Who controlled the place of residence:

    GVN ( ) VC (X) Contested ( )

    (c) Since when controlled or contested? November, 1965

11. Number of brothers (2) and sisters (1)

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age: _____

13. Marital status: Married

14. Number of children: 4

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age: none

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject (X) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject (X) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion: Ancestor worship

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge: basket weaving

19. Economic status:
(a) VC designation Poor Farmers
(b) Landowner? Yes How much land 4 sao

20. Education:
Illiterate ( )
Literate (X)
Schooling completed: _____

21. Any relatives in VC: father & brother

22. Any relatives in GVN: _____

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by:
(a) French
(b) GVN
(c) VC

24. When became a refugee: January 1967

25. Where took refuge first: [redacted] Catholic Camp

26. Parent residence: Outside the [redacted] Catholic Camp

AGR

INTERVIEW

95

THE RAND CORPORATION

INTERVIEWS CONCERNING THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR-95

Date of Interview: : March [redacted] 1967

Subject's Category : Refugee: January 1967

Area left : Hamlet [redacted]
[redacted] Village
Duy Xuyen District
Quang Nam Province

This interview is for the information of US and Vietnamese official agencies and personnel on a need-to-know basis. Permission to distribute or show this interview to non-official persons requires the prior approval of The RAND Corporation and the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs.

1. Where do you come from?

From Hamlet [redacted] Village, Duy Xuyen District, Quang Nam Province.

2. Were you born there?

Yes. I was born there and have gone through a lot of experiences. My father died in the early 40's, and then the war with the French broke out. My house was burned to the ground. We lived through the Resistance in misery. Then came the peaceful years under the GVN, when the people could make a living in peace and freedom. I was given a few sao of land to work on. My wife did some trading. In my spare time, I wove baskets and made some more money. We were doing very well. In fact, we were able to buy a few more sao of land. Suddenly came the flood of 1965, and then the GVN lost control of the village, the VC moved in, and we were thrown back into misery.

3. How did the VC take over the village?

First, we suffered from a typhoon. Our house was blown away. A flood immediately followed the typhoon and we lost the whole March crop. We got some aid from the GVN to keep ourselves alive, and tried to plant another crop. By the end of the year, somehow, the VC came to hold meetings and announced that the village was liberated. They started to build fences and called the place a combat hamlet." The GVN village authorities moved to the [redacted] Post. The VC had a free hand to do whatever they liked with the people. They forbade us to travel to the GVN-controlled areas. I went on living in the hamlet, but life became harder and harder. There was the danger of the bombings and shellings, and we had to go on labor-duty trips and to pay agricultural tax. Talking about agricultural tax, it was sickeningly heavy. I only had a little piece of land of bad quality, with no buffaloes to help with the farm work, yet the tax rate fixed by the VC was so high I could hardly make enough to pay them. So I decided to leave. It was impossible to live there any longer.

4. What's your religion?

Buddhism

5. Do you have any brothers and sisters?

No.

6. How many children do you have?

Three, all of them under 15. My wife and children are here with me.

7. How were you classified by the VC?

The Viet Minh called me "poor farmer" during the Resistance. The VC now call me "middle farmer."

8. Why?

Because I had been able to buy a few more sao of land when the GVN was still in the village.

9. What's your education?

My parents were poor and couldn't afford to send me to school, but I know how to read and write.

10. When did you come here to take refuge?

I came here in January 1967.

11. How big is [redacted] Village?

It's [redacted] I don't know the number of people, but there were a lot of them when I was still there. I lived in Hamlet [redacted] which is near the highway.

12. When did the VC first set foot to your village?

In 1965. They took Hamlet [redacted] in July, and moved up to Hamlet [redacted] in September. In October or November, they appeared in Hamlet [redacted] to hold meetings at night.

13. What did they tell the people at meetings?

We were told not to cooperate with the American Imperialists. Whenever, they came to hold meetings, I took my children to [redacted] Village to pass the night. It wasn't that I had anything against the VC. To the VC, as well as to the GVN, I was just a plain, ignorant citizen. I was afraid that if I

stayed in the house, the VC would order me to go to meeting at gunpoint, and the following morning, when the VC had all disappeared, the GVN authorities would accuse me of working for the VC.

14. Did the GVN troops still come to your hamlet then?

Yes. The hamlet was contested between November 1965 till February 1966. After Tet 1966, the VC took over for good, and the GVN troops no longer came. The VC built fences to keep the people inside, and I no longer went to [redacted] Village.

15. Did the GVN troops ever carry out operations in your village?

Not when the village was under VC control. The GVN guarded the highway outside the village, and the VC usually sniped at them. We farmers had to beg the VC to stop: "It's all right for you to fight, but if we aren't left in peace to produce, you won't be able to fight very long." They told us to shut up or they'd send us to thought reform camps.

16. Did the VC fire at the vehicles on the highway?

Yes, and they'd come back and brag that they'd destroyed so many cars. Actually, we didn't see any car being destroyed by the VC at all. Once in a great while, they succeeded in wounding somebody sitting on the trucks, but that's all.

17. Did you ever live in a Strategic Hamlet?

Yes.

18. When was the Strategic Hamlet built?

In 1962, or 1963. Mr. Diem was still alive then.

19. What did the people know about the death of Diem?

We heard the news of his death, but that's all. We didn't know he died.

20. Under GVN control, did the people get help from the government?

Yes. The people could borrow money to do farm work through the Agricultural Credit. I didn't borrow because I didn't want to be in debt to anyone.

21. Did the GVN have tractors for rent?

No, but the people could borrow money to buy buffaloes.

22. Did the GVN distribute land to the people?

Yes, the government distributed public land to poor farmers to make a living. I got five sao.

23. Did the VC let you keep those five sao of land when they came?

Under the Diem Government, a lot of people left the village in the GVN-organized move to the South. After Mr. Diem's death, a lot of people moved back to the village. When the VC came, they took back our land and divided it up into smaller pieces.

24. How did you feel when the VC first took over Hamlet [redacted]

We were afraid the GVN might move in to fight off the VC, and we would be caught in between. When the VC took over the whole village, our fear became true. The village was shelled all the time by the GVN troops in the [redacted] Posts.

25. What did the VC tell you at meetings?

They said it was the people's duty to fight off the enemy and safeguard the villages. Those who didn't fight should contribute labor and material to the struggle. By that, they meant we had to dig communication trenches, combat trenches, and go on labor duty trips.

26. What did they say the purposes of the Front were?

They didn't say.

27. What did they say about the Americans?

They only said that we had to do our best to annihilate the American imperialists.

28. What did they say the Americans were doing in Vietnam?

They didn't say.

29. Did they say they had any allies?

They said they got help from Russia and Red China in their effort to liberate the South.

30. What did they say about life in the North?

They said the North had achieved Socialism, and the people were very happy. Workers only worked a certain number of hours a day. The people ate well.

31. Did you believe the cadres?

We didn't know what to believe and what not to believe. At first, a lot of people believed everything the cadres said. Later, the people got fed up, because the cadres overdid themselves. They lied most of the time.

32. How did you know they lied?

Everybody knew the result of their sniping on the highway, yet they always claimed that they had killed a lot of GVN soldiers and destroyed a lot of vehicles. The people said to each other: "How could they kill as many people as they always claim? We didn't see any one killed, we only heard them lie." The people reasoned to themselves that if the cadres lied about what happened in front of the people's eyes, they would never tell the truth about what happened in some remote place.

33. Did the VC arrest any GVN officials?

No. All the GVN officials had left the village before the VC came.

34. Did the VC make the youths join their army?

All the youths over 16 years of age were told to join the army or the guerrillas. Anyone who refused would be sent to re-education sessions until he consented to join.

35. How many youths in Hamlet [redacted] have joined the VC army?

Quite a few have joined, but I don't know the exact number. Right in my bloc, no one has joined them. The boys in my bloc would rather go to re-education sessions than join the VC army or guerrillas.

36. How many have joined the ARVN?

Before the VC came, two boys in my bloc joined the ARVN. A lot more have joined recently.

37. How did the cadres behave toward the people?

At first, they were sweet to the people. Later on, they became rude and hardly anyone could agree with their arguments.

38. Who were these cadres?

They were villagers who had volunteered to work for the VC when they'd first come.

39. Who were the hard-core cadres?

Those weren't natives of the village. They came to organize the people, train new cadres, and then moved on to other villages.

40. Did you know anything about the Front?

We saw the VC and we heard the name of the Front, but we didn't know anything about it.

41. Did the cadres love the people?

Cadres of district or provincial levels showed their concern about the people. Hamlet and village cadres didn't care a straw about the people.

42. Did high ranking cadres often come to your village?

Not very often. Besides, I seldom went to meetings. Meetings were usually held too far from my house. I was too lazy to go.

43. Were the cadres well disciplined?

I don't know.

44. Did they ever steal from the people?

No. When they wanted something from the people, they asked for it. They never stole anything. I heard the high-ranking cadres tell the lower ones to beg the people for food if they were hungry, and never to steal anything from anyone.

45. Where did the cadres send the people to re-education sessions?

Re-education sessions were held right in the village.

46. Where were the reform sessions held?

If you committed an offense for the first time, you'd be sent to a reform session held right in the village. For the second time, you'd be sent to the district. No one knew for sure where the district was.

47. Has anyone in your hamlet sent to reform sessions?

No.

48. Have you heard of anyone who had been sent to reform sessions?

I heard that some people in Hamlet [redacted] had been sent to reform sessions. I don't know them personally, though.

49. Were you afraid of being sent to reform sessions?

No. I've never done anything wrong to be sent to reform sessions. I've always been a law-abiding citizen.

50. Did the young men like joining their army?

No, although the VC tried to force them to join their army by sending them to re-education sessions.

51. Did anyone like joining the ARVN?

The youths would rather join the ARVN. They said the ARVN soldiers were freer. Even if they died, they died in comfort. As for VC soldiers, they had to hide in the mountains and put up with deprivations and hardships. If they died, their families wouldn't be told.

52. Did the youths really say so?

Yes.

53. How did the cadres motivate the young men to join their army?

They said young men were pillars of the country. It was their duty to fight against the enemy, safeguard the villages, bring about rights and happiness to the people. Therefore, all the youths were urged to join the army.

54. Did the VC urge the women to join the army?

They did, especially in the last few months. A lot of girls from the village joined the VC.

55. What did they do for the VC?

We were told that they joined the army. I don't know what they did in the army. They were taken away from the village for training.

56. Were families of VC fighters given special treatment by the cadres?

The cadres always praised the fighters' and guerrillas' families, but they didn't give them any help.

57. Were those families proud of their boys being in the VC army?

They said they were just plain citizens, they had to be obedient to the authorities, no matter who the authorities were. A man in my bloc was blind and was taken care of by his only daughter. Yet the VC forced the girl to join them. The girl refused and was sent to re-education sessions several times. Finally, she gave in when the neighbors promised to take care of the old man while she was away.

58. How did the cadres treat families of GVN soldiers?

They didn't harass those families, but they asked them to call their boys back. They said: "Call the boys home. Don't be foolish. One of these days we'll attack their units, and they won't be able to escape death."

59. Were the poor people glad to receive more land from the VC?

No, because the tax rate was too high.

60. Could the people give the land back to the cadres?

If anyone had good reason, he might give back the land. But if he was able to work the land, he wasn't supposed to give it back for reasons of heavy taxation. Most of the people who had land near the highway gave it back to the cadres, saying: "It's too dangerous working near the highway. There's too much bombing and shelling. Besides, we had no buffaloes to help us. We give up!" If you had a piece of land in a safer place, you had to work it, or you'd have to pay taxes just the same.

61. Did the cadres call you a "middle farmer"?

Yes, although I had only 2-and-a-half sao of land. They knew I had a little money put aside, so they called me "middle farmer".

62. Were there any landowners in the village?

The richest men in the village owned only 10 mau of land.

63. How many kinds of taxes did you have to pay the VC?

The main kind was agricultural tax.

64. How much did you have to pay a year?

I don't know how they went about fixing the rate, but they made me pay 50 kg of paddy a year. I had an orchard, and they estimated my earnings from fruit trees in terms of paddy, and taxed me accordingly. My wife did a little trading to help make ends meet. The VC had made up a list of merchants to put a commercial tax on, but it hadn't been enforced when we left the village.

65. What other contributions did you have to pay?

The VC asked us to take a handful of rice from the amount we used for each of our meals, to put in an "economy jar". The cadres came by to collect this rice every two weeks.

66. Could the people sell their produce outside the village?

The people weren't allowed to sell anything outside the village, but they always managed to take something to the [redacted] Marketplace to sell.

67. Did the people take rice to [redacted] Marketplace to sell?

The people didn't have enough rice to eat, let alone to sell it. If anyone had a few/of rice left, he'd save it for the rainy days. The people, on the contrary, usually bought rice from the [redacted] Marketplace to eat.

68. What did the people sell at [redacted] Marketplace?

Pigs, chickens, bamboo baskets, and vegetables.

69. Were the people allowed to buy things from the GVN-controlled market?

Yes. The people were allowed to buy kerosene, candles, cotton clothes, etc, from the GVN-controlled areas. The people in Hamlets [redacted] were under tighter control than those in Hamlets [redacted] who lived near the highway. When the people in Hamlets [redacted] could get away, they'd rather take the waterway toward [redacted] than go up to [redacted]

70. What kinds of organizations did the VC have for the people in the village?

First, they put up some people to be Front Cell Leaders. Later on, they changed the name to Farmers' Association Cell Leaders and called all the farmers to join. Youths had the Youths' Group. Others joined the Women's Association, Children's Association, Old Folks' Association, etc. The main purpose of the organizations was to facilitate the collection of paddy or money.

71. Who was the highest ranking cadre in the village?

The Chairman of the People's Committee was the highest ranking cadre.

72. What's the Autonomous Committee?

That kind of Committee only existsat hamlet level. The Chairman of the Autonomous Committee is the hamlet chief.

73. How important was the Secretary of the Village Party Chapter?

I don't know.

74. How many cadres were there in your hamlet?

The Autonomous Committee Chairman, the vice-chairman, the hamlet unit leader, and the political officer. Those were the four main cadres. There were guerrillas, but I guess they weren't cadres.

75. How many guerrillas were there?

There was a squad of guerrillas: 12 men.

76. Were the cadres and guerrillas natives of the hamlet?

Yes. The cadres were volunteers. The guerrillas were drafted.

77. Did the guerrillas get paid?

No. They got two cans of rice a day, but no money.

78. Did the guerrillas have time to help their own families?

Yes. They were on guard duty at night. In the daytime, they could help their families do production work.

79. Did the people like the guerrillas?

The people complained about the guerrillas all the time, for they often sniped at the vehicles on the highway, and thus drew fire from the posts.

80. Since they were children of the people in the hamlet, couldn't the parents control them?

No. They didn't care a straw about their parents. Once they stepped out of the house carrying a gun, nobody else existed in their eyes. They didn't care what might happen to their families. A nephew of mine was a guerrilla, and I practically had to go down on my knees to convince him not to snipe at the vehicles on the highway: "I beg you, nephew, not to fire at the vehicles or the whole village will be destroyed." He said: "Sorry, Uncle, but I've got to do my duty."

81. Did the people like the cadres?

No one could like them after living with them for a while.

82. Did the cadres ever try to help the people?

They talked of help, but they never practiced what they said. It was hard for the people to seek their help. Sometimes, we had to ask them permission to do one thing or another, and they were nowhere to be found. They didn't have any fixed office, they kept wandering around.

83. Did the cadres ever quarrel with each other?

Yes, but it was their business. We people knew nothing about their affairs.

84. Did the VC arrest or liquidate anyone in the hamlet?

They arrested some former Popular Force men, and sent them to reform camp. Those people were released after a few months, and returned to live in the village.

85. Did you and the people in the village have to go on labor-duty trips?

Yes, but when it was my turn to go, I fell sick and was excused.

86. Were you really sick?

Yes. I promised the cadres I would go as soon as I was well again.

87. How long did each trip last?

People between the age of 30 and 45 had to go for one month. Young men under 30 had to join the regular army or the guerrillas, or they'd have to go on labor-duty trips for two months at a time.

88. Did the people prefer going on labor-duty trips to joining the VC army?

Yes. A man could go back to his family after a trip, but he couldn't if he joined the army.

89. What did the people say about having to do labor duty?

The people complained a lot. The people had to put up with hardships and hazard of death.

90. Did anyone die because of a labor-duty trip?

I've heard that a man in my hamlet died because of labor duty. He was killed by the bombs.

91. Did the VC build combat hamlets in the village?

They built combat fences all over the place. We couldn't even use our bicycles. The roads were dug up or fences were built across them. Sometimes, we had to step down in a ditch on the roadside, and climb up a roadblock to get back to the main road. It was terribly inconvenient. The VC explained that the purpose of the fences and roadblocks was to slow down the enemy and give them time to withdraw.

92. What did the VC do to control the movement of the people?

When we wanted to go anywhere, we had to let the Farmers' Association cadres in the hamlet know. If we wanted to go out of the village, we had to secure the permission of the village cadres. We also had to report the presence of our visitors from outside the village.

93. When you were in the village, what did you hear about life in the front army?

I didn't hear anything about it.

94. Did the VC ever ask the people to take care of the wounded fighters?

No. I don't know about other hamlets, but not in my hamlet. It's too close to the highway to be safe from GVN attacks.

95. Did the Front units ever pass by your hamlet?

Never.

96. Have the VC been increasing their activities in Quang Nam?

I only saw them liberate one more village last year: [redacted] Village.

97. Did the VC ever tell the people about the defeats their units had suffered?

Never. The VC always talked of victories. Once in a while, we turned on Saigon Radio and learned about the VC's defeats, but we never heard about them from the VC themselves.

98. Did you listen to the radio often?

I only listened to GVN broadcasts in secret. Once they caught me red-handed, and they took away my radio set for two days. They intended/to give it back, but I went to their office and begged them. I said it was the first time I ever tuned in GVN broadcasts. Moreover, it was only "Cai Luong" I was listening to.

99. Did you often listen to Radio Hanoi?

We were fed up with Radio Hanoi. They kept repeating the same thing every day: How many companies of Americans and GVN had been annihilated in the South.

100. What did you hear about the bombing of the North?

I've never heard about it over Radio Hanoi. They only talked about their victories in the South, and about the achievements of their cooperatives and textile factories. They urged the people to try their best and "pull" -- that means pulling the plow without the help of the machinery. Young men should join the army and let the women take over production work.

101. Did you believe the news broadcast by Radio Hanoi?

No.

102. Did you believe the news broadcast by Radio Saigon?

I believed 70 percent of it.

103. Did the VC have a school for the children?

They borrowed the people's houses to use as school rooms, but no one sent his children to school. Everybody was afraid of the bombings and shelling.

My three children have stopped going to school since the GVN lost control of my village.

104. Did the VC have a hospital for the people?

No. If anyone was sick, he had to go to the GVN-controlled areas to seek medical treatment. The VC didn't openly allow us to do so, but they had no objection when someone was wounded or fatally sick.

105. Did you know anything about the Government in Saigon?

No.

106. Did you know who the leaders of the GVN were?

I heard of Mr. Nguyen Van Thieu being the national leader.

107. What did you know about the purposes of the GVN?

The purposes of the GVN are to annihilate the Communists, to save the country and the people. That's what I've learned from the radio broadcasts.

108. Do you think the GVN is strong or weak?

I think it's strong.

109. Why do you think so?

If the GVN were weak, it wouldn't be able to survive and fight the VC. The people like the GVN because it's strong and wealthy and helpful to the people. Nobody likes the VC. We're fed up with them.

110. Do you think the GVN loves the people?

Yes. If the GVN didn't care for the people, it wouldn't tolerate people like me who had lived in a liberated area.

111. Do you think the GVN is just?

Yes. The GVN, as far as I know, has never arrested innocent people. But if I do something against the law now, I'll surely be arrested by the GVN.

112. Do you think the GVN is wise?

I think it's very wise.

113. What do you think of the GVN officials?

When the village was still under GVN control, I found the officials very nice to the people. I haven't met any officials since I got here, so I don't know how they are now. I don't mind them, though. I know they can't take care of everybody. The people are numerous, and the number of officials is limited.

114. Have you ever heard of the Chieu Hoi program?

Yes, I heard about it on the radio. I also read leaflets.

115. Did other people read leaflets?

Yes. Whenever the aircraft dropped leaflets, the people read them. If the VC were around, they'd collect them all and forbid the people to read.

116. What did the cadres say about the Chieu Hoi Program?

They told us not to pay attention to the GVN propaganda, that the Chieu Hoi program was a trap. If anyone rallied, he'd be sent to re-education or forced to join the ARVN.

117. Did the people believe what the VC said?

No. The people only believed the leaflets.

118. Did you keep any safe-conduct pass?

No. Passes were for the VC cadres and fighters. I was neither. I didn't need one.

119. Did any guerrillas from your village rally to the GVN?

Two of them have rallied to the GVN. They rallied in Hoi An. Both have joined the ARVN.

120. Was the village often attacked by the GVN or Allied troops?

The GVN troops carried out an operation in my village once in a while, but they didn't attack us.

121. I heard about a clash taking place in your village last April (1966).

Yes, the clash took place in my hamlet. Nobody knew when the VC had come and deployed themselves in the hamlet, but the GVN troops poured in, and suddenly, firing broke out. We people didn't know what was going on. We just ducked into the trenches. A few hours later, when the firing stopped, we came out and saw some 50 bodies of GVN soldiers lying around in the field. The VC took all their dead away, so I don't know the number of their casualties. The next day, the GVN troops came back to carry away their dead.

122. Did the people suffer any damage?

I don't think so. The battle took place in the open field, not in the populated area.

123. Was it the only battle that ever took place in your village?

Yes.

124. What did the VC say to the people about the battle?

They've never mentioned it.

125. Do you think the GVN troops were taken by surprise?

I think so; otherwise, they wouldn't come into the village.

126. Did they call the aircraft?

About mid-day, the aircraft came and dropped a few bombs. Nobody really suffered from the bombing.

127. Where did the VC take their dead and wounded?

I don't know.

128. Was the village often bombed and shelled?

My hamlet was shelled all the time. The people suffered a lot. My uncle and my sister-in-law were killed by the shells. The houses, luckily, were spared.

129. Do you know why your village was shelled?

It's because of the VC who sniped at the vehicles on the highway.

130. Did the people resent the GVN for shelling their village?

The people blamed it all on the VC who sniped at the GVN troops. They said the GVN couldn't help retaliate if it was shot at. If the VC didn't start shooting, the people would be left in peace.

131. Did the people really say so?

Yes, the people said so, and I agree with them.

132. Have you ever heard or seen the GVN spray chemical products to kill the trees?

I heard about it, but I've never seen a spraying operation.

133. Who told you about it?

The VC, in their propaganda meetings.

134. What did they say?

They said, in the areas occupied by the Americans, all the trees were dried up. Only plants which had edible roots, such as potato and manioc, survived. Others, such as paddy and corn, were killed by the chemical products.

135. Did the VC say why these places were sprayed?

They said it was because those places had been attacked fiercely by the VC. The Americans retaliated by spraying poisonous chemicals to kill the people. Actually, I've never seen such an operation.

136. Were you afraid of the chemicals?

Yes. What the VC said really scared us. We farmers seldom got out of the village to be properly informed.

137. Had you ever seen the Americans before you came here?

No. I'd never seen one until I got here.

138. Didn't the Americans ever carry operations into your village?

No. Only soldiers of the GVN's 21st Regt, 2d Div, used to come to my village.

139. Do you think the Americans are like the French in the old days?

No. The French in the old days came here to take over the country and govern the people. The Americans have come here to help us. They've shared some of their wealth with us.

140. Have you ever seen the Americans or the GVN bring gifts to the people in the villages?

All the villages around [redacted] have been liberated for some time; therefore, the GVN and Americans haven't set foot in those places. But out here, I've seen the Americans bring gifts to the people in this camp.

141. Who else, besides the Americans, are helping the GVN?

The GVN also has other allies, such as Australia, South Korea, and Thailand. I learned that from the radio.

142. Which side do you think is stronger: the GVN with its allies, or the VC with their allies?

Of course, the GVN is stronger. It has four or five allied countries, while the VC only have two -- Russia and Red China. Moreover, the US, alone, is the most powerful country in the whole world.

143. Have you ever listened to Peking Radio?

Yes, for a while, when I was in the village. I heard the Chinese say bad things about the Russian revisionists, and the Russians criticize Mao Tse-Tung's followers. I heard them quarrel for a while. Later on, I got fed up and didn't listen to Peking Radio any more.

144. In your opinion, does the dispute between Red China and Russia have any effect on the VC?

I don't know.

145. Do you think Mr. Ho Chi Minh has anything to do with the VC?

From what I've learned from the GVN radio broadcasts, Mr. Ho Chi Minh has a lot to do with the VC.

146. Have you heard or seen Northern troops in the South?

I heard from the GVN broadcasts that most of the VC troops have come from the North. I, myself, didn't see them.

147. Have you ever heard of the bombing of the North?

Yes. It was because the Communists refused to have a cease-fire and to talk peace. So, the North has been bombed.

148. Have the VC been able to get more supplies from the North?

I don't know.

149. If the North is bombed all the time, could the people stay as happy as the cadres have claimed they were?

How could anyone be happy in the face of the bombs and shells? The people in the North must have been running and hiding like us in the villages.

150. Do you think the North can increase production in spite of the bombings?

No one can do production work at all in the face of the bombings. Take us in the village, for example; we couldn't work in the open field because we couldn't just dig trenches everywhere. At home, we couldn't weave baskets if we always sat around the trenches waiting for the aircraft to come.

151. What made you decide to leave your village to take refuge here?

I was fed up with the war. I had known war once, during the Resistance against the French. I remembered how it was nice and peaceful under the control of the GVN. I left the village because I could no longer stand the bombing and shelling.

152. Why didn't you run deeper in VC-controlled areas? Why did you choose the GVN-controlled areas?

All the VC-controlled areas were unsafe.

153. Why didn't you leave the village earlier?

I had wanted to leave for a long time, but I have an old mother who didn't want to leave her native land. She was the main reason why I stayed on in the village and tried to live with the VC. The shellings became more and more dangerous, and I decided to leave. I left her in the care of a cousin. I left behind some money and paddy for her use.

154. Did you know how you would be received in the GVN-controlled areas?

Yes. I heard that the refugees were kindly received by the GVN. I knew I wouldn't be turned away, that's why I decided to seek refuge in the free areas.

155. What kind of help have the refugees received from the GVN?

I've heard from the radio that the GVN helped the refugees a lot.

156. Did anyone try to stop you from leaving the village?

I left in secret. If the VC had known, they would have tried to stop me. Eight families in the bloc planned to leave together, but only two got away. Six other families have been stopped by the VC.

157. I thought four families had gotten away?

Yes, but two families had left a few days before me. My family and another got away later.

158. What did you bring along?

Nothing at all. My wife was a merchant, and she had been able to smuggle out a few dozen <u>an</u> of paddy to [redacted] Area. But when we left, we didn't take along anything. As soon as we left, the VC moved in to search our house.

159. How do you know?

I met some people from the hamlet later on, and they told me.

160. How did you come here?

I took my family to [redacted] Post, and then to [redacted] to report to the Village Council, which has been in [redacted] for sometime. The Council recommended us to the [redacted] Refugee Camp, and we came straight to this place. We moved in with some of our acquaintances, and after a while, we asked the village authorities for a piece of land to build our huts. So we've been living outside the camp for a few weeks now. It was too crowded to live with families of acquaintances within the boundaries of the camp.

161. How many families are still in the village?

Most of the people are still in the village. Only a few have succeeded in getting away. The VC kept very tight control on the movement of the people. They didn't want the people to move to the free areas.

162. Have you tried to look for a job?

Not yet. I'm still learning my way around. I'm too new here. It's been only two weeks since I finished building a hut and settled my family there. Now I'm thinking of getting a job, but I have no idea what I can do. My wife is doing a little buying and selling to make some profit.

163. Can you get a job working for the Americans like many other people in this camp?

I'd like to very much, but I have no connection whatsoever. My wife has relatives in the ARVN, but none of them is a corporal or a sergeant. In order to get a job with the Americans, I've got to be recommended by two non-commissioned officers. That's my problem.

164. Do you feel safe in this place?

Yes, it's so peaceful here.

165. Are the people in this camp getting help from the GVN or the Americans?

The Catholics in this camp have received a lot of help from the Americans. People like me,who came late and have to settle outside the boundaries of the camp, are getting nothing.

166. Do you blame anyone for your hardships?

I only resent the VC. It's because of the VC that I have had to leave my native village.

167. Do you want to go back to the village?

I surely do. I wish the GVN would pacify my village soon so that I could go back there and resume my job of weaving baskets in peace.

168. This is the piture of a ladder. The top rung represents the best kind of life you could imagige in the village, and the bottom rung (N.10) represents the worst kind of life. Where were you when the GVN was still in control of your village?

At No. 7, but when the VC came, I dropped to No. 9.

169. Where are you now?

I haven't been here very long, so my life has not been improved. I'm still at No. 9.

170. Describe the worst life in the village.

For a farmer, nothing is worse than having no help to do the farm work: no buffaloes, no laborers.

171. Describe the best life you could imagine for yourself.

To be free, to have enough to eat, to have money, to be in good health, and to have family happiness.

172. What do you want your sons to become?

I want them to serve in the ARVN when they grow up. As a poor farmer, I have no higher hope for my children.

173. If you can ask the GVN for three things, what would you ask?

First, I'd ask the GVN to do me the favor of not suspecting me, although I came from a VC-controlled area, I've come here to seek refuge from the VC, I've never been a VC. Second, I wish the GVN would give my family some support to help us live through the first moments of difficulty. Third, I wish the GVN would soon annihilate the Communists, reunify this country, and reconstruct this land, so that the people can make a living in peace.

174. How much longer do you think the war will last?

I have no idea.

175. In your opinion, which side is winning now?

I'm sure the GVN will win.

176. What will the people's life be like if the VC win the war?

All the people will become poor.

177. Why do you think so?

I know the VC. They wouldn't let anyone get rich, and they wouldn't try to improve the life of the poor people.

178. What'll become of the people if the GVN wins the war?

The people will be free to earn as much money as they can through investments and commerce. The GVN wouldn't try to impoverish the people by imposing heavy taxation. The reason the people in the VC-controlled areas are so poor is that they have to pay too many kinds of taxes.

179. In your opinion, which side has won more support from the people?

I think most of the people support the GVN.

180. What do the people who are living in the VC-controlled areas think?

Those people are living in a dark cave. They know very little about life outside. They hate the dark, but they don't know if they could afford to leave it. Most of those who live in the liberated areas are poor. If they had money, they wouldn't be living there. They are farmers, and the only way they know how to make a living is working on the land. If they leave their villages, they are afraid of starvation.

181. In your opinion, what more should the GVN do for the people?

The GVN should drop more leaflets describing the life in the GVN-controlled areas. A lot of people believe in the leaflets. Then the GVN should give more help to the refugees.

182. Under VC control, could the people talk freely?

No. Under GVN control, we could talk freely against the VC, but not under VC control.

183. Were you free to talk about anything you liked when the village was under GVN control?

We were free to talk, but we were afraid to say anything against the GVN. We dared not criticize the GVN officials, for example. We are plain citizens. We don't dare offend anyone for fear we might be punished.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

The subject lived outside the [redacted] Catholic Camp. He has not received any help from the GVN authorities since he became a refugee. He envied the people who have settled in the camp for a year or more; "They're well established. They have houses to live in and jobs to earn money. The Priest is helpful to them too." The Camp's priest, he said, was very efficient. He has managed to get the Americans to bring gifts to the people in the camp. The subject looked bewildered and did not seem to know what to do for a living.

He seemed sincere and cooperative throughout the interview.

QUESTIONNAIRE II

No. AGR: 95

For Refugees

MASTER COPY

1. Name of Interviewer: [redacted]

2. Name of Subject: [redacted]

3. Time and Date of Interview:

From 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. on March [redacted] 1967

From _____ to _____ on _____ 1967

From _____ to _____ on _____ 1967

From _____ to _____ on _____ 1967

Total time: 3 hours

Interview based on: tape (X) hand written notes ( )

4. Place of Interview: [redacted] Catholic Refugee Camp

5. Sex of subject: Male (X) Female ( )

6. Age of subject: (1952) 42

7. Ethnic background: Vietnamese

8. Place of birth:

hamlet Hamlet [redacted]

village [redacted]

district Duy Xuyen

province Quang Nam

9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee:

hamlet Hamlet [redacted]

village [redacted]

district Duy Xuyen

province Quang Nam

10. (a) Length of residence in last location: 42 years

(b) Who controlled the place of residence:

GVN ( ) VC ( ) Contested ( )

(c) Since when controlled or contested? February 1966

11. Number of brothers ( ) and sisters ( )

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age: none

13. Marital status: Married

14. Number of children: 3

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age: none

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject (X) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject (X) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion: Buddhism

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge: Farming, basket weaving

19. Economic status:
(a) VC designation Middle Farmers
(b) Landowner _____ How much land 2 1/2 mao

20. Education:
Illiterate ( )
Literate (X)
Schooling completed: _____

21. Any relatives in VC: yes

22. Any relatives in GVN: yes

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by:
(a) French None
(b) GVN "
(c) VC "

24. When became a refugee: January 1967

25. Where took refuge first: _____

26. Present residence: [redacted] Hoa Vang District
Quang Nam Province

INTERVIEW #AGR-96 MISSING—

INTERVIEW NOT COMPLETED

AGR

INTERVIEW

97

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

(U)

THE RAND CORPORATION

INTERVIEWS CONCERNING OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT OF SOUTH VIET NAM

File No. AGR-27

Date of Interview : March [redacted] 1967

Subject's Category : Refugee: Dec. 1966

Area Left : Hamlet [redacted]

[redacted] Village

Duc Duc District

Quang Nam Province

This interview is for the information of US and Vietnamese official agencies and personnel on a need-to-know basis. Permission to distribute or show this interview to non-official persons requires the prior approval of The RAND Corporation and the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs.

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1. How long had you and your family lived in your village before you became a refugee?

We had lived in the village a long time. We had lived there since our parents' times. I don't know exactly how long ago, but it was a very long time ago.

2. How big was your village?

Very big. How can I know how big exactly? I don't.

3. About how many people lived in your village?

There were about six thousand or so families living in the village. That is for the whole village, I mean.

4. How many families lived in your hamlet?

About six hundred families lived in my hamlet. I lived in Hamlet [redacted]

5. How many hamlets did the village have?

Four. [redacted] Hamlet [redacted] and Hamlet [redacted] were the most populated. [redacted] was the least.

6. How did you earn your living in your village?

By farming. I grew rice and I cut wood to live on.

7. How did most of the villagers earn their living?

Most of the villagers earned their living by farming. They cultivated their ricefields. When the GVN was in control of the village, quite a few villagers lived by cutting timber and wood in the mountains and jungles, but when the Communists came, people were no longer able to go and cut timber and wood in the jungle. Those people had to go back to farming to earn their living. Among the villagers in the village, a few lived by doing small business. Very few people in the village dealt in business.

8. Were most of the villagers well-off or poor? Did they have enough to eat?

Generally speaking, very few were rich. The majority of the people did farming, and they just had enough to live on from what they made from the yearly harvests.

9. Did you own any land?

I had two "sao" of ricefields and a small piece of land for gardening. Because my ricefields didn't yield very much, I had to rent another "sao" of ricefields in order to have enough rice to live on during the year.

10. What did you do with your ricefields? How many crops did you have a year?

My two "sao" of ricefields had only one crop of rice a year. During the off-season, I grew potatoes, manioc and beans, etc. The "sao" of ricefields I rented from other people had two crops a year. The land I rented was better than mine.

11. How much rent did you have to pay for the "sao" of ricefields you rented?

I paid half of my harvest. I shared fifty-fifty with the landowner.

12. From did you rent the land? Where did the landowner live?

I rented the land from a / distant relative of mine. He lived in the hamlet, not far from me.

13. How much paddy did you get per crop? How much per year?

I got around a hundred and fifty "ang" of paddy per year. This is not counting the potatoes, manioc and beans crops.

14. How many members are there in your family?

I have five children, but my eldest daughter is married, and no longer lives with me. I now have four sons living with me. My wife died some time ago. My daughter and her husband also left the hamlet to come out here at the same as I. Her husband is now in the Chieu Hoi Center. He was formerly a guerrilla.

15. How old are your sons? What did they do in the village?

My eldest son is 16 this year. The other three are from 13 to ten. Back in the village, they didn't do anything. They were still young, and so, they were members of the Hamlet Children's Group.

16. What is your religion?

Buddhism.

17. What religion did the majority of the villagers practice?

The majority of the villagers in the village practiced Buddhism.

18. What other religions did other people practice?

Quite a few worshipped their ancestors. A few were either Catholics or Protestants.

19. Were there any conflicts between members of different religions?

No. There was no case of conflict between different religious groups in our area. On Buddhist festival days, for instance, members of other religious groups were also invited to attend the festivals, and the same thing happened at Catholic or Protestant festivals.

20. What is your ethnic background?

Vietnamese.

21. Were other villagers different from you?

No. All the villagers in the village were Vietnamese.

22. What education have you had?

I had five years of schooling. I finished my fifth year in school, and then dropped out of school.

23. How about your children? How much education did they have?

One of my sons went as far as secondary school. Another one was in his fourth year of primary school. Another one didn't have much schooling. He now has a job. My daughter didn't have any education.

24. What education did the other villagers have? Did the majority of the villagers have a chance to be educated?

Under the GVN, yes. But after the Communists came and controlled the area, education was no longer available. Lots of people missed the opportunity to be educated, therefore, lots of people remained illiterate.

25. Was there a school in your village?

There was one during the GVN times, but later on, it was left abandoned, and eventually destroyed during the Communists' control of the village. The school was hit by a bomb, and was completely destroyed.

26. Did you have any best friends in your hamlet? If so, how many?

I didn't lack good and close friendsin the hamlet. I used to be very close to at least four people.

27. What were they doing in the hamlet?

Like me, they belonged to the hamlet's Buddhist Community.

28. How old were they?

They were my own age, that is to say, from fifty or so to sixty or sixty-five.

29. What did you talk about between yourselves whenever you saw one another or met?

We used to talk of our work, or we talked of our religious affairs. All those four men also left the village at the same time as I , and are now in Duc Duc.

30. Did you often meet together after the Front came to your village?

Yes. But we no longer met as often as we used to during the GVN times. We didn't meet as often because we were afraid that the Communists would hold us under suspicion,

31. Could you talk freely to your friends about everything after the Communists controlled your village?

Principally, we talked of our work, and therefore, we weren't afraid.

32. Did you talk of politics or of the situation in your village, or what?

No, we didn't talk about those things. We didn't want to come under their suspicion, and run the risk of being arrested and taken away for re-education, and so on.

33. Which people in your village were the most respected by the villagers?

Under the GVN, a man by the name of [redacted] was the most respected person in the village. He was the representative of the GVN in the village. Under the Communists' rule, the people were forced to submit themselves to the Communists' regime, It couldn't be said that the villagers either admired or respected the representatives of the Communists in the village. In fact, since the Communists controlled the village, the villagers didn't hold any of them in very great esteem. When the Communists first came and held meetings in the village, the majority of the villagers attended the meetings, but gradually, the people no longer liked to do so, and they would only attend the VC-organized meetings when they had to and couldn't get away from doing it. In later years, hardly a handful of villagers would attend the Communists' meetings. Most of those who attended were children.

34. Who among the villagers was the most respected after the Communists were in control of your village?

Among the villagers, the person who was the most respected after the Communists came was the representative of the Buddhist Community.

35. Was he the best informed about what was happening in the village, district and country?

Sure, he was. That was the reason why he had such prestige among the population. He often gave lectures to members of the Buddhist Community on different matters.

36. On which matters did he give lectures?

Mostly on matters having to do with the members' work, and on matters concerning religion.

37. Was the Buddhist delegate informed about what was happening in Saigon, and about what was happening inside and outside the country?

Yes, he was. He regularly received news of here and there from the Vien Hoa Dao (Buddhist Institute for Secular Affairs). Apart from the Buddhist delegate, there was also a man, who was formerly the hamlet chief, who knew a lot about what was going on. Like the Buddhist delegate, he had access to news from here and there, and therefore, was better informed than the average villager.

38. How was life in your village before and during the Resistance?

During the first years of the Resistance, life was still fairly normal, but from 1962 onwards, the villagers had to go through a very hard time; many people didn't have anything to eat; lots of people were hungry.

39. Did any people in your village join the Resistance to fight against the French?

Yes. At that time, the majority of the villagers joined the Resistance.

40. Which kinds of people did so?

Generally speaking, the whole population joined the Resistance to fight against the French.

41. Did you join the Resistance?

Yes, I did.

42. What did you do? Where did you go?

Generally speaking, the average villager participated in civilian activities, such as civilian labor work, etc. I did likewise. We didn't have to go anywhere. We worked

for the Resistance in the hamlet. Personally, I had to carry rice and other food supplies for the Resistance.

43. Did any of the villagers join the Resistance and not return to the village after 1954? If so, what happened to them?

Yes, some people joined the Resistance and didn't come back to the village because they had regrouped to the North. As far as I know, a number of cadres and soldiers regrouped to the North.

44. About how many regrouped to the North when peace came?

About a hundred cadres and soldiers from our village regrouped to the North. Among the hundred or so, there were three to five women. The rest was male. The majority were cadres.

45. How many among the hundred or so who regrouped to the North returned to the village when the Communists came to control your village?

About fifteen came back to our village.

46. How many regroupees were in your hamlet?

Four. They were all males.

47. When did they return to your hamlet?

In 1965, when the Communists came to take over the village.

48. Did life in your village improve after 1964?

Yes, life did improve after peace came. After peace came, there began ten years of GVN rule. During those ten years, the villagers were able to work and prosper. There was plenty of work and plenty of opportunities. Life was very good then.

49. Who were the local GVN officials in your hamlet during the ten years of GVN rule?

In the hamlet, there was the hamlet chief, officials of the village council, a man in charge of the hamlet's information service, and another in charge of the hamlet's military affairs. On the village level, there was the village council.

50. Were there any GVN military forces in your village? If so, what kind? How many of them?

On the military side, there were the soldiers from the Popular Force units. I think there were in all the village nine platoons of militiamen and three platoons of Combat Youths.

51. How did the GVN local official behave towards the villagers?

Generally speaking, they behaved well. Of course, there were scattered cases of one or two GVN officials who were not very good to the people. For instance, one or two of them didn't hesitate to make abuses as far as extracting money from the people was concerned. But those were rare cases, and only a few of the GVN officials indulged in corruption. The majority of the GVN officials were good and behaved well.

52. Were the local GVN officials people from the area or strangers?

All of them were from the village itself. The Popular Force soldiers, as well as the village council officials, were all from the village.

53. Were the local officials elected or appointed?

They were elected by the people in elections held in the village.

54. How many elections did you have in your village?

There had been, in all, three elections in the village. The first election was held to vote for the President. The second one was to vote for the National Assembly, and the third one for the province council. Apart from those elections, during the ten years when the GVN was in control of the area, every three years, an election to vote for the village council was held in the village.

55. Tell me about the first election. How many candidates were there?

At the first election, there were Bao Dai and Mr. Diem as candidates. At that election, I gave my vote to Mr. Diem. I gave my vote to him, and so I followed suit.

56. How about the election to vote for the province council? How many candidates were there at that time?

I can't remember.

57. Do you remember who was elected to the province council?

I can't remember the name of the winners.

58. Were the winners the ones for whom you voted?

Yes, but I can't remember their names now.

59. How did you decide to whom to give your vote?

Before we went to vote, people in the villages talked about the election, and we were often advised for whom to vote. In general, the GVN cadres in the village urged the villagers to go and vote, and they often advised for whom to vote. The village information service was in charge of making publicity about the coming election, and the information cadres urged the villagers for whom to vote.

60. Did everyone vote at each of the elections held in the villages?

Yes, everyone did. Before election day, talks, discussions and lectures were organized to educate the villagers on the topic of elections. In general, the lectures and talks, etc., went on for two to three days before the elections actually began. The talks and lectures told us about the voting procedures, how to vote, for whom to vote, etc.

61. What qualifications did one have to have in order to vote?

First, one had to be a Vietnamese national; second, one had to have a clean court record; and third, one had to be a person who had never been politically convicted.

62. What qualifications did one have to have in order to be a candidate?

To be a candidate, one had to have the same qualifications as for an elector, that is to say, one had to satisfy the three conditions first, of being a Vietnamese national, and of having a clean court, criminal and political record. Apart from that, to be a candidate, one had to be a person who enjoyed the confidence and support of the people.

63. What did you know about the Diem government?

I heard about the overthrow of the Diem government, but other than that, I didn't know anything much about it.

64. What were you told about the aims and policies of Mr. Diem's government?

I only heard that Mr. Diem's government was a nepotist government. That was all.

65. How did you learn about Mr. Diem's fall?

Through the village information service.

66. What did you and the other villagers think about the fall of the Diem government?

Talking of Mr. Diem, one immediately thought of his nepotism and his oppression of different religious groups. Therefore, when the villagers heard about his fall, the general feeling was of relief. One felt that the time had finally come for injustice and oppression to be ended. The Buddhist villagers were specially relieved at hearing about Mr. Diem's fall. To say the truth, at that time, there hadn't yet been any instance of discrimination against the Buddhists in the village, but we had heard lots of things about oppressive measures taken by the Diem government against Buddhist groups in Hoi An, Hue, etc. We had been told about Buddhist pagodas being attacked, monks and nuns being arrested, etc. That was the reason why not many villagers liked the Diem government, and so when they heard of his fall, they didn't feel regretful, nor did they have much sympathy for him.

67. Were there any GVN military forces near your hamlet or village?

In the village, the majority of the GVN military forces were the Popular Force units. Apart from them, now and then we received the visit of the GVN regular troops from the district.

68. How did they behave towards the villagers?

Generally speaking, they treated the villagers well. However, there were a few among them who didn't always please the villagers by their behavior and talks.

69. Did they behave better or worse during the Diem government?

They didn't change after Mr. Diem's fall. As I said, the majority of the GVN soldiers behaved well, and thus, they had the sympathy of the villagers; but there were a few among them who were not liked for their proud and arrogant behavior towards the villagers.

70. Did you ever live in a strategic hamlet?

Yes.

71. When was the strategic hamlet built?

In 1962. All the [redacted] hamlets in the village were transformed into [redacted] strategic hamlets.

72. How much labor and money did you have to contribute to the building up of the strategic hamlet?

I contributed more than a month of work. Everyone had to contribute his share. In the beginning, for each day of work, we were paid fifteen to twenty piasters, but later on, we were paid only four piasters and a small amount of unpolished rice for every day of work put into the building of the strategic hamlet.

73. How did the villagers react to the hamlet being transformed into a strategic hamlet? What did they say?

The villagers responded very favorably to the work of building up the strategic hamlet. They were afraid of the Communists taking over the village, and therefore, they were very much in favor of the strategic hamlet.

74. What did you like the strategic hamlet? What did the other villagers like about it?

It was very useful. It gave us security. Living inside the strategic hamlet, we didn't have to worry about the Communists infiltrating among us without being checked up on. The main advantage of living inside the strategic hamlet was that security was guaranteed.

75. What did you and the others dislike about the strategic hamlet?

There was nothing about the strategic hamlet that anyone could dislike.

76. Did those whose land and property were located outside the limits of the strategic hamlet move willingly inside the hamlet?

Those who had to move their house inside the strategic hamlet were given a cash compensation of two thousand and one hundred piasters. For every house moved to the strategic hamlet, the government paid its owner two thousand and one hundred piasters. I,myself,had to pull down my home and move it to the strategic hamlet. Generally speaking, the amount of two thousand and one hundred piasters was just sufficient to cover the cost of moving a small thatch house, but not a large brick house. But the money did help us a bit.

77. What happened to the strategic hamlet?

It no longer exists. The Communists pulled it down when they came to the village in 1965. In the beginning, they themselves pulled it down with their own hands. Then, they called on the villagers to join in. Those whose land and property were located outside the strategic hamlet moved back to their land. But I didn't move back to my former home because my house had been destroyed in a fire, and I had nothing to go back to. My house was hit by a bomb and completely destroyed. My sons and I moved inside the hamlet pagoda to live after the Communists came.

78. How do you feel about the strategic hamlet now?

I am all in favor of it. I wish that peace would come and we could all go back to live peacefully in our village.

79. In those days, before the Communists came, how did you feel about your life and future?

Under the GVN in those days life was fairly good. We didn't have plenty, but enough to live on. We then lived rather comfortably. We had freedom, e were not pressured into doing anything.

80. What things dissatisfied you most at that time? Did you then have any worries or problems?

No. I was not dissatisfied by anything, and I didn't have any special problems or worries. It was only after the Communists came that I began to become very dissatisfied with them.

81. Did you then think that the GVN could have halped you?

In those days, the GVN did help us a lot. The GVN made loans to us so that each one of us had the minimum facilities to work and live. I, myself, borrowed two thousand piasters from the government to buy fertilizer for my land. Lots of others villagers in the village received loans from the GVN to buy agricultural tools, to buy buffaloes, etc.

82. When did you first hear of the Front?

In 1965, when they came into the village. During the ten years of GVN control in the village, there was lots of talk of the Front organizations being hunted down and destroyed by the GVN. At that time, the Front was not able to make an appearance in the area without suffering setbacks. In those days, people going into the jungle to cut wood and timber sometimes met one or two VC going by.

On odd occasions, I, myself, met a few VC in the jungle when I went to cut wood.

83. Who were the VC you met? Where were they from?

They were people from our village. They stopped to ask us news of the village, news of their families, then went away again. As soon as we saw them, we recognized them and knew what they were doing. We knew they were VC by the way they were dressed and the weapons they carried.

84. When did you see the VC in the jungle?

From 1962 onwards, people going to work in the jungle often met a few VC going by the jungle.

85. When the GVN was in control of the village, what kinds of people joined the Front?

In 1962, the Communists made an attack on the area and controlled the area for three months. When they left, quite a few villagers joined them to go into the jungle. In my hamlet, about thirty or forty persons left to join the Communists at that time. Among the people who left to join the Communists, there were all sorts of classes of people: adults, youths, males, females.

86. What did the Front do in your hamlet during the three months it controlled your hamlet?

They organized meetings to make propaganda to the villagers, etc.

87. How many were there at that time?

Quite a few. There were two platoons of Front soldiers guarding the hamlet, and several cadres.

88. Where were the Front soldiers and cadres from?

The soldiers were from [redacted], etc. And the cadres were all from other villages in the area. None of them from our own village.

89. Why did so many persons in your hamlet leave to join the Communists at that time?

Because they were gullible people; they were taken in by the Communists's talks, and so, they joined the Communists. However, the majority of those who joined the Communists in 1962 quit them to return to the village soon after they joined. By 1965, all those who had joined the Communists in 1962 were back in the village.

90. What happened after the Communists came to your hamlet and controlled it for three months? Why did they pull out after that time?

The GVN came in and the Communists were outnumbered. They then pulled out. Before the GVN came into the area, they fired heavy artillery that inflicted great losses on the

Communists. When the GVN soldiers moved into the village, all the Communists fled. the GVN then established its control over the village until 1965.

91. When did your village fall under the Communists' control again? How did it happen?

The Communists took over the area again in 1965. They came in suddenly to attack and take over the village. That day, they came in at four o'clock in the morning and made an attack on the center of the village where the village popular forces were stationed. It was on the 6th of the first month of the Lunar Year (around February 1965).

92. Describe the attack by the Communists on the village. What was the strength of the Communists? Why couldn't the GVN forces control your village?

The attacking Communists were very great in number. They encircled the village, and moved in from all directions. They made an attack on the center of the village after having encircled it from all sides. The village popular force soldiers were taken by surprise. I heard that many of them were killed in the attack, and several captured. Fighting started at four in the morning and lasted until the morning. The Communists controlled the area after that. Among the GVN soldiers, many were killed, several captured; a few managed to escape. After that attack, there was no longer any GVN soldiers in the village. Many villagers also fled. They fled to [redacted] My own family also fled to [redacted] We had been staying in [redacted] for seven days when the Communists made an attack on [redacted] and sent us back to our village. We were thus forced to go back to our village because there was no longer any route of escape for us.

93. What did the Front people do to the people's GVN identification papers when they came and controlled the village?

They didn't do anything to our papers. They didn't confiscate them. I still have mine.

94. Who were the Communists who were in your village after it came under their control?

There were many of them. However, I can't say how many of them exactly. To tell the truth, in the beginning, we didn't often see them during the daytime. They were more often seen at night. During the day, the most we would see were two or three of them going about. A month or two after they controlled the village, they began to set up different organizations, and only then were the Communists seen operating during daytime, instead of at night as they used to do when they first controlled the village. Those Communists were cadres, as well as soldiers, guerrillas, and so on.

95. How did the VC cadres, soldiers and guerrillas behave towards the villagers?

In the beginning, when they first came, they behaved normally. However, later on, as they became more settled down in the area, they began to organize forced labor work, to collect taxes and contributions to support their troops.

96. How did the villagers feel about the Communists' cadres, soldiers and guerrillas?

In the beginning, generally speaking, everyone was very afraid of the Communists. That was why, whatever the villagers were told to do, they obeyed out of fear. However, later on, many villagers became indifferent to the Communists. They neither opposed them, nor supported them. If they were called to pay taxes and contributions, they would be slow in doing so, and that was why many of them had been taken away for re-education. After the Communists had been with the villagers for some time, the villagers began to take them for granted, and no longer feared them. The villagers would be reluctant to pay their taxes, and they would always try to pay as little as possible; they would, for instance, pay fifty "ang" out of a hundred they were supposed to pay.

97. What did the Communists say about the aims of the Front? What were you told about the aims of the Front? What did you know about those aims?

The VC said that their aim was to liberate the people and the country from the yoke of the GVN. That's all I can remember now.

98. What did you think of what you were told?

Generally speaking, none of the villagers took the Communists' talks seriously. The villagers didn't believe in what they were told, because they had had experiences with the Communists before during the Resistance period, during which the villagers had contributed more than they could afford, and yet none of them had benefited in any way. On the other hand, during the ten years under the GVN, the villagers had had a better life, thanks to the regime advocated by the GVN. As a whole, when the Communists came and talked of liberating the people, etc., the villagers didn't think much of what was said. They were not taken in by the cadres' talks.

99. Do you know the names of any of the leaders of the Front?

Of course, I don't know of some names. I know the name Mr. Ho Chi Minh. I can't recall now another name I used to know.

100. Have you heard of the name Nguyen Huu Tho?

That's the name I was trying to recall. Yes, Mr. Nguyen Huu Tho! He is the leader of the Front in the South.

101. When the Communists first controlled your village, would you say that they were peace-loving people or warmongers?

To us, the Communists were nothing but a bunch of warmongers and bandits.

102. Why?

As soon as they arrived in the village, they began to go around and force the people to pay this and that. One person had to pay two thousand piasters, another three thousand. Apart from that, one was called to contribute rice. Besides, one was called to go and work as a civilian laborer for the Communists.

103. Would you say that the Communists were patriotic?

What was patriotic about the Communists? They were a bunch of traitors! They made the villagers suffer. Because of

them, some of us had our homes destroyed, properties lost. But for the Communists, there would not be all that destruction, all that misery. Before they came, no one in the village had had to see his home destroyed, his cattle killed. We then lived in security and peace. But for the Communists, I wouldn't have to leave my hamlet and come here to live.

104. Would you say that the Communists were brave or cowardly? Were they sympathetic or, on the contrary, ruthless? Were they well-disciplined or rigid?

Generally speaking, the Communists were a bunch of cruel people, who didn't hesitate to make the villagers suffer in order to get their own way. They killed, murdered, without making any distinction whether this or that person was a relative or a close kin of theirs.

105. Did the Communists hold meetings in your village?

Yes, very often. In the beginning, the villagers often attended those meetings. However, later on, partly because of the fear of being hit by cannons, partly because they were fed up at having to attend every single meeting, the villagers gradually dropped out, and so not many people went to the Communist-organized meetings any longer.

106. How often were the meetings held in your village? Were they held more often when the VC first came to your village, or less?

In the beginning, meetings were held as often as twice or thrice a month. Apart from that, there were regular monthly meetings at the hamlet level. In later years, the meetings were still held fairly regularly, but because not many people attended them, many of them had to be cancelled due to poor attendance.

107. What did the Communists say at those meetings?

They told the villagers about the Front's victories. They told us which villages had been taken over by the Front and liberated.

108. What did they say about your own village?

They said that they were going to do all sorts of things that would help the villagers in the village, but in actual fact, they hadn't done anything at all. They said that the cadres would work in order to build up a new life for the villagers, that a school and hospital would be set up, and so on, but nothing had been done yet. They talked a lot, but didn't act accordingly. All they did was to collect taxes and contributions from the villagers, and force the villagers to go and work as civilian laborers for them. As to school and hospital, there was none. Children kept on wandering about the hamlets, not being able to go to school.

109. What did the VC say about the GVN at the meetings they organized in your village?

They surely said lots of nasty things about the GVN. They said that the GVN was corrupt and unjust -- that by putting the villagers inside the strategic hamlet, the GVN was actually imprisoning the people, and so on.

110. What did they say about the Americans?

They said that the GVN was enslaved to the imperialist Americans, but it didn't know about it. They said that in areas where Americans have settled down, all the girls and women there had become prostitutes.

111. What did they say about North Vietnam?

They said that, in the North, the people had achieved victory for Socialism, and thus, everyone lived very happily and in great comfort, having plenty to eat and to wear.

112. What did they say about Red China?

They said that the Liberation Front had the support of Red China in its struggle against the GVN, and that the Front had been receiving assistance from Red China.

113. What type and kind of assistance did the cadres say the Front was receiving from Red China?

They said that Red China had sent weapons, ammunition and food supplies to the Front.

114. What did they say about Russia ?

They said the same things about Russia as about Red China, that is to say, Russia supported the Front and had been giving the Front assistance. They said that the assistance was material,as well as moral.

115. Did they say anything about the Sino-Soviet conflict?

No, the cadres didn't say anything about the conflict, but some of the villagers had radios, and they heard of the Sino-Soviet conflict over the radio, and so, they knew about it and talked about it.

116. What did you hear of the Sino-Soviet conflict from the villagers who had a radio?

The villagers said that the Chinese and Russians were having a conflict because they were competing for leadership.

117. Did the VC cadres say anything about the future of the war?

They said that this war would be a long war, and therefore, it was certain that the Front would be victorious. They said that therefore, we villagers had to make sacrifices in order to win.

118. What did you think about what the VC cadres said?

Generally speaking, most of us just listened to what we were told, but none of us believed in what we were told. The general attitude was that the VC said so, and let them say what they wanted to say. The villagers said that there was no way to see what they were told, and therefore, there was no way to know which thing to believe, and which thing not to believe. The villagers said that the Communists claimed they won all the battles, but the villagers were wondering how the Communists could win when the GVN had aircraft, cannons, tanks, etc., and had more supplies than the Front. Another evidence of the Communists's big empty talk was the battle at Son Khuong. At that battle, the Front suffered several battalions of North Vietnamese soldiers dead, but the VC in the village claimed that the Front only suffered a few dead and several wounded. But since the villagers were later on called in to help with evacuating the wounded and moving out the dead bodies, they knew exactly how many dead and wounded there were after the battle.

119. Have there been changes in what the Communist cadres said in the meetings they organized in the village?

No. They talked of the same things over and over again.

120. Did the Front ever take away any villagers for re-education?

Yes.

121. Who was taken away for re-education? Why were they taken away for re-education?

People who formerly worked for the GVN were taken away by the VC to be re-educated. In general, people who formerly worked, either in the village council or for the popular force units, etc., were taken away for re-education. Apart from them, other villagers were also taken away to be re-educated, but in their case, they were not taken away for a long period, but only for two to three days.

122. Where were the villagers taken away for re-education?

Those who were taken away for a short period were taken around the hamlets in the village, but those who were taken away for a long period were taken up to the mountains to be re-educated.

123. How long were those who were taken for a long period gone?

Some of them were away for a month, then allowed to return, but others were taken away and they never returned.

124. Were you ever taken away for re-education?

Yes, but I didn't go out of the village. I was taken away for five or six days, and was permitted to go home.

125. Why were you taken away?

The Communist cadres didn't say why they were taking you away. They just came to your home and said you had to go, and so you went. They said I had to go to attend a re-education course, and so I went.

125. What did you do during the five or six days you were taken away for re-education?

They said we had to go to attend a course, but in fact, we didn't have to attend any course. Every day a cadre would stand up and talk to us, telling us about the Front's news and victories, and so on, and that was all. The cadre would read us the most recent news about the Front's battles, then he would read us one of the Front's communiques if there were any, and then he would tell us about the current situation.

127. What did you hear about those who were taken away for a long period? What did they have to do?

Some of them had to attend lectures, but others had to do production work.

128. How did the villagers feel about being taken away for re-education? What did they say?

The villagers didn't know what to say. Families whose sons or brothers had been taken away for more than several months were, of course, very anxious about their sons or brothers' fate, and so, they kept on asking the VC cadres when those who were taken away would be permitted to return. The majority of the villagers didn't like being taken away, and so, they tried to get away from being taken for re-education as much as possible.

129. What did the cadres say about the villagers being taken away for re-education?

They didn't say anything. Suddenly, you would see one or two guerrillas arriving at your house, and they'd say you had to make the preparations to go for re-education. If you were taken away for five days, they'd tell you to take along five days of food supply. If you had to be away for ten days, you'd be asked to take along ten days of food supply. Other than that, they never said anything else.

130. How about those who were taken away for a long period? Were they told how long they were supposed to be away?

No, but they were told to take along two "ang" of rice and

as much money as they could afford. Those who were taken away for five to six months received food supplies from their families, but those who were gone for over a year no longer received any food supplies.

131. How many young men over 16 were in your hamlet in 1966?

Quite a few. There were about a hundred or so young men over 16 in the hamlet.

132. What did they do in the hamlet?

Some of them were forced to volunteer into the Front units; a few returned to the hamlet because of lack of good health, after having volunteered for the Front forces. Some other young men in the hamlet were forced to become guerrillas.

133. How many among the young men over 16 in your hamlet joined the ARVN?

In 1962, many young men in the hamlet and village joined the ARVN. When the American troops made an operation into our village, many young men in the village took that opportunity to leave the village and go over to the GVN in order to join the ARVN. Those who joined the Front also left the village and went to rally to the GVN.

134. In your opinion, did those who joined the Front forces willingly do so?

No. They were forced.

135. How did the Front force the young men in your hamlet to join the Front forces?

For one thing, they gathered all the young men in the hamlet and gave them lectures urging them to join one of the Front's units. For another thing, they used persuasion: they urged all the young girls and women in the hamlet to write the young men letters, asking them to join the Front forces and promising them that the girls would be waiting for them at home, and saying that, while the young men were away, the young women would take care of the young men's families, etc.

136. How many young men in your hamlet joined the Front?

Generally speaking, all the young men in the hamlet joined the Front. Some joined the Front forces, others were either guerrillas, or did civilian work for the Communists.

137. When did the Communists begin to recruit soldiers for the Front forces?

At the beginning of 1956. The Communists recruited young men and women. Some of the women also became guerrillas.

138. How did the villagers feel about the young men joining the Front?

They knew that the Front forced the young people to join. Many young men volunteered to join the Front forces, but left the hamlet in tears. Families, too, were in tears at seeing their sons or brothers leaving their home to go into the units.

139. How many families in your hamlet had their sons in the ARVN?

Quite a few. I think ten or so families in our hamlet had their sons in the ARVN.

140. How did the villagers feel about young men joining the ARVN?

They didn't say anything.

141. Were families with sons in the Front treated differently in your village?

Yes. Families with sons in the Front received special privileges, such as paying contributions and taxes, etc. They had to pay less than other people. Families who had a son or brother whom sacrificed his life for the revolution didn't have to pay contributions to the Front. Families with sons in the Front were also given the privilege of being freed from many assignments, such as civilian labor, etc.

142. Were families with sons in the ARVN discriminated against?

They were very restricted. They were not allowed to go anywhere, but constantly kept within the limits of the hamlet.

143. Did families with sons in the ARVN have to pay more taxes and contributions than others?

No. The taxes were collected, based on the amount of land cultivated.

144. What effect did the fact that all the young men in the hamlet joined the Front have on the economic life of the village?

All the able-bodied men having gone or been mobilized, there remained only old and weak men in the hamlet, and therefore, work was left undone.

145. What happened to young men who tried to avoid the draft?

If they wanted to avoid the draft, they had to escape and leave the village. Many had done so in 1965 when the Communists first came into the area.

146. How many Front guerrillas were in your hamlet?

Only a squad -- twelve guerrillas.

147. What did the guerrillas do?

They stood guard at night. They were in charge of guarding the hamlet.

148. Where were the guerrillas from?

From the hamlet itself.

149. Did the Front ever promise to take away land from any villagers and give it to others?

They did, but they hadn't done it yet. There was lots of waste land; there was more than anyone could wish. A lot of people had abandoned their land to go to GVN areas when the Communists came, and so, one didn't run out of land in the hamlet.

150. Did the Front distribute land to any villagers?

The Front confiscated public land and distributed it to the landless farmers in the hamlet. But the Front had never taken away any private land from anybody. They said they would, but they didn't. To tell the truth, there were not many big landowners in our hamlet. The majority of the villagers had one or two "mau" of ricefields.

151. How many persons in your hamlet received land from the VC? How much land did each one receive?

About fifty families received land from the VC. Each family received one or two "sao" of land.

152. Was the land given permanently, or as a loan, or did the people have to pay rent?

The people were distributed land in order to have something to work on, and they were expected to pay taxes for the land they received. The taxes were collected, based on the harvests the farmer made after each season.

153. Did you receive land from the Front?

No. I worked on my own land. Only landless farmers, or those who contributed a lot to the Front, either in material or in labor, or families with sons serving as guerrillas, were distributed land. The amount of public land in the hamlet was not unlimited, and therefore, not everyone in the hamlet was distributed land.

154. What did the Front do with the land that was left abandoned?

The Front units did their own production work on the abandoned land.

155. Were those who received land satisfied?

Sure, they were. In fact, they were so satisfied with it that they still cling to their land now. Indeed, unlike many of us, they didn't leave the village when the Americans made the operation in the village. They stayed back in the village.

156. Had there been a land reform program in your village during the GVN times?

Yes. The GVN bought land from big landowners and distributed it to those who had little or no land in order to give them something to work on.

157. Did you receive land from the GVN?

No. I had my own land. At that time, I didn't even cultivate it. I let other people cultivate it for me and pay me rent.

158. What taxes did you have to pay the Front since it controlled your village?

There were the troops'supporting taxes, and the compulsory contributions to the revolution's funds.

159. How much did you have to pay as troop-support tax?

Only once did the Front collect the troop-support tax. This year, the taxes were not collected yet when we all fled out. All in all, I paid two hundred piasters in troop-support tax. I paid in cash.

160. How about the contributions to the revolution's funds?

The contributions were collected in paddy. They were collected,based on the agricultural harvests.

161. How much did you have to pay when the Front first came, and how much did you pay in 1966?

I didn't have to pay much. The less riceland we had, the less paddy we had to pay. Each year, I had to pay sixty kilos of rice. The cadres made an assessment of the harvests, and based on them, they worked out how much each farmer had to pay. Each villager had to make a statement of his rice,as well as potatoes, manioc, beans, etc,. and the cadres would work out the amount of contributions to be collected.

162. What did the villagers say about the Front taxes?

What could they have said? Some cried, others complained.

163. What did you, personally, think of having to pay taxes to the Front?

I didn't think anything; they forced us to pay the taxes, and we had to obey. We didn't think, nor could we make any judgment. I paid my dues in order to be at peace. It was sort of paying for your own survival.

164. Did a family with, say, five children have to pay the same taxes as another family with the same amount of land, but with only two children?

The more mouths a family had to feed, the less taxes it had to pay.

165. Were the taxes collected yearly or after each season?

The agricultural taxes were collected after each season. The taxes were higher after the main season than after the secondary season.

166. Were the taxes justly applied? Or did some have to pay more or less than their share?

Depending on the amount of cultivated land one had, one paid so much in tax. As to whether some paid more or some paid less than others, it is true there were a few such cases. Families of cadres, for instance, were allowed to pay, half in cash and half in kind.

167. Did families with sons in the Front pay less tax to the Front?

No. They paid the same rate, but they were given the privilege of being able to pay half in cash and half in kind if they wanted to do so. All the other villagers had to pay in kind: we paid in paddy, and had to turn the paddy into rice before handing it in to the Front.

168. At the time you left your village, were the Front taxes higher or lower than the GVN taxes had been?

The Front taxes were higher by many times.

169. How much higher were the Front taxes?

By at least three times. When the GVN was in the village, each year, I had to pay only two hundred or so piasters.

170. Did anyone refuse to pay his taxes to the Front?

Who could do that? It was impossible not to pay taxes to the Front. Everyone paid his taxes.

171. Where did the villagers in your village sell their produce?

Under the GVN, the villagers used to take their produce to [redacted] market to sell. People used to sell their rice, their tea, chickens, pigs, etc.

172. Were the villagers able to continue to take their produce to [redacted] to sell when the Communists came?

No. The Communists no longer allowed the villagers to sell any part of their produce.

173. What did the Front do to prevent the villagers from taking out their produce to be sold?

They kept a watch on the villagers. If anyone was found carrying out his produce to be sold, he would be caught, his goods confiscated, and he sent away for re-education. The Front had its men posted along the roads, and it was impossible to take any produce out of the village without being seen.

174. What had happened to the cost of living since the Front controlled your village?

It had changed a lot. Such goods as salt, nuoc mam, dried fish became very expensive; we could hardly afford to buy those things.

175. Were the villagers allowed to go to GVN markets?

No, they weren't. Only a few people were able to do so: those were the people who had been given permission to go to GVN markets to do business. It was very difficult for anyone to ask for permission to go out of the village. Some people asked five to ten times without ever obtaining permission.

176. Who were the people who were allowed to go to GVN markets to do business? What did you have to do in order to be given permission to go to GVN markets to do business?

I really don't know about that. The Communists seemed to have given permission to whomever they wanted. I, myself asked for a permission to go out of the village at least three or four times, but each time, I was turned down. I asked for permission to go and visit my daughter in Hoi An, but they didn't give it to me.

177. Did the Front's restrictions on selling the village's produce have any effect on the villagers' production of food in the village?

Sure, the Front's restrictions had some effect on the production of food in the village. Since it was impossible to sell anything, the villagers didn't have the incentive to produce as much as they could. Of course, the villagers were able to sell to the Front cadres. The only restriction was that we were not allowed to sell our produce outside our village. The Front cadres would buy all the produce in the village and re-sell it, either in the village or outside it. For instance, the villagers were not allowed to sell their buffaloes, but they would re-sell the cattle to the villagers. The Front cadres would always buy anything at a very low price. Say, a buffalo could be sold for eight or nine thousand piasters outside the village, but to sell it to the cadres, the most a villager could obtain was five to six thousand piasters; but the same buffalo would be re-sold at the price of eight or nine thousand piasters by the Front cadres.

178. Did the villagers willingly sell their produce to the Front cadres?

They had to. That was the only outlet for them, and if they were short of cash, they had to sell to the Front. They couldn't sell their produce anywhere else. The Front would buy all produce the villagers cared to sell: rice, cattle, chickens, etc. Most of the time, the cadres would buy all the village's produce and take it out to the next village to sell, but they would never allow us to do that. The villagers felt very resentful about that. Many a villager brought that matter up at meetings the VC organized in the village. The villagers complained about the cadres buying

at low prices and re-selling at higher prices. The high-level cadres promised to look into the matter, and hold criticism sessions to redress the local cadres, but nothing was changed. Many local cadres had their wives going around the village, buying up all produce available and re-selling it just at the entrance to the village. They usually made big profits out of those transactions.

179. What were the organizations the Front set up in your hamlet?

The villagers were gathered up into the Farmers' Association, and depending on their age and sex, the people were grouped into either the Hamlet Youth Group, the Old People's Group etc. Besides those civilian organizations, the Front also set up the hamlet guerrilla unit, the hamlet security section.

180. What did the Farmers' Association do?

The Farmers' Association was in charge of land, properties, etc. It also looked after the taxes, the purchase of goods and food in the hamlet, etc.

181. Which villagers joined the Farmers' Association?

Generally speaking, every villager belonged to the Farmers' Association.

182. Were the villagers who joined the Farmers' Association given any special privileges?

No, what privileges were there to have? Members of the Association had the right to attend meetings organized by the Association, but other than that, there was no other privilege.

183. Were the people in the village better-off because of the setting up of the Farmers' Association?

No. People joining the Association were expected to pay fees. Each villager had to pay a monthly fee of one piaster.

184. Why did the villagers join the Farmers' Association?

Because they had to. It was not possible for a villager not to join the Farmers' Association. We all had to join it.

185. Were there any secret organizations in your village?

I don't know about that.

186. How many cadres were in your hamlet?

All in all, there were at least twenty or so cadres in my own hamlet.

187. Where did the cadres come from?

From the hamlet itself.

188. How many among the twenty cadres in your hamlet were regroupees?

Four were regroupee cadres.

189. How did the cadres in your hamlet behave towards the villagers?

The civilian cadres were good to the people. The military cadres, on the contrary, were very rigid and demanding. They would call the villagers to participate in certain types of assignments, and if the villagers didn't show enthusiasm, the military cadres would immediately take them away to be re-educated.

190. What was the most important cadre position in your hamlet?

The security cadre was the most important among the twenty or so cadres in the hamlet.

191. Was the security cadre a regroupee cadre or a local cadre?

He was a regroupee cadre. He returned to the village in 1965.

192. What were the next important cadre positions in the hamlet?

Next to the security cadre, the most important cadres were the ones from the Hamlet Autonomous Cadres Committee, then the ones from the Farmers' Association.

193. What did you think of the high-level cadres in your hamlet? What did the villagers say about them?

Generally speaking, the villagers, as well as I didn't like having to attend meetings, lectures, etc., because they delayed and disrupted our work and life. But the cadres always forced us to attend their meetings, and if we couldn't get to their meetings, they rarely tolerated our absence. Very often, meetings were organized from nine o'clock in the morning until noon or one in the afternoon. That meant that, in order to attend the meeting, we had to give up our work. The cadres who were in charge of organizing civilian labor were also very rigid and demanding with the villagers. Some villagers had just returned from their work as civilian laborers, then they were again forced to go and do civilian labor work. There were also cases of some villagers who, because of their health, should be asked to work for five days only, but the cadres would make them work for ten to twelve days. The villagers, therefore, complained very much about the way the cadres dealt with them.

194. Which cadres or groups had the most influence on Front administration and policies in your hamlet?

The head of the Hamlet Security Committee was the one who had the most influence on running the hamlet's affairs.

195. Were there any women cadres? If so, how many?

Yes, there were women cadres. There were four women cadres in our hamlet.

196. What positions did they hold?

They were from the Hamlet Women's Executive Commitee.

197. What was the role of the Hamlet Women's Executive Committee in the hamlet?

To be in charge of all the women in the hamlet. The Committee organized meetings of the women in the hamlet; it organized the collection of contributions in cash or in food for the troops, etc. Whenever there was a battle and many soldiers were wounded and taken to the village for treatment, the Women's Executive Committee would send out its members, some to go and comfort the wounded, others to go around and ask the villagers to contribute special food, such as hen's eggs and milk, to feed the sick.

198. How did the women cadres behave?

They behaved the same way as the male cadres. To tell you the truth, the majority of the local cadres were from the landless class, and therefore, most of them had very little, if any, education; their talks were simple, and their manners unassuming. Therefore, they had little difficulty in getting along with the villagers, and they were usually not proud or arrogant.

199. What did you and the other villagers think of the women cadres in your hamlet?

Genarally speaking, the villagers didn't admire either the male or the female cadres. As I said, the majority of them were from the landless class. They had had no education, and therefore, most of them were looked upon as being illiterate persons. The GVN didn't use these people as its cadres because they had no education or culture. But with the Front, it was quite the contrary: those people were being used as trusted elements, and some of them had been given responsibilities. To say the truth, among the local cadres, some were appointed because of their enthusiasm for the Front's cause and struggle, but others held their positions out of compulsion.

200. Was there a Party Chapter in your hamlet?

I don't know.

201. Was there a Party Chapter in your village?

I'm sure there was, but I don't know anything about it.

202. Did you know who belonged to the Village Party Chapter?

No. How could I? I don't even know which of the cadres belonged to the Party Chapter.

203. What did you and the villagers think about the way the Front cadres acted in your hamlet?

Generally speaking, the majority of the villagers in the hamlet didn't appreciate or like any of the Front cadres in the hamlet. The villagers felt that the cadres put too much pressure on them, and they resented the cadres for doing it.

204. Did the villagers think the cadres were honest and fair?

No, they didn't. They couldn't think of the cadres as being honest and fair because there were cases where the villagers could see with their own eyes that the cadres didn't act according to their words. For instance, the cadres advocated a ban on foreign-made goods, but they were the very persons who always looked out for foreign-made goods, such as clothing materials, radios, etc., to buy and use them. Another example: the cadres used to advocate a tight-belt policy, forbidding the villagers to spend and forcing them to save. But the cadres were the ones who always had plenty of varied food on their table, and they were the ones who always wore good and nice clothes. All those things made the villagers think that the cadres were far from honest and fair.

205. Did the cadres help the villagers?

I haven't seen the cadres help the villagers at anything yet. In the beginning, when they first came into the hamlet, they sometimes gave a hand here and there, but to talk of real help to the villagers, there was never any help coming from the cadres. They took a lot away from the villagers, but they didn't give anything.

206. Have the cadres in your hamlet changed?

No, except a few cases of cadres from cell level being raised to hamlet level. There were also cases of a few who became cadres out of force, and after a while, stopped being cadres because it was found that they didn't show sufficient enthusiasm in their work. Those small changes were the only ones.

207. Did you ever see or hear about conflicts between the cadres?

Yes, but only on rare occasions. For instance, there was a conflict between a visiting village cadre and one or more hamlet cadres. There seemed to be lack of understanding between the village and the hamlet cadres, and from that lack of understanding, a conflict arose. That happened in Sub-Hamlet 1: a military cadre from the village level was making a visit there. The village military cadre came into the sub-hamlet, but didn't inform the sub hamlet cadres about his coming and his visit. On his own, the village military

cadre went around to see and talk to the villagers; when the sub-hamlet cadres learned about his visit, they disagreed, and an argument arose between the sub-hamlet cadres and the village military cadre. The sub-hamlet cadres complained at being ignored by the village cadre, saying that they were being treated cheaply by the village cadre. They told the village cadre that he should have informed them of his visit, and if he had done so, they would have worked out a plan for his visit, etc. They accused the village cadre of thinking of himself as being from the village level and, thus, of looking down on the sub-hamlet cadres.

208. In your opinion, what effects did such disputes between the cadres have on the villagers?

They showed the people that the cadres couldn't even get along with one another, and that they were competing for authority, for influence and for leadership. The sub-hamlet cadres wanted authority in their own area, but the village-level cadre also wanted authority on the basis of his rank. The village cadre was not in his area, but because he was a cadre from village level, he wanted authority in the hamlets he went into.

209. In your opinion, did the fact that the cadres competed against one another for authority and leadership have any effect on the work they had to carry out in the village? If so, how?

Sure. The fact that the cadres didn't get along with one another and that they fought one another for power and authority had a bad effect on the work they had to carry out in the village. For instance, the villagers could see that there was no unity of action and command among the cadres, and thus, if asked to do something, the villagers were reluctant to co-operate. It also lowered the people's respect for the cadres.

210. Were there different factions among the cadres?

I don't think so. At least, I didn't know of any.

211. In your opinion, did the regroupee cadres form a faction different from the local cadres?

Yes, I think they did. The thing was, many of the local

cadres didn't want to be cadres, but they were forced to be. Because they were forced to work as cadres, many of the local cadres didn't fully co-operate with their superiors. They then assumed a passive attitude. And if they did work, they worked for the sake of working, not carrying out the results. The regroupee cadres, on the contrary, were always most enthusiastic. They were also fully dedicated. Therefore, they didn't approve the local cadres' attitude towards their work and duty. However, there were also cases of regroupee cadres not getting along with other regroupee cadres. Conflicts between regroupee cadres may arise from jealousy: a regroupee cadre may have been appointed to the district level, and another regroupee cadre may be jealous of his counterpart's new appointment.

212. Did the Front ever arrest, punish or kill any villagers?

They arrested lots of people in the village.

213. Who were the persons who were arrested by the Front?

In general, all those who previously had been working for the GVN were arrested. People who were formerly either militiamen, or cadres in the GVN were arrested. Among those who were arrested in the village, a few had been allowed to go back to the village, but many others were taken away for good.

214. Did the Front kill any villagers? How many?

Yes. As far as I know, one man in my hamlet was killed by the Front.

215. What did the man do in the hamlet?

He was a member of the village council. Apart from that man whom the Front killed in the hamlet, there were many others who were taken up in the mountain and killed there without being given any reason. People going into the jungle to cut wood came across dead bodies, but no one knew exactly what happened to those dead persons.

216. What did you think about the Front arresting and killing the villagers?

I thought of the Communists as being inhuman and cruel. They claimed that they had come to liberate the people, but what they did was to arrest some of the villagers, and to kill some others. A few others were taken away and beaten up.

217. What did the villagers say about it?

The villagers resented and complained about the Communists very much. The villagers said that the Communists claimed they were in the village to liberate, but whom did the Communists liberate? All they were seen to do was to arrest, to kill and to destroy.

218. Were you and other villagers ever made to perform work without pay for the Front?

Yes. The majority of the people were forced to work as civilian laborers for the Communists.

219. What did you do?

I had to transport rice to the rice caches.

220. How long did you have to work as a civilian laborer?

Ten days. Because of my age, I was taken away to work as a civilian laborer only once. Young people had to go and work for a period of up to three months, others for half a month.

221. What did you think about having to work as a civilian laborer? What did the other villagers say about it?

The majority of the people who went to work as civilian laborers returned home and complained very loudly about it. What could they have said? Some of them said that the cadres forced them to go, but when they became ill, there was no medicine available. Others said that by going into the jungle, they picked up all sorts of illnesses. To recruit civilian laborers, the cadres promised the villagers that, while they worked, they would be given everything -- medicine and food -- but once the villagers were actually working for the Front as civilian laborers, they weren't given anything, and on their return, if they were ill, they were not even looked after, nor given any medicine.

222. Had you ever met any soldiers or cadres working with the Front who weren't Southerners?

Yes, I had. On one occasion, soldiers and cadres from some North Vietnamese units went into our village and camped there for a short period.

223. When did you first see North Vietnamese soldiers and cadres in your village?

Around March 1966.

224. How many of them went into your village? What did they do there?

There were many of them. That time, there must have been a whole battalion of them. All of them were from the North Vietnamese army. They were stopping by the village and getting ready for the battle that took place in Son Khuong. At the battle of Son Khuong, they suffered many dead, and so they withdrew, and were never seen again in the village.

225. What did the villagers think of the North Vietnamese soldiers and cadres? How did the villagers treat them?

The villagers treated the North Vietnamese the same way as they would treat the Southerners. No one complained about the North Vietnamese soldiers because they relied on themselves for everything, and therefore, they didn't have to take or borrow anything from the villagers. The North Vietnamese soldiers had their own food supply; the only thing they asked from the people was to be able to camp in the villagers' homes at night. Whatever the villagers liked to give them, they would gratefully take, but otherwise, they would never borrow or ask anything from the people.

226. Had the Front's activities in your village changed in any way in the last year or so?

There hadn't been any change. The Front carried on with its same activities in the village. As far as I could see, I didn't see any change.

227. Have you ever heard about defeats suffered by Front units?

No. The VC didn't talk about their defeats, so I didn't hear anything about them.

228. Have you ever heard of victories made by the Front?

Sure. As far as victories were concerned, the cadres didn't stop from talking about them, but as to defeats, they never touched the subject.

229. Did the Front set up a school in your village?

No, the Front didn't. The GVN built a school in the village, but when the Communists came into the village, they didn't even use it.

230. Did the cadres ever make promises about setting up a school in the village?

Yes, they did, but how could they have managed? There wasn't enough labor, since everybody had been mobilized for other missions, such as digging trenches in the village, or labor work in the jungle. The Front simply didn't have time, or funds and energy to set up the school.

231. Did you have a hospital in the village?

The Front set up a dispensary in a private home, but it constantly moved the dispensary from one home to another. The dispensary didn't have a fixed location.

232. Did the Front have doctors working at the dispensary?

The dispensary had several -- five or six -- nurses working there.

233. Where did the nurses come from?

They all came from the area -- that is, from [redacted]

234. Did the villagers have to pay to use the dispensary?

The dispensary treated civilians as well as wounded Front

soldiers, but only light casualties were treated at the village's dispensary. Heavy casualties were taken up in the mountains where the Front was supposed to have a hospital. As a rule, people going to the dispensary weren't supposed to have to pay. But the dispensary was short of medicine, and so it had to charge to cover its costs.

235. While in your village, what had you heard about the present Saigon Government?

I hadn't heard anything at all.

236. Do you know the names of any of the present Saigon Government?

I know the name Nguyen Cao Ky.

237. Do you know what the aims and policies of the present Saigon Government are?

Since I came out here, I could read on the posters about "Down with the Government in exile," "Down with political factions," etc. I also read that the present government stands for peace, for the people, and so on.

238. How did you get information in your village on what was happening in Saigon?

Either by listening to the radio, or through the Buddist Community that regularly received news from the Vien Hoa Dao.

239. Did you ever listen to the radio?

Very rarely, because I, myself, didn't own a set. People who owned radios often listened, to the news on the radio, and talked to us about what they had heard.

240. Were the villagers able to listen to Radio Saigon?

They listened to Radio Saigon in secrecy. When the cadres were not around, the villagers would listen to Radio Saigon programs. The cadres forbade anyone having a radio to listen to Radio Saigon.

241. To what Radio Saigon programs did the villagers listen?

They listened to the news programs, but also to the musical programs.

242. What have you heard about life in North Vietnam?

I heard people with radios say that they heard from Radio Saigon that life in the North was very miserable; the people in the North were not free, and that very tight restrictions and discipline were imposed on them. The villagers also said that they heard the people in the North were beginning to resent the restrictions imposed on them, and that some of them had looked for ways and means to escape and flee to the South.

243. What did the regroupee cadres say about life in the North?

According to them, life in the North was very good and comfortable. They talked of Socialism having achieved for each citizen happiness and comfort; they said that all children were taken care of in nurseries, and educated in state-run schools.

244. What did you think of the things you heard about life in the North?

I was told all those things, but I didn't take them very seriously. I certainly didn't believe everything the regroupee cadres said. The cadres were known to be able to tell lies on everything they said, and so, the villagers were always suspicious of what the cadres said.

245 Did you ever hear about the Chieu Hoi program?

Yes, I did.

246. What is it?

Aircraft flying over villages and hamlets dropped leaflets calling on the people and the Communists to return to the GVN. Some of the aircraft broadcast messages. Others dropped leaflets.

247. Did you ever hear broadcasts from aircraft and read leaflets?

Yes, I did.

248. What did the broadcasts and leaflets say?

The broadcasts called on all the soldiers serving in the Communists' units to give up their weapons and return to the GVN cause, promising them that if they did so, they would be given assistance from the government. They would be given rewards, and they would be given a job. The leaflets carried the same types of messages and appeals. Some of the leaflets were in the form of a letter written by a mother to her son, or a sister to her brother, or a wife to her husband. In the letters, the mother (or sister or wife) asked her son to abandon his unit and return home.

249. Did you and the other villagers believe what you heard from aircraft broadcasts or from the leaflets?

Of course, we believed in them. Even the cadres believed in them. The evidence is that there were cases of high-ranking cadres heeding the leaflets' appeals and rallying to the GVN. Some of the leaflets printed a list of high-ranking cadres who'd rallied to the GVN, with all the details concerning them -- their units, etc.

250. What do you think of the program?

I think that the program is one of the best weapons for the GVN. On the other hand, it is also one of the means by which the GVN can protect the civilian population from being the target of the bombing and shelling. Thanks to the Chieu Hoi program, the GVN has the means to bring the civilian population back to GVN areas, and thus, protect them from being hit by the bombs and shells.

251. Did any rallier ever return to your village?

No.

252. Was your village ever attacked by the ARVN or by its allies since it came under · · Front control?

The village was attacked by artillery a air hundreds of times. Once, the village was attacked by ground troops, and that was the time we took the opportunity to come out.

253. When did the GVN begin to make attacks on the village?

About a month or two after the Communists took over the area, airplanes were seen flying above the area, sometimes strafing the area, other times dropping bombs. Since that time, off and on, the village was either shelled or bombed, until the time I left the village.

254. Did the GVN attacks get worse?

Yes, they did. They became more frequent in late years. They were doubled over the time when the Communists first came into the area.

255. Why did you think your village was attacked?

Because it was occupied by the Communists, and for no other reason.

256. What did the villagers say?

They said the same thing. Everyone knew that the village was attacked because it was occupied by the Communists. Because of the Communists, the villagers had to undergo suffering and misery.

257. What did the Front cadres say?

They said that,in order to win, one had to make sacrifices and one had to bear hardships from one year to another until victory came. They said that we had to sacrifice, and sacrifice more, for the revolution.

258. Were Front soldiers in your village when it was attacked?

Yes, but they were never concentrated in one area alone, and therefore, they didn't suffer great losses.

259. Were any Front soldiers or cadres killed or wounded because of the attacks?

Yes, but very few. The Front soldiers were always dispersed into small groups of two or three men in order to avoid being hit. The GVN attacks caused a certain amount of damage for the Front, but not much. At the battle of Son Khuong, the Front suffered very heavy losses in human lives.

260. Did the GVN attacks on your village cause great damage to the villagers? Were any of the villagers killed or injured?

Yes. The attacks caused great damage to the villagers: homes were burnt down, cattle killed or lost. Many villagers were killed. Many people lost their property in the attacks.

261. Had you made any preparations in your village for the attacks?

To protect ourselves from the attacks, we dug trenches for our precious possessions. Though the trenches helped a lot, they didn't prevent us from losing everything we had if a bomb fell right in the trench. In such a case, you could only resign yourself to your fate.

262. Which of the attacks -- by ground troops, or by artillery, or by air --, was the most effective against the Front?

The recent operation by ground troops in our village caused great damage to the Front.

263. Which of the attacks was the most destructive against the villagers?

The bombs were the more destructive against the villagers. The cannons were also very destructive, but the bombs were much more so.

264. Before the attacks, was your village given any warning?

No. Who would give a warning? As soon as the villagers heard the sound of airplanes, they would immediately run into the trenches. In some cases, they didn't even have enough time to run for cover. The planes were already dropping bombs.

265. Were the villagers given any warning before the operation the Allied troops carried out in your village?

No. In the morning, we got up and saw that the troops had arrived.

266. In your opinion, would such a warning have been useful to the villagers?

If the villagers were given an advanced warning of the attacks, they would have been able to take precautionary measures that would minimize their risks of being hit and of seeing their property destroyed. However, the villagers were never warned of an imminent attack.

267. How did the GVN attacks make you feel about the GVN and its allies?

I felt that it was because of the presence of the Communists in the village that attacks were made on the village. I felt that the attacks were aimed at undermining the strength of the Communists in the area, and not purposely aimed at causing damage to the civilian population, but since the civilian population lived next to the Communists, it was a matter of bad luck that some villagers had to suffer.

268. Whom do you blame for the attacks made on your village?

Of course, the Front is to be blamed. If the Front were not in our village, the village wouldn't have been attacked.

269. Did you think there were better ways for the GVN to counter the Front? If so, what were those ways?

I did sometimes think of some better ways to fight the Communists other than making attacks on the village. I sometimes felt that the GVN should have sought out the Communists in order to annihilate them, rather than dropping bombs at random, thus causing damage to the innocent villagers.

270. What did the villagers say about the attacks on the village?

They said the same thing. The majority knew that the attacks were not aimed at the villagers, but at killing the Communists in the village, but some people felt that if the GVN wanted to fight the Communists, the GVN should look for

them and fight them at their base, rather than firing shells and dropping bombs into a whole area where many civilian people lived, and thus, causing damage to the people. The villagers said that if the GVN wanted to fight the Communists, the GVN could do just that, as much as it wished, but that it should not make the innocent people suffer.

271. In your opinion, how could the GVN best fight the Communists without causing too great damage to the civilian population?

The GVN could, for instance, do the same thing as it did during the 10th month of the Lunar Year, that is to say, carrying out an operation in the area, and thus, permit the civilian population to come out. If an operation by ground troops could be made, and an advanced warning given, the population wouldn't suffer anything. Before the operation started, the troops would call on all the people of the village to surrender themselves and come out to go over to GVN areas; those who refused to come out would be considered as being Communists, and would be dealt with accordingly. Those who agreed to come out and go over to the GVN would be protected from the risks of being hit by the bombs and shells.

272. Before becoming a refugee, had you seen any Americans in Vietnam?

Yes, I had seen many Americans before coming out here.

273. Where did you see them?

In our village. They came into our village to carry out their operations there. When I arrived in Duc Duc, I also met quite a few Americans.

274. How did those Americans behave?

The Americans who came into our village didn't fire one single gunshot when they arrived in the village. But they arrested all the young people they saw.

275. What did you think the Americans were doing in Vietnam?

According to the cadres, everywhere they went, the Americans

killed and arrested, and they raped the women. The first time I saw an American, I was very frightened. But after a while, I wasn't any longer. I could see that the Americans behaved very well; they didn't kill, rape as the cadres said. They went into the villagers' homes and talked to the villagers, although no one could speak their language. They used hand signs, and we answered them back by smilling or by nodding.

276. While in the village, what did you think the Americans were doing in Vietnam? (Question repeated).

The cadres made propaganda and said that the Americans were in Vietnam to oppress and fight the people of Vietnam, but I, personally, thought that the Americans were in Vietnam to fight the Communists.

277. What do you now think the Americans really want in Vietnam?

I now think that the Americans have come to Vietnam in order to help to annihilate the Communists, and so achieve peace for the country and the people.

278. Why do you think the Americans are committed to help Vietnam to fight the Communists?

Because the Americans belong to the free-worl bloc, and it is their duty to assist another country in the free-world bloc. On the other hand, the Americans hate Communism, and therefore, it is only natural that the Americans should come to the help of Vietnam in its fight against Communism.

279. In your opinion, what is the relationship between the GVN and the Americans?

The Americans act as advisors of the GVN. Every GVN office has its own American advisor. On the other hand, the Americans are friends of Vietnam; they are here to give assistance.

280. Do you think that the American role in Vietnam is like the French's in the old times or it is different?

It's different. In the old times, the French ruled us; we then didn't have any power or authority; whatever we were told to do, we had to obey. At that time, we had to serve the French. Today, it is not so with the Americans. We mind our own affairs, and the Americans act only as advisors.

281. Do you think that the Americans behave differently from the French, or do they behave in the same manner?

The Americans behave differently from the French. The Americans are kind and good to the people. They have respect and sympathy for the people of Vietnam. The Americans aren't conceited.

282. Have you seen or heard about American gifts to villagers?

I have heard about those gifts, but have never seen any of them in our village.

283. What did you think about those gifts?

I heard that, in some refugee camps, American and Korean soldiers distributed gifts to the people in the camp, but I haven't received any since I became a refugee. Those gifts are, of course, very useful to the people, since the majority of them came out empty-handed.

284. Have you seen or heard about other foreign countries assisting the GVN and sending troops to South Vietnam?

After I arrived in Duc Duc, I saw a few Koreans, and I was told they were Koreans, and that they were here to help the GVN to fight the Communists.

285. What do you think of the presence of Koreans in your country?

I was told that Korea is also a country threatened by Communism and that is the reason for Korea to come to our help in order to annihilate Communism. Because of their experience with Communism, the Koreans are very much against the Communists; wherever they carry out their operation, the Koreans are very tough and harsh on the Communists: they look out for the Communists, and if they catch up with any of the Communists, they are ruthless. The Koreans are

fiercer at fighting the Communists than the Americans. The Koreans don't spare anyone they suspect of being a Communist. I was told that, recently, when the Koreans made an operation in Loc Qui and Loc Son, the Koreans inflicted heavy damage to the Front, but also to the villagers because they suspected the people of being on the side of the Front.

286. Which do you think is stronger: the GVN and its allies, or the Front with its allies?

In my opinion, talking of one side or one group being stronger or not than another, one has to talk of "politically strong" and of "economically strong." In the political sphere, the Communists have lost unity within their own ranks. Therefore, the Front is no longer strong politically. In the field of economics, the Front's economy has been greatly disrupted and undermined. Economically, the Communists are far behind the GVN. Therefore, the Communists are necessarily weaker than the GVN. What do the people in any country want? They want only to have enough to eat and wear, and to be happy. Whatever government can bring those two things to the people, the people support that government. Communism doesn't agree with the people because, in the political field, Communism practices discrimination and oppression of classes, while in the field of economics, the Communists' economy has been disrupted; people are no longer able to work productively. Land is left uncultivated.

287. Have you heard about the bombing of North Vietnam?

Yes, I have.

288. From whom did you hear about the bombing of the North?

From the people who owned radios and heard the news from Radio Saigon. They told me they heard that many cities of North Vietnam had been bombed. I can't remember the names of those cities, but I did hear about cities being bombed.

289. In your opinion, what are the bombings' effects on the North?

I heard that the bombings had the effect of diminishing the production level of the North, as well as disrupting the economy of the country, but I don't know the details.

290. What did the cadres say about the bombings of the North?

They didn't talk about the bombings of the North. I heard about the bombings from people who listened to Radio Saigon and learned about them.

291. What were the reasons that made you leave your village and come out here?

The hardships and the regime imposed by the Communists.

292. Which of the two reasons was the most important for you?

The Communist regime. I didn't agree with it. There was too much pressure put on us, too many restrictions. On the other hand, life in the village was becoming unbearable, with the constant bombing and shelling.

293. Did you ever hear broadcasts from airplanes or read leaflets asking you to leave?

Yes, I did. On several occasions, planes flew into our area and made broadcasts calling on us to leave.

294. What did the broadcasts say?

They called on the villagers to leave the VC-controlled areas, and go over to GVN areas to take refuge. They said that the villagers should not continue to remain in VC controlled areas because they would become targets of the attacks.

295. When did you first hear such broadcast messages?

In 1966, and also in 1965.

296. What did you think of the broadcast messages? Did you ever think of heeding them?

I did want to heed the broadcasts' appeals and leave the village to go over to GVN areas, but I wasn't able to do so. There weren't any opportunities for me to leave.

297. What were the reasons why you couldn't leave the village at that time?

The Communists kept a watch on us; they didn't allow us to go anywhere. They restricted us to the limits of the village. If we ventured out of the village, we ran the risk of coming upon the guards posted along the roads. We had to resign ourselves to wait for an opportunity such as an operation by GVN or Allied troops before we could come out. You see, it was impossible for a whole family to go out of the village. If I had wanted to, I could have escaped by myself, but that meant that I would have to leave my children behind in the village. All these things made it difficult for us to leave.

298. Have you ever taken refuge before?

As I said, when the Communists first came to take over the village, most of the villagers in the village fled under the attack. I, myself, fled to [redacted] then meant to take refuge in a GVN area, and didn't expect that the Communists were soon to follow us to [redacted] At that time, [redacted] was under GVN control. We'd been in [redacted] for seven days when [redacted] in turn, was attacked and taken over. We were sent back to our village. We had to go back because there was nothing else we could have done: there was no longer any escape route for us, and out of compulsion, we had to go back to the village.

299. Describe your trip from the village to this place. When did you leave your village? What was the opportunity that permitted you to leave the village to take refuge here?

The opportunity came when the Allied troops made an operation into our area. The operation was made on the 18th of the tenth month of the Lunar Year. I was then living in the hamlet pagoda because my own home had been destroyed by a bomb explosion. When the Allied troops arrived at the pagoda, I was in the pagoda. When the villagers heard of Allied troops coming into the area, many of them were terrified, and so they flocked to the pagoda to take refuge there. About two-thirds of the villagers in the hamlet took refuge at the hamlet pagoda. Seeing all the villagers assembled at the pagoda, the Allied troops' interpreter asked whether we wanted to leave the village or to stay back there. All the villagers said

they wanted to leave because they could no longer bear the bombing and shelling. The interpreter told us to wait while preparations were made to take all of us out. We waited at the pagoda for three days. Then, on the fourth day, a detachment of soldiers from the district was sent into the village. Those soldiers accompanied us out of the village. In the beginning, we were told we would be flown out on planes, but then the planes didn't come because of the rains. Only one plane managed to land. Old and sick people and children were allowed to board the plane to be flown out. The rest of the villagers went out of the village on foot. I, myself, went on foot. On the way out, we stopped one night in [redacted] and one night in [redacted] We arrived at the district on the [redacted] We left on the [redacted] and arrived in Duc Duc on the [redacted]

300. Before you left your hamlet, what had you heard about present conditions in GVN areas?

I was told that people who took refuge in GVN areas would be given help by the GVN; I also heard that refugees would be assisted to find a job, and that, once in GVN areas, they no longer had to fear the bombing and shelling.

301. Where did you hear this?

People going to GVN markets met GVN soldiers, who told them about those things. Once back in the village, the people who heard it from the GVN soldiers told the other villagers in the hamlet.

302. Did anyone in your village try to stop you from leaving?

No. Almost all the villagers left. Who was there to stop anyone?

303. What preparations for leaving did you and your family make?

We didn't make any preparations. The interpreter told all of us not to take anything, except a few clothes and a small amount of rice. I, myself, took along a few clothes for my sons and two "ang" of rice. Everything else I owned, I left back in the village.

304. What property did you leave behind?

I left behind the following: paddy; 100 "ang" of paddy, 15 "ang" of sticky rice, and two buffaloes.

305. Who came with you when you left the village?

The whole hamlet left. In my family, all my children left with me.

306. Did anyone remain in the village?

A few did so, but very few.

307. Why did those people stay back?

Some of them held hard to their possessions and couldn't leave. Others were pro-Communist, therefore, they didn't want to leave. Many among those who stayed back did so because they couldn't make up their minds to leave everything they had; they were hanging on their fortune.

308. About how many families left your village? How many in your hamlet?

About half of the village left. In my own hamlet, about two-thirds of the population left to come out here.

309. What kinds of people left, and what kinds stayed behind?

All kinds of people left: rich farmers, middle farmers, poor farmers, share-croppers. A small number of people stayed back in the village because they couldn't depart from their properties.

310. Did you expect to leave your hamlet for a long or a short period?

I was expecting to leave for a long time.

311. Why did you think so?

Because I thought the war was still on, and as far as I could see, there wasn't yet any prospect of ending it.

312. How long do you think you'll be here now?

I don't know what to think. I have no idea at all. Who doesn't want peace to come so that each one can go back where he belongs? But who knows when peace will come?

313. Have any people who left your village to come out here now gone back to the village?

Yes, a few.

314. Why have they gone back? Who has done so?

Old and weak people, who couldn't adjust themselves, and who no longer have any hope of finding a job here and make their living, have asked for permission to go back to the village. The camp authorities said that, since those people were all old and weak, they were given permission to go back to the village.

315. How many refugees have gone back to your village?

Four. All four were old women.

316. What would happen to you if you went back now?

I would be taken away for re-education. I wouldn't dare go back now.

317. What have the GVN authorities in the Duc Duc Refugee Center done for you?

The refugees have been given a lot of help by the authorities. We have been given cash, rice, cooking oil, etc. We have also been given shelters.

318. Have the GVN authorities kept their promises?

When we first arrived in Duc Duc, we were told by the district chief that, in due time, we would be given everything we needed: blankets, sleeping mats, mosquito nets, cooking pots, rice, cash, and so on. But of all the things promised, we have received only some. We didn't receive everything we needed; in fact, we didn't expect it.

We've been told that, because of the lack of facilities, and because of the difficulty of communications, the task of bringing aid and assistance to refugees has not been running smoothly.

319. Do you feel dissatisfied? What about the other refugees?

No, I don't feel dissatisfied. I know that the GVN authorities are meeting lots of difficulties, with the bad and impracticable roads, what with the shortages of vehicles to transport the supplies, etc. In spite of all the difficulties and shortcomings, we are not left out; in fact, we have been given as much assistance as the authorities can afford to give us: shelters, food, etc. The authorities have built houses for us to live in; we have been given cash.

320. How much assistance have you received, in all, since you became a refugee?

In all, my family and I have been given 900 piasters, plus four "ang" of polished rice and one bag of black rice (Bulgar), two cans of salad oil, six meters of clothing materials, and one pot for cooking.

321. Did you have enough food, money, and medicine while you were in Duc Duc? Did you have good shelter and sanitation?

To be frank, the food, cash, and all were just enough. If one had a small family, one would be able to get by, but with a large family, one would feel hungry. As for shelter, we had sheds to live in. It was rather crowded, but one got used to it. As to sanitation, it was not very good. In fact, the place lacked sanitation and hygiene. It was too crowded, one couldn't expect too much. Recently, several people died of cholera because of the lack of proper hygiene.

322. What assistance have you received since you came to this place?

Nothing yet. I haven't been here long. I arrived in this place barely two weeks ago. I had been put up here by the hamlet chief, but as far as assistance is concerned, I haven't received anything yet.

323. Why did you choose this place?

Actually, I asked to be transferred from Duc Duc to [redacted] but when I landed in [redacted] I wasn't accepted there, on the grounds that there was no available space for me. Then, I was sent to this place. The people in [redacted] gave me an introduction to settle down here.

324. Why did you want to go [redacted]? Do you know anyone there?

I have a cousin in [redacted] He told me of a refugee camp in [redacted] but when I arrived there, I wasn't accepted. Moreover, I didn't stay in [redacted] because I was told that I wouldn't be able to find a job there. The people in [redacted] Refugee Center advised me to go to [redacted] because there are more opportunities here.

325. Have you been given identification cards in Duc Duc?

No, I had mine. In Duc Duc, I was issued a paper, stating that I was allowed to move out of the Duc Duc Refugee Center.

326. While in Duc Duc, did you earn extra money with part-time jobs?

No. I did only odd jobs for the camp, and was given thirty piasters for the camp and thirty piasters for every day of work.

327. Do you do any types of jobs here?

Since I came here, I managed to get some odd jobs and have been working for one or two days to have some income to live on.

328. What do you do? How much do you earn?

I fill sandbags. I have earned a few hundred piasters.

329. How many refugees were in the Duc Duc Refugee Camp? How many are in this camp?

In Duc Duc, it was very crowded. There were thousands of families living there. Here, as you can see, there are only ten or twelve families of us, that is, not counting the people who have been here a long time.

330. While in Duc Duc, did you feel safe from military attacks?

Yes, I did. I don't know what happened, but the Communists succeeded in sniping at the camp several times. A few refugees were injured by the VC.

331. Do you feel safe here?

Yes. We live here far away from the Communists. As a whole, everything here is better than/Duc Duc. The air is very good here; there is plenty of space; and most important, there are good opportunities for work.

332. How is the leadership of this camp organized?

A representative of the Buddhist Church is the head of this camp. The Buddhist representative comes and visits us now and then. In actual fact, he drops by quite often.

333. What does he do when he comes? Do you receive any help from him?

No. What does he have to give us? Whenever he comes, he talks to us, comforts us, sees that we have beds to sleep on. If we don't have beds to sleep on, he'll try to find one for us.

334. Did you get any information or rumors or instructions from your village since you left it?

When I was in Duc Duc, some people from the village arrived at the camp, having left the village just before Tet to take refuge in GVN areas. They told us about news of the village. They told us that, since we left, the village had became the site of heavy bombing and shelling, and that some of the villagers who were still in the village had been killed. They also told us that all the properties and possessions we left behind had been confiscated by the Communists. They said that homes had been left standing, but all the other properties had been taken away.

335. Have you seen any foreigners in Duc Duc? Have you seen any here?

Yes, plenty.

336. What are they doing? How do they behave?

They are just passing by. They don't do anything in particular. In Duc Duc, the foreigners came into the camp to distribute either clothes or medicine or food to the refugees. They behaved very well. The ones I see here also behave very well.

337. What do the children of the refugees do here?

They just play all day long, as you can see. There are schools here, and children can go there, but most of the refugees haven't obtained a job yet, and so the children are not yet sent to school. When I was in Duc Duc, the district chief said that schools would be built for children of refugees to go to, but at the time I left the camp, there wasn't any school yet.

338. Whom do you blame for your troubles?

I blame the Communists. They were the authors of our miseries. But for them, we wouldn't have been through so many hardships and difficulties.

339. When you leave here, where would you like to go?

I wouldn't want to go anywhere else. I'll stay here as long as I can, until peace comes, and I'll be able to go back to my village. If I can find a job here, I'll settle down here.

340. Would you like to receive some training in order to make your living?

No. I'm no longer young. I'm getting fairly old. I won't be able to learn anything. All I want now is to find a job that will permit me to live fairly decently.

341. Here is a picture of a ladder. It has ten rungs. The bottom rung, that is the rung No. 10, represents the worst life you can imagine. The top rung, that is the rung No. 1, represents the best life you can imagine. Where on this ladder would you say that your life was during the time the GVN was in control of your village?

My life was on rung No. 5.

342. Where on the ladder would you say that your life was after the Front came to your village?

From being on rung No. 5, my life kept on dropping down the rungs to rung No. 10 by the time I left the village.

343. How about right now? Where on the ladder would you put your life now?

Right now, materially, I don't live as comfortably as I did back in the village; indeed, I lack a lot of things. At home, I wouldn't. But, spiritually, I now live much better than I would at home. Now, I am far from the threat of the war; far away from me are the sights of destruction, the sights of death. At home, I would have plenty of food to eat, but at night, I would have to go down/the trenches to sleep, and even down in the trenches, I would have been awakened several times by the sound of the bomb explosions. Here, my mind is at peace. Here, my morale is very good: It is much higher than during the time I was in the village. Materially, now, my life is on rung No. 10, but spiritually, it is on rung No. 5, while if I were back in the village, it would be the contrary: materially, my life would be on rung No. 5, but spiritually, it would be on rung No. 10.

344. Where do you think your life would be now if you had a job and a steady income?

On rung No. 5.

345. Where do you think your life will be one year from now?

How can I say?

346. In your opinion, what are the conditions that will permit you to say that your life is on rung No. 1? What do you have to have in order to say that you are on rung No. 1?

I would have to have a permanent and steady work. I would have to have a house to live in. However, to tell you the truth, I don't aspire to rung No. 1; it is too high for me. The most I can conceive is a life on rung No. 3, and to be on rung No. 3, one has to have a permanent and steady job, a decent home to live in.

347. Try to describe the best life you can imagine. What is it like?

First, one would have to have a profession or be a cadre or an officer, with an income of five to six thousand piasters a month. Besides, one will have to have a good home to live in. One must be able to afford medicine and medical treatment in case of illness.

348. How would you describe the worst life you can imagine?

The sort of life we had had back in the village. We lacked everything; If we were in trouble, there was no one to go to; what with difficulties and hardships and the pressure put on us.

349. What kind of life do you hope your sons will have?

I would want for them an easy and good life, materially, as well as spiritually. I would want for them a good education and training, and when they are grown up enough, they will have good jobs.

350. What would you like them to become?

If they have the ability and qualifications, I would like them to become public servants: they can either work in government offices, or serve in the army.

351. What will be necessary to give your sons a good life?

The most necessary thing is education. The most I wish for them is that they will be able to finish [illegible] school.

352. If you could ask three things of any Vietnamese government, what would they be?

First, a job; second, a permanent place to live; and finally, schooling for my children.

353. Do you think the present GVN will be able to give you those three things?

Yes, I do. I do believe that the GVN will be able to grant me those three things. The fact that many other refugees

who had gone before me had been given a job and a home to live in made me believe that, in my case too, the GVN will be able to give help to me as it has done to others. Many schools have been built, and I will be able to send my sons there to be given a good education.

354. How long do you think the war will last?

I can't say anything about this. The war will last for many more years.

355. What makes you say the war will last for many more years?

Because, as I can see, there are so many factions in our country. Those factions do not get along with one another, but are constantly fighting one another. Each faction works for its own interests. Because of that, there is no common front, and so, the war will go on. No one wants to yield to the other. Take the recent Down-with-the-Government-in-Exile Movement. A group of people in exile have just formed a government and their goal is to make a return and seize the power from the present government. For the war to end, there must be favorable conditions.

356. What are those favorable conditions?

The present government will have to do something about the existing factions; it will, for instance, have to make a deal with them, and either have them all on its side, or wipe them out. While different factions fight against one another, the Communists don't lose time: they consolidate their strength and start trouble.

357. Have your thoughts on this changed?

No. I have always thought that it will be many more years before the war could be ended.

358. Which side do you think is winning now?

The GVN is, of course, winning. The Communists can't possibly win.

365. If the Front wins, what do you think life in Vietnam will be?

If the Communists win, life in Vietnam will be very miserable. The people will have no freedom; everything will be either forbidden or restricted. The people will have to pay lots of taxes and contributions. We will be working hard, but won't be able to enjoy it. We will be toiling to produce, but we won't be allowed to sell. Young people will be drafted.

366. If the GVN wins the war, what do you think life in Vietnam will be like?

If the GVN wins, the people of Vietnam will have a good life. They will be very happy. The ten years we lived under the GVN showed us that, with the GVN, the people can do work, and enjoy every bit of their work. In our village, there were people who'd had only very little, but by being willing to work, they came up very high. If the GVN wins, everyone in the country will be able to live a life that can be put on rung No. 5, at least, if not higher.

No. AGR 97

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

1. Name of Interviewer: [redacted] 23

2. Name of Subject : [redacted]

3. Time and Date of Interview:

From 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 a.m. on March [redacted] 1967

From 1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. on March [redacted] 1967

From _____ to _____ on _____ 1966

From _____ to _____ on _____ 1966

Total time: 4 hours

Interview based on: tape (X) hand written notes ( )

4. Place of Interview: [redacted] Village, [redacted] Refugee Camp.

5. Sex of subject: Male (X) Female ( )

6. Age of subject: 54

7. Ethnic background: Vietnamese

8. Place of birth:

hamlet [redacted]

village [redacted]

district Duc Duc

province Quang Nam

9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee:

hamlet [redacted]

village [redacted]

district Duc Duc

province _____

10. (a) Length of residence in last location: Since birth

(b) Who controlled the place of residence:

GVN ( ) VC (X) Contested ( )

(c) Since when controlled or contested? 1965

11. Number of brothers ( ) and sisters ( )

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age: _____

13. Marital status: Widower

14. Number of children: 5

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age: 1

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
    Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
    Brothers with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
    Wife with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
    Children with subject (X) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion: Buddhist

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge: farmer

19. Economic status:
    (a) VC designation Poor
    (b) Landowner? Yes How much land 2 "sao"

20. Education:
    Illiterate ( )
    Literate (X) 5 years of schooling
    Schooling completed: _____

21. Any relatives in VC: 2 nephews

22. Any relatives in GVN: _____

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by:
    (a) French
    (b) GVN
    (c) VC 1 brother-in-law - nephew in 1965

24. When became a refugee: 18/10 Lunar Year.

25. Where took refuge first: Duc Duc Refugee Center

26. Parent residence: 10/1 Lunar Year [redacted]

INTERVIEW #AGR-98 MISSING—

INTERVIEW NOT COMPLETED

INTERVIEW #AGR-99 MISSING—

INTERVIEW NOT COMPLETED

AGR

INTERVIEW

100

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(A)
THE RAND CORPORATION

INTERVIEWS CONCERNING THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR-100

Date of Interview : March [redacted] 1967

Subject's Category : Farmer, Woodcutter

Area of Residence : Strategic Hamlet
[redacted] Village
Quang Nam Province

This interview is for the information of US and Vietnamese official agencies and personnel on a need-to-know basis. Permission to distribute or show this interview to non-official persons requires the prior approval of The RAND Corporation and the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs.

in

1. How long had you been living/your village before taking refuge?

I had been living in my village since my childhood.

2. Is your village large? What is its population?

My village is very large and composed of [redacted] hamlets. [redacted] out of them were occupied by the VC two years ago, two others are contested, and there is only one out of these hamlets that is now under GVN control. My hamlet is one of the foregoing two contested hamlets. I don't know the population of my village, but my hamlet had 400 voters in the past.

3. What was your occupation in your village?

I had lived by farming and gathering firewood or timber.

4. What was the area of ricefield on which you could grow crops? How many crops per year? Could you live well enough on farming?

I grow crops on an area of 6 sao of land, but I owned only 1 sao, while the remaining 5 sao were rented. My land belongs to a double-cropping category, and every year I could harvest from 150 to 200 bushels of paddy, but this quantity must be divided and half of it paid to the land owner. As the land I grew crops on was near the mountainous area, rats sometimes appeared to destroy rice. The quantity of rice harvested was cut down considerably when the crop was destroyed by rats. I also lived by gathering firewood or timber and in previous years I could gain much more benefit from this than farming. In the last two years, due to difficulties of transportation, no one came to my hamlet to purchase timber or firewood any more. As a result, I could no longer live by gathering firewood or timber. I lived well enough in previous years except the last one before my return. I had to eat sweet potato and cassava instead of rice for my daily meals.

5. What is the main occupation of your villagers? Do they earn enough from their own trades?

Most people in my hamlet also live by farming and wood gathering as I do. About 80% of them cannot live well enough and must use sweet potato, cassava, and maize instead of rice for their meals.

6. How many members are in your family?

My family consists of 5 persons: my wife, 3 children, and myself. My eldest child is now 13 years old.

7. What is your religion?

I am a Buddhist.

8. What is the main religion in your hamlet?

About two-thirds of the people in my hamlet are Buddhists while one-third of them are Catholics. There are only 2 Protestant families.

9. Has there been any conflict within the hamlet because of difference of religion?

No conflict of this type has ever occurred.

10. Is there anyone in your hamlet who is not Vietnamese?

All of them are Vietnamese.

11. What grade had you reached before leaving school?

I know reading and writing only.

12. Is there any school in your hamlet?

In my village there is a primary school, composed of 3 classrooms, not located in my hamlet, but in the hamlet under the GVN's control. There is only a private kindergarten for children living in my hamlet.

13. Can children living in other hamlets attend the school located in the hamlet under GVN control?

No. Children living in the hamlets under VC control, as well as those living in the contested hamlets, cannot attend the school located in the hamlet under GVN control.

14. Does anyone in your hamlet possess a high level of education?

No, there is no one. I know a teacher who has practiced his profession for a long time. One of the younger members of my family passed the elementary examination and has also lived by teaching.

15. Have you any bosom friend in the hamlet?

I have no bosom friend, but was only acquainted with a certain number of hamletcers.

16. Could you talk freely with your acquaintances on every subject?

No, I usually talked only about daily work with them.

17. Whom do the people in the hamlet admire most?

One man has gained the highest esteem of most local residents, and he is now a member of the village council.

18. Is he still living in the hamlet?

He is now working for the village council, the headquarters of which is in the hamlet under GVN's control.

19. Who is the best one in your hamlet to get information from other localities?

No one in my hamlet is conversant with this field of activity.

20. What was life in your hamlet before 1954?

Before 1954, during the resistance period, the people lived a hard life since a great part of their rice harvest was delivered to the Front as agricultural tax. Even though the tenants enjoyed a reduction of rent, they themselves had to pay nearly all that they had gained for agricultural tax. Everyone in the hamlet had to use sweet potato and cassava instead of rice, for their daily meals nearly all your round. In addition, they often had to contribute their labor, doing very hard jobs, to the Front. I remember one time I had to carry rice (by using a shoulder-piece with 2 baskets or bags at both ends) to South Laos and it took about 3 months for the round trip.

21. Were there many of your villagers working for the Viet Minh?

Yes, many villagers were working for the Viet Minh.

22. Are those villagers still living in their locality?

Most of them regrouped to the North in 1954. Nine to ten persons in my hamlet regrouped to North Vietnam.

23. After 1954, what happened to those working for the Viet Minh who did not regroup to the North?

After 1954, when the Nationalist forces came to control my village, no one from among those working for the Viet Minh was arrested. Moreover, some of them have worked for the Nationalist side.

24. How about the life of your villagers after 1954?

Since 1954, after the occupation of the village by the Nationalist side, all the villagers' standard of living has been raised more and more except for a short period in the initial stage when people had to study hard some documents issued by the Nationalist side. They were then exempt from agricultural tax and corvee labor contribution as well. Most of local people have rebuilt their houses. In addition, they could get NACO loans to purchase oxen or buffaloes to grow their crops. Compared with the life under Viet Minh control, the life of local people under GVN control has been much better (about 30% to 100% better). Unfortunately, a great flood in 1964 swept away all the houses, cattle, and property of the local people. Moreover, many people were killed. The number of dead victims in one out of five hamlets within my village reached 500.

25. Did the local people receive any assistance from the GVN?

Without the government's support, by providing us clothes, blankets, mats, rice, and fish sauce, everyone in my village would have died of hunger.

26. How do the Nationalist officials treat the local people?

A certain number of officials have treated the people very gently, but a few of them have not behaved correctly because they have often bullied the people and committed corrupt practices.

27. Where did these officials come from?

These officials are all from my village.

28. Are these officials elected by the people or designated by the government?

All these officials are elected by the local people.

29. Can the people enjoy free elections?

Theoretically, the people may vote freely. But, in fact, the government has recommended some candidates to the people, who have usually voted for these candidates without a choice of others.

30. Was there any other election in your village?

Yes, there were two other elections, one under the Diem regime and another last year, but both were elections for the National Assembly. I think there is no difference between the election of the National Assembly and the election of the village council. The people may vote freely, indeed, but really they don't know which candidate to choose. All district cadres have guided the people to study electoral procedures, and then they themselves have guided the people to vote for such and such candidates.

31. Do you think the elected candidates were deserving?

No one could know whether such candidates are deserving or not since they have not yet achieved anything.

32. Do you know about the Diem Government?

I know nothing at all about this matter.

33. Could the local people lean immediately of the overthrow of the Diem Government?

No, the local people only learned of this overthrow 2 days later through the broadcasting system.

34. Did the people discuss the overthrow of the Diem Government?

I did not hear any discussion on this among the people. I think only those who possessed a rather high level education might bring up this matter for discussion, and those well-learned persons were very few. Most of the people know only how to make their living and don't know enough about this matter to discuss it.

35. Did anyone show sorrow?

I was not told about sorrow, congratulation, or criticism in favor of or against Diem.

36. Are there any Nationalist troops stationed in your village?

Previously, Nationalist troops were stationed in my hamlet. But in the past two years, they have been stationed in [redacted] Hamlet only.

37. Are there any other Nationalist troops stationed near your village?

There is a unit of US Armed Forces stationed in [redacted] post, about 1km from my hamlet.

38. Did you see American troops and ARVN troops often in your hamlet?

Sometimes, the ARVN troops and Popular Forces men from [redacted] appeared in my hamlet.

39. How did they treat the local people?

There are some bad elements in the Popular Force. As regards the ARVN, it depends on each unit since there is change of personnel very often. Sometimes, most of the servicemen in the same unit are good ones, but in another unit one may find some bad elements who have often menaced the people. Generally speaking, they have treated the people gently.

40. Has there been any change of treatment of the ARVN troops towards the people before and after the overthrow of Diem Government?

I think their treatment remains the same, but one may always find some bad elements among them.

41. Was there any strategic hamlet in your village?

My village consists of [redacted] hamlets and, in the past, they all were strategic hamlets.

42. When was your strategic hamlet set up?

It was established 4 years ago.

43. What did the people have to contribute to the strategic hamlet construction?

The people had to contribute only their labor. Materials were provided by the district concerned. Such construction was completed in about a month.

44. Did the government pay the people participating in the S.H. construction?

The government did not pay the people for their labor but distributed rice to them; but the quantity of rice distributed could compensate somewhat for the rice the people had to use during the month when they were building the hamlet.

45. What do you like best about the S.H.?

A.S.H. is considered as one's own house and garden. If it is well fenced, burglars cannot steal in and one can therefore enjoy a sound sleep. It is just the reason why I like to live in a S.H.

46. Do you like to enjoy a sound sleep without having to worry about burglars stealing in?

No, I've just given you an example only. I really mean that the inhabitant can prevent VC from stealing in their hamlet once they are living in an S.H.

47. What do you dislike in anS.H.?

My grandparents' tombs are in my garden, and a ditch was dug nearby. A certain number of hamlet people and I don't like this since, according to our tradition, this would harm the surviving family members if their ancestors' tombs are hit.

48. Did you let the local authorities know about this matter?

Although dissatisfied with it, I kept it dark. I thought I could not protest it since the S.H. construction was carried out for all the local people's interests.

49. Did you hear any complaints from the local people about their participation in the S.H. construction for a month?

It took about a month to complete the S.H. construction but the local people were not required to work continuously for a month. They were allowed to take 2 or 3 days off to take care of their personal affairs before resuming their work for another period of 5 or 7 days. There were no complaints about this S.H. construction.

50. How about your S.H. at the present time?

My S.H. has been fenced three times. First, it was surrounded by barbed wire. Then after the VC destroyed it several times, it was fenced again with barbed wire. It was fenced the last time last year, but it was as carefully done as the first time.

51. Do you like to live in an S.H.?

Yes, I do.

52. Do you think other local residents also like to live in an S.H.?

I don't know about it. But I am convinced that most of the people living under GVN control prefer living in an S.H. No one could know about the opinion of those who are pro-Communist.

53. Did you feel dissatisfied with anything before your hamlet became a contested area?

No.

54. How was your business then?

My business was then going on rather well. When my hamlet lay within the contested area, transportation became difficult and it was hard to sell wood. My income was less than before, but it was no matter. But later, unfortunately, the flood swept away all my property. I tried my best to re-organize my business, but it was not as good as before.

55. If your hamlet had not been turned into a contested area, did you think your business could be better and better?

Yes, I was convinced that my business could be more and more prosperous without the VC's harassing and I could, therefore, grow crops and fetch wood safely.

56. When were you told about the Front for the first time?

I was told about the Front a long time ago, but I cannot remember when I was told about it for the first time.

57. Who told you about the Front?

No one told me about it, but I remember I read a leaflet dealing with the Front. However, I forget all about it now.

58. Do you know about the goal of the Front?

I don't know about it, but we had better not think of it since VC have usually lied or given empty promises.

59. Do you know why the Front has fought the Nationalist side?

I think the Front intends to invade South Vietnam to offer it to Russia and the Chicoms.

60. Why do you think so?

I only guess so.

61. Do you know who is leading the Front now?

I don't know. Moreover, I have never been told about the leaders of the Front.

62. Do you think the Front is peace-loving?

VC don't want peace. They often talk about peace, but for fun only.

63. How could you know they talk about peace for fun only?

If they really love peace, they would have already negotiated on peace. They have refused all peace talks proposed by a great number of countries.

64. Who let you know that several countries have proposed peace talks?

I have been told about it by some acquaintances of mine who usually read the paper.

65. In your opinion, is the Front patriotic?

They have often talked about patriotism indeed, but they really don't love their country.

66. Based on what factors have you presumed them not patriotic?

If they are really patriotic, they must love the people. Do they love the people? No. If yes, why have they forced the people to pay heavy taxes, contribute their civic labor as under the Viet Minh's rule? Now, all are alike in the areas under the Front's control.

67. Do you think the VC don't love the people?

They have always considered the people as their productive tools.

68. Have there been any meetings held by cadres in your hamlet?

Yes, meetings have been held in my hamlet once every three or five months, conducted by cadres who infiltrated into the hamlet. Such meetings were usually held at night. As my hamlet is not under their control, they dare not frequent it freely.

69. What did the cadres usually say to the people at the meeting?

They applied their regular propaganda method and told only lies.

70. What is their propaganda method?

They have often said that people living under GVN control would be oppressed and suffer a hard life. However, according to them, the people would enjoy a happy life if they

lived with the Revolution side, since the latter have led the struggle for the people and from the people. In spite of their propaganda efforts to persuade the people, no one in my hamlet has confidence in them any more.

71. What have the cadres said about the GVN?

Naturally, they have always criticized the GVN.

72. Why have they criticized the GVN? What is the good of repeating what they have said?

They spoke at random and I think it is not good to repeat what they said.

73. Please tell us what you have been told and don't give us your opinion. Don't hesitate, since you are not responsible for such an account.

They said that most GVN officials are enjoying high salaries; however, they have also committed corrupt practices. Moreover, the people living under GVN control must suffer a hard life. In the area under the revolution's control, the life of every one is the same since no one has received any salary or committed corrupt practices.

74. Have the cadres talked about Americans?

No, they have not told about Americans.

75. Have the cadres told about the North?

They stated that the North Vietnamese are living happily. No one there is poor, unhappy, or illiterate. They concluded that the Revolution will bring to the South Vietnamese the same life as in the North for both the male and female sexes.

76. Did the people believe what the cadres said?

No one has confidence in them because the local people have experienced all events under the Viet Minh's rule. At present, my hamlet is not under their control, but two hamlets near mine are under their rule. Everyone in my hamlet is well aware how unhappy the residents in these two hamlets are!

77. Have the cadres talked about Chicoms?

No.

78. Did the cadres often talk about the Soviet Union?

Never. They sometimes talked about assistance from the Chicoms and the Soviet Union, but in general and not in detail.

79. Did the cadres talk about the present war?

Not about war, but about the revolution that will liberate all the people. However, they did not say how and when the revolution is to be realized.

80. Have the cadres forced the people to study or receive training somewhere else?

They have been accustomed to call the meetings the study sessions. No one from the hamlet has been forced to undergo training elsewhere.

81. Have the cadres killed any resident in the hamlet?

Yes, they killed 2 persons, 1 under the Diem regime and another 2 years ago.

82. How did they kill them?

The VC stole in the hamlet and stabbed them in their homes.

83. Did the cadres declare anything about these murders before and after?

No. However, after each murder, they left a sentence on the victim's body.

84. What did such a sentence say?

It said only that the victim was an element harmful to the people and the country as well. But no detail was mentioned in it.

85. What were the occupations of these two victims?

The victim under the Diem regime was a Catholic who had previously worked for the Viet Minh. But when the Viet Minh Front dissolved, he did nothing. The second victim had worked for the district and village authorities.

86. What was his main job?

He usually got information for the village and district authorities.

87. Did the people say anything about these two murders?

These murders frightened the local people very much, they dared not talk about them. But they organized a great meeting in the hamlet to protest to the VC since their hamlet was then controlled by the GVN. The people did not call this meeting, but the village officials conducted it.

88. Are there many youths over 16 years of age in your hamlet?

All youths in my hamlet have joined the ARVN or the Popular Force. The younger ones were drafted while the older ones voluntarily joined the Popular Force. Now only 5 youngsters of age 16 to 17 are left. As they do not yet have I.D. cards, they are not yet ready to be drafted.

89. Are there any youths joining the VC ranks?

No one from my hamlet has joined the VC army. Some joined the Viet Minh army, but they regrouped to the North.

90. Did anyone from your hamlet join the VC guerrilla forces?

No.

91. Did the VC cadres come to your hamlet to make propaganda persuading youths to join their army?

Yes, they did but no one has responded to their call.

92. The cadres did not force the people to join their army, did they?

No. In addition, there are no more youths who can be forced to enlist since most of them have fulfilled their military duties starting at the draft age.

93. Did the cadres organize any guerrilla unit in your village? How many guerrillas are there in all your village?

The VC organized a guerrilla unit in [redacted] Hamlets which they controlled, but I don't know the number of guerrillas. There is no guerrilla unit in my hamlet either.

94. Has been there any land distribution by VC in your village?

I was told that VC have distributed land in [redacted] Hamlets. However, land distribution in other hamlets was not carried out.

95. How did the cadres distribute land?

I don't know about it, but I was told that the VC expropriated land belonging to those who left their hamlet, for distribution to others in the hamlet. But I did not know their land distribution procedures.

96. Did the cadres promise your hamlet to distribute land?

No, they did not promise anything. They carried out land distribution in only two hamlets under their control. They cannot yet control our hamlet and have appeared now and then in my hamlet to convene meetings so as to carry on their propaganda activities, but they have never talked about land.

97. Did anyone in your hamlet pay taxes to the VC?

People in the hamlets did not have to pay taxes of land as they did under the Viet Minh. However, those who fetch fire wood or timber, or get abrasin-oil from the forest have to pay taxes to VC cadres when they meet them.

98. Are the taxes paid in form of rice or cash?

In cash.

99. Must the people living under the Front's control pay taxes?

I was told by some people living with the VC that they had to pay the same taxes as previously applied by Viet Minh when these people did business with people in our hamlet.

100. Are there any local products that may be sold outside your hamlet?

We can sell firewood, timber, and abrasin-oil.

101. Where can these products be sold?

In the past, we could sell our products very easily, since traders used to come to our hamlet by boats to buy them. But no boats have reached our hamlet in the past two years because it seemed that traders have been afraid of being stopped by the VC. This is why our local products cannot be sold as much as before. Now and then, a few traders reach our hamlet by land to buy some barrels of abrasin-oil. But firewood and timber cannot be sold any more.

102. Can the people go out from their hamlet freely?

Yes, the local people can go out at any time, but they are allowed to go to other GVN controlled areas only and not to [redacted] Hamlets under VC control.

103. Can the people living under VC control get out from their hamlets freely?

VC have forbidden the residents to go out from those hamlets, however, some residents have now and then contacted us on the sly.

104. How can the residents of the two VC controlled areas purchase necessary things from outside?

They usually needed salt and fish sauce and had to buy such things from the GVN areas. I really don't know how they can get them, but I think some of them have now and then come to the GVN areas on the sly to purchase necessary things.

105. Have the cadres organized any agency or any civilian group in your hamlet?

No. But they have set up different organizations in the two hamlets under their control, as under the Viet Minh rule. I was told about it by residents of those hamlets and this is all I know about it.

106. Are the cadres who frequent your hamlet local residents, or do they come from somewhere else?

Such cadres are not local residents, they usually come from [redacted] Village. That is under VC control and near my village.

107. How do these cadres treat the local people?

They come just to ask the local people for something or to carry out their propaganda activities.

108. Have been there any female cadres?

No.

109. Is there any Party sub-chapter in your hamlet?

No, it existed only under the Viet Minh.

110. Are there members of the Viet Minh still living in your hamlet?

A few of them are now living in our hamlets but they do nothing for VC. However, some of them are working for the GVN.

111. Do the people living under the Front's control talk about VC cadres?

I have been told much about complaints of those living under VC control. Those people have usually complained that VC cadres have often forced them to pay heavy taxes or to do this or that job, thus making them feel very unhappy. As a result, many of them have escaped from their hamlets to live in GVN areas.

112. Have you been told that residents in the VC controlled hamlets have held the cadres in high esteem?

I have never been told the people living under VC control or in contested areas like the cadres.

113. Have peple in your hamlet been forced to contribute labor by VC cadres?

No, the VC cadres cannot force us to contribute our labor since they do not control our hamlet. But people in both [redacted] Hamlets have to do corvee labor for the VC.

114. Do you know about corvee labor?

No, I don't know about it. I have been told only that every one living under VC control must contribute his labor for several consecutive months.

115. Have you heard any complaints from such people?

Naturally everyone must complain about hardship. Based on the account given by certain people living with the VC, corvee labor is very hard work. This is all I know about corvee labor as I did not ask any questions about it.

116. Have the VC-controlled hamlets been turned into combat hamlets?

I don't know about that. But I found that the VC-controlled hamlets are fenced like strategic hamlets, with checkpoints at all gates guarded by guerrillas. Yet, the same people have still been able to find a way to have such hamlets.

117. Have the cadres ever allowed the people of such hamlets to go out?

I have been told that people living in such hamlets may be allowed to go out now and then. In most cases, the applicants must find pretexts for visiting their relatives or for doing something necessary in an attempt to purchase necessary items from markets under GVN control, or to leave their hamlets for good.

118. Are you aware how the VC troops live?

VC troops are very unhappy since they are often in need of food and clothes. Moreover, they have no salaries and must live secretly in dense forests. Now and then, they are allowed to go to different hamlets under VC control so as to ask the people for things they need.

119. Who has given you this account?

I have been told about it often by people living in VC controlled hamlets. Moreover, I have experienced troops life under Viet Minh rule, and I think it is the same now under VC control.

120. In your opinion, between a VC and a Nationalist serviceman, who is more easily killed in combat?

I think it is difficult to kill GVN troops since they are supported by more weapons, munitions, big guns, airplanes, and all kinds of vehicles. The VC troops only have their hard weapons and their bare feet to flee away in case of emergency. As a result, they may be killed easily indeed. I was told that VC must often sacrifice a great number of men to overrun a small post. In addition to their "human wave" tactics, their weapons are old and their munitions poor, thus causing their death more easily.

121. Have you ever met the VC servicemen who are not South Vietnamese?

I have never seen VC servicemen, whether they are South or North Vietnamese.

122. Have you ever been told about defeats of VC units?

I have learned about VC defeats through the Saigon broadcasting system. Most of the people in my hamlet have often listened to the radio, too.

123. Did you believe in the broadcast news?

Yes, we did.

124. Why?

Usually, the news broadcasts are recognized by the government since they are its voice. In this connection, why would we not believe in the government's voice?

125. Are there any dispensaries, physicians or nurses in your village?

There are neither dispensaries nor physicians in my village. But there is a nurse who usually distributes medicine to the local people once every week.

126. How do they treat those who are seriously ill?

The seriously sick patients are sent to the district hospital.

127. May such patients living in VC-controlled hamlets be sent to the district hospital?

No, I have never seen patients sent from VC-controlled hamlets to the hospital under GVN control. I guess that that hospital would not receive such patients.

128. Why do you guess so?

The people once living with VC, may be considered as pro-Communists, and in such a case, the Nationalist side will never receive them.

129. When you still lived in your hamlet, had you been told anything about the present Saigon Government?

No, I did not hear anything about it.

130. Do you know who leads the present Nationalist government now?

Yes, I know. They are Major General Thieu and Air Vice Marshal Ky.

131. Do you know about the goal of the Nationalist Government?

No, I don't.

132. Do you think the Nationalist Government is powerful?

Yes, it is very powerful since it has large quantities of weapons, munitions, vehicles and airplanes, and is supported by many allied forces, while the VC men have hand weapons and bare feet.

133. Do you think the Nationalist Government loves the people?

Yes, it does.

134. Why do you think so?

It is so obvious since the people would have died of cold and hunger without the government's assistance of every kind after their houses and property had been carried away by floods a few years ago. We may also take the VC's recent shelling of Da Nang as an example. The victims' destroyed houses will be re-established immediately with the government's assistance.

135. Do you think the GVN is fair?

I don't know about this.

136. Do you think the GVN officials have eagerly served the people?

The GVN officials have dedicatedly served the people. However, one could find some bad elements among them. Really, it doesn't matter since such a state is common to all governments.

137. Do you think the village and district officials have treated the people much better than before during the recent days?

I think most officials have treated the people much more gently than before. Under the Diem regime, suspects would be tortured immediately after being arrested by village or district officials. Now, officials in charge of arresting suspects no longer use torture to question them, and usually show their kindness.

138. While still living in your hamlet, did you know about events in the Saigon capital?

No, I didn't know anything about what happened in Saigon.

139. Is there any radio set in your hamlet?

Yes, a certain number of people possess radios, and I have often listened to the radio.

140. If you listened to the radio, why didn't you know about events in Saigon?

I do not remember everything, since I paid little attention to news broadcasts. I still remember just one thing: Saigon was shelled.

141. What broadcasting station do the people like to listen to?

The people usually like to listen to the Saigon Radio station. Sometimes, they listen to foreign radio stations. But they can't receive Da Nang news broadcasts and I don't know why.

142. Have the people ever listened to news broadcasts from VOA and BBC?

Now and then, the people listen to VOA, but its news broadcasts are not clear. However, the BBC broadcasts come innquite well.

143. Have the people ever listened to the Hanoi radio station?

No.

144. Do the people often listen to the old or new Vietnamese classical music?

The people rarely listen to the new Vietnamese classical musical broadcasts, while the old Vietnamese classical one no longer exist. In about 5 to 7 months, the local people may attend the news films shown by district technicians.

145. Is there any paper sold in your hamlet?

Yes, there are some, but they are usually distributed too late.

146. Have you ever heard rumors in the market?

No.

147. Do you know about the Chieu Hoi program?

Yes. I am aware of it, since I got some Chieu Hoi leaflets and already read them. Also I learned of it through the broadcasting system, and based on the news broadcasts, I could learn the number of VC returnees along with their weapons brought in every month.

148. What have you read in Chieu Hoi leaflets?

Most leaflets usually compare the VC forces with the Nationalist forces, and calling VC cadres and servicemen to rally to the National cause.

149. Have you ever witnessed a VC returnee?

I saw a middle-aged man reporting to the district. He is a returnee, since he was living in a VC-controlled hamlet. However, I don't know what he is doing, and I wonder whether he is a VC cadre or not. I also witnessed the return of a guerrilla to the district. He was a guerrilla of Son Thuan Village under VC control.

150. Do you think most VC cadres and servicemen are aware of Chieu Hoi?

I am convinced they all know about it since leaflets have been dropped in large quantities over the VC areas surrounding my hamlet. I am sure they are aware of it.

151. Can the people living in the VC-controlled hamlets read the Chieu Hoi leaflets? Are they prohibited by VC from reading such leaflets?

I am wondering whether VC have prevented the people from reading or not. But I think such a prohibition is meaningless when leaflets are so numerous.

152. Have you ever been told about Chieu Hoi by the people living under VC control?

No.

153. Have the Allied Forces or ARVN units ever operated in your hamlet?

In July 1966, an ARVN unit was stationed in my hamlet but stayed there only for about 2 months before withdrawing. My house was then used as a billet. However, nothing occurred.

154. Have the Front troops ever attacked your hamlet?

A platoon of Popular Force was stationed in my hamlet. VC troops appeared outside my hamlet at 5:00 a.m. one day last January (1967). Hearing an alarm whistle, Popular Forces men in the hamlet immediately prepared an attack on the enemy. Unfortunately, they fell into the enemy's ambush as soon as they got out of the hamlet. After a short clash, 6 Popular Forces men were killed, 3 captured, and 1 weapon lost. It seemed that VC had not suffered any loss. After this clash, the Popular Force unit has no longer been stationed inside the hamlet, but outside it.

155. Did the people suffer any loss in this clash?

No, the people suffered no damage since the clash occurred outside the hamlet.

156. Did any ARVN unit replace that Popular Force unit after this clash?

No. The Popular Forces have now and then appeared in the hamlet, but have withdrawn immediately. The ARVN troops stationed in [redacted] post now and then appeared in the hamlet, too, but for a while only. Since then, there have been no more clashes.

157. Has your hamlet ever been shelled?

Yes, my hamlet was shelled immediately after the foregoing clash between VC and Popular Forces.

158. Did the people suffer any loss?

Two buffaloes were killed and 1 hamlet resident wounded by a few shells that came into a part of my hamlet. The injured person was then treated in a district hospital and recovered a fortnight later.

159. Did the people talk about this shelling?

The local people have cursed the VC very much. Most of them have complained that VC dared not attack the ARVN unit stationed in Nong Son post and secretly attacked the hamlet, thus causing damage to the local people due to shelling by the ARVN.

160. Did the people show their resentment against the Nationalist side for having shelled them? Did the victims complain about their losses?

The victims didn't express any resentment nor complain.

161. Did the victims get any compensation?

No.

162. Did the government warn the people about the shelling?

No.

163. Do you think the government should warn the people of similar shelling?

I think such shelling should not be made known in advance since one out of ten people would be a VC sympathizer, and if the shelling were made known in advance, some VC sympathizer would warn the VC of it and the latter would run away before the shelling. So the shelling would become useless since it is aimed at killing VC and not the people.

164. Has your hamlet ever been bombed?

No.

165. Have you ever seen or been told about the spreading of chemical mixtures for defoliation?

I have never witnessed this spreading of chemical mixtures, but was told by some acquaintances that chemical mixtures were spread over a mountain in Quang Nam Province, and all trees and grass there could no longer grow. I don't know the name of this mountain or about any other details.

166. Can you think why the Nationalist side has used chemical mixtures for defoliation?

I think this is done to prevent VC from hiding in the dense forests.

167. Have you been told about the spreading of chemical mixtures to destroy crops?

No.

168. Have you been told that the Allied Forces and GVN have used another kind of destructive chemical sustance?

No.

169. When and where did you meet an American for the first time?

I met the Americans in February last year when I went to Da Nang to look after my own affairs.

170. What do you think about Americans?

I have found them very good since they gave rice, clothes, and medicine to refugees.

171. Have you ever been told by VC cadres that Americans have come here to invade Viet Nam?

Yes, I was told so by VC cadres through their propaganda.

172. What do you think about such propaganda?

The VC know only how to tell a lie, and no one could believe in them.

173. Why do you not believe in them?

The United States is one of Viet Nam's allies. Communists want to occupy all Viet Nam. But once this part of the country falls into the hands of Communists, the United States can no longer stand firmly. This is why the US Armed Forces have come here to support Vietnam to fight Communism. They have supported Vietnam as an ally, and also to safeguard their country from Communist invasion. Otherwise, if they come here to invade our country, they would have already forced our people to contribute our money. But they have not only used their own property and consumed their own goods, but also have given gifts to the local people very often.

174. Do you think the Americans are similar to French colonists in the past?

I don't think the Americans are now advocating the same policy as adopted by the French in the past since the French had deprived the local people of their wealth and labor, and also forced them to pay taxes on land, crops, etc. On the contrary, the Americans have only offered aid and required nothing from the people.

175. Do you think other refugees have thought the same as you?

I can't be sure of it, but I think the people may think the same.

176. Have you been told that several foreign countries have sent their troops to assist Vietnam?

Yes, I was told that Australia, New Zealand, and Korea Armed forces have come here to assist Vietnam, too. However, I have not met them.

177. Do you know the reason why troops of those countries have come here to assist Vietnam?

They sent their troops to support Vietnam since they are allies and also because they regard Vietnam as a fence surrounding their countries. Their people can live safely only when this fence is well protected. If Communists can occupy South Vietnam, they will use it as their base to continue their aggression in other countries.

178. In your opinion, between the Front and GVN forces, which side is more powerful?

I already let you know that the Nationalist side is more powerful, since it has a Navy, an Air Force, all kinds of vehicles, and assistance from the Allied Forces. VC have only hand, arms, and their feet are bare. If the VC are really powerful, they would have already occupied South Vietnam a long time ago.

179. Do you know about bombing over the North?

Yes, I have learned it by listening to the radio, and through the news broadcasts. Most of the roads, bridges, and storage places in the North were destroyed.

180. When did you first learn about bombing of the North?

I was learned of it when I still lived in my hamlet.

181. Do you know the reason why North Vietnam has been bombed?

The North is the place where Communists have been strengthening their forces, and from which arms, weapons, and troops have been sent to South Vietnam to attack the GVN troops. Therefore, the ARVN and the US Armed Forces must carry out their air-strikes over the North to prevent it from sending troops to the South. In this way, the VC in South Vietnam would become weaker and weaker and can be defeated easily by the ARVN.

182. Do you think such bombings have affected the North Vietnamese?

I don't know about it since there have been no comments on such bombings by the speaker, but I think the people must suffer some damage resulting from such bombings. People on both sides could not avoid possible damage in war time.

183. Do you think such bombings have affected the VC's morale in South Vietnam?

I have already told you I think that the VC must grow weaker and weaker, since supplies of arms, munitions, and troops from the North are cut off by continuous bombings.

184. Why did you leave your hamlet to take refuge?

First, I could not continue my business of gathering wood. Second, I am a former hamlet chief working for the GVN, and I may be murdered at any time by VC because they have hated me. Moreover, the ARVN troops have used my house many times for a temporary station, and the VC could easily think that I had disclosed their presence so that the GVN troops could attack them. Those are the reasons why I had to leave my hamlet for good and take refuge.

185. Which reason do you think was most important?

The last reason is the most important one, because the GVN troops, while staying in my house, had often arrested people coming from [redacted] Village to buy salt and fish sauce. [redacted] Village is under VC control but located near my village. In addition, the GVN troops have often gone into the mountain forests to capture VC guerrillas who hide there. An acquaintance of mine living in [redacted] Village told me that VC assumed I told the GVN where they were, and encouraged the GVN troops to capture them, and the VC intended to kill me whenever they could.

186. When did you decide to leave your village?

A long time ago, right after the great flood in early 1965.

187. Why did you not leave earlier?

I was then a hamlet chief and inter-family chief. When I wanted to leave it everyone in the hamlet requested that I stay and continue my duty. The village council also wished to keep me. That is really why I stayed there; not to hold on to my own land and property.

188. Later, what made you decide to leave your village?

I must confess that it was hard for me to continue my business there this year. In addition, an acquaintance of mine living in [redacted] Village told me last January (1967) that the VC intended to kill me. So, I decided to go away.

189. Had you taken refuge before?

No.

190. Have you been told about the life in GVN areas before leaving your hamlet?

Before taking refuge, I was well aware that refugees would receive assistance from the GVN: food, clothing, and housing.

191. Who told you about this?

I listened to the radio and was also told by several acquaintances that the GVN warmly welcomes and assists all refugees. They insisted that they, themselves, had witnessed such assistance from the GVN.

192. Did you believe them?

I fully believed what they said. Moreover, I am convinced that the GVN will do everything it has promised. Also, I think my acquaintances cannot enjoy anything if they tell a lie.

193. Did anyone try to keep you from learning?

No.

194. How did you prepare to take your refuge?

Before my departure, I sold a buffalo and kept the money to use later. When I left my hamlet, I brought along with me only my money and clothes. Other things were abandoned.

195. What do you think about the property you left?

I think all of it will remain there and I will return to my hamlet when peace is restored. I am afraid that the VC will appropriate all my land and property if peace cannot be achieved and I could not return to my hamlet.

196. Were there any other families taking refuge with yours?

Yes, there were two neighboring families taking refuge with mine since we had discussed the problem in advance.

197. How did you take refuge?

All three families hired a boat to go from our hamlet to Duc Duc district town. Then we requested air transportation to reach here.

198. Why did you choose this place as your refuge?

I chose it because I have some relatives who took refuge here before me.

199. Upon your departure, did you guess how long you would have to be gone from your hamlet?

No, not then. I am determined to return to my hamlet as soon as peace reigns over my country, and I hope my wish comes true shortly.

200. Do you know how many families left your hamlet before you did?

After the flood occurring in 1964 till early 1965, twenty one families left my hamlet to live in GVN areas. Before their departure, my hamlet consisted of 135 families.

Since then, there have been no more refugees until my family and the 2 neighboring ones decided to go away together.

201. Do you know the social classes and kinds of religion of the previous refugees?

After the flood, everyone in the hamlet, rich and poor, became alike since they lost all they possessed. There were 12 Catholic families and 9 Buddhist families who belonged to the previous refugees (21 families in all).

202. Did anyone in your hamlet leave it to live in VC-controlled areas?

No.

203. Did anyone return to your hamlet after taking refuge?

No one.

204. Do you think something would happen to you if you returned to your hamlet now?

I was working for the GVN and was menaced by the VC. I have already left my hamlet to live in the GVN area. I will be captured by VC immediately if I return to my hamlet now.

205. Have you received any assistance since you come here?

No, I have not yet received any assistance, although I have already complied with all procedures to get necessary papers.

206. Has the government promised to help you?

No, nobody has given me a promise.

207. Do you believe you will be assisted?

Yes, I am sure I will receive assistance from the government.

208. Why?

It is so simple because most previous refugees now living here have been supported by the government, and they all were given money for food for 6 consecutive months and each family was granted VN$3,000 for building a house.

209. Do you still keep your old I.D. card?

Yes, I do.

210. Have your companions lost their I.D. cards?

A few of them had lost their old I.D. cards in the great flood I mentioned before. My wife was one of these unlucky persons. But I already requested another I.D. card for her.

211. Is any vocational course held here for refugees?

No.

212. Do you prefer learning some trade?

As I am rather old now, I don't want to learn any trade. I only want to find a job to earn my living.

213. Are you now looking for a job?

One of my acquaintances has gotten me a job making vermicelli, and I have worked for 3 days. But it is only a temporary job.

214. Among your companions, have some of them found any jobs?

None my companions, except one, has found any job. A number of refugees who came here before us have found jobs.

215. Do you know the number of refugees in the camp?

As I am not living in the camp, I don't know how many there are. My family is now temporarily living with my cousin.

216. Do you feel safe living here?

Army troops are stationed around here in great number, but I think safety is not assured completely. Even though VC cannot infiltrate into this area they can mortar it. As a proof, everyone knows about the VC's recent shelling of a village near an air base that killed many people. My family is living not very far from this air base and might be shelled by VC some day.

217. Since you left, have you received any news from your hamlet?

No.

218. Do your children go to school?

There is a primary school near my dwelling place and I intend to send my child to this school soon.

219. Who do you think is responsible for the difficulties you are now facing?

All such difficulties are caused by the VC, because no one would leave his house and possessions to take refuge in a locality other than his birthplace if the VC had not invaded South Vietnam. Due to the VC's aggressive war, all refugees must suffer many hardships.

220. Do you intend to move to another locality to live?

I intend to live here since I have several relatives living here, too.

221. If social life is represented by a scale of 10 steps, and the 1st step represents the best life and the last one, the worst life, what was your step before your hamlet became a contested area? Once your hamlet lay within the contested area? And now, what is your step in comparison with the previous ones?

Before VC harassing, I could conduct my business easily and live rather comfortably, and I think I was then at step 5. When my hamlet lay within the contested area, I could not continue my business, and my life was then lowered to step 8. At present, even though I do not yet have any regular job, my daily life is not very hard and I think it still remains at step 8.

222. Can you guess what step your life will reach in five more years?

I cannot guess it now. But I am convinced that my life will be much better in five more years, if the war comes to an end.

223. What is the best life in a hamlet?

A life in a hamlet is considered best if the resident possesses much land, is wealthy and not anxious any more about war.

224. What is the worst life in a hamlet?

Hamlet life is the worst if the resident unfortunately has lost one leg or one arm due to bombing or shelling and is still alive, but unable to work.

225. What do you hope for your son's future?

I hope my son will study hard and pass the baccalaureate and will become a good and rich citizen.

226. If you were allowed to request 3 things from the government, what would you request?

If possible, I would request only two things from the government: housing and a job offer, so I can support my family.

227. Which government do you rely on to provide such things?

I am certain that the present GVN could assist me to get the above two things.

228. Can you guess how long this war will last?

I cannot.

229. Do you know which side is now winning the war, VC or GVN?

I have realized that the GVN is winning the war, since VC usually run away wherever the ARVN appear.

230. Do you think the GVN will win this war completely?

Yes, I think so, because the ARVN are very strong and, in addition, there is support from the Allied Forces.

231. Do you believe that other refugees think the same?

I am certain that all refugees have the same idea since we all believed in the GVN's final victory when we took our refuge in the GVN-controlled areas.

232. So, did such belief affect the decision of refugees?

Yes.

233. Which side is now supported by the people, VC or GVN?

I think that most people have supported the GVN. Many people living in VC areas have taken refuge in GVN-controlled areas, and many VC cadres and servicemen have rallied to the National cause. There are people living in VC areas who support VC, but these people represent only a minority group.

234. What do you think the government must do to receive much more support from the people?

The government must show justice, i.e. it must treat every citizen in the same manner. For example, suppose the government provides rice to residents of a hamlet, and if the distribution is carried out fairly, each resident receives 1 can. But if the hamlet chief has some relatives, and the latter receive much more rice than others, that would be unfair. Such unfairness has often occurred. (Note: In reply to a previous question, the subject was wondering whether the government is fair or not).

235. What do you think about the people's life if the VC wins the final victory?

The VC cannot win this war. If they were to gain the final victory, the people would live very unhappily. This was proved during the period of resistance against French domination under Viet Minh leadership. Moreover, those people who are now living in VC-controlled areas may prove it. If the VC wins this war, the people will know only hard work and heavy taxes, since human beings are only tools for their exploitation. In such circumstances, how can the people live happily?

236. If the GVN defeats VC, how do you think the people will live?

Even though in war time the GVN has always tried its best to assist the people, if it wins this war, it is certain that the people will receive much more assistance from the government. The government will then reconstruct the rural areas and rebuild houses, roads, hospitals, schools, etc. The people will then live comfortably and happily.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

The interviewee is intelligent and replied to all questions fluently. He did not hesitate while giving his answers. As his hamlet was not entirely controlled by the Front, he did not know very much about VC activities.
He showed sincerity during this interview.

No. AGR-100

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

1. Name of Interviewer: [redacted]
2. Name of Subject : [redacted]
3. Time and Date of Interview:

   From 2:05 PM to 4:00 PM on March 1966

   From 12:50 to 4:30 PM on March 1966

   From _____ to _____ on _____ 1966

   From _____ to _____ on _____ 1966

   Total time: 5 hours 35'

   Interview based on: tape (X) hand written notes (X)
4. Place of Interview: [redacted] Village, Quang Nam Province
5. Sex of subject: Male (X) Female ( )
6. Age of subject: 49
7. Ethnic background: Vietnam
8. Place of birth:

   hamlet [redacted]

   village [redacted]

   district Duc Duc

   province Quang Nam
9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee:

   hamlet [redacted]

   village [redacted]

   district Duc Duc

   province Quang Nam
10. (a) Length of residence in last location: from childhood

    (b) Who controlled the place of residence:

    GVN ( ) VC ( ) Contested (X)

    (c) Since when controlled or contested? three months

11. Number of brothers (3) and sisters ( )

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age: 3

13. Marital status: Married

14. Number of children: three

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age: _____

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject (X) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject (X) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion: Buddhist

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge: Farmer and wood-cutter

19. Economic status:
(a) VC designation None
(b) Landowner? _____ How much land 1 sao

20. Education:
Illiterate ( )
Literate (X)
Schooling completed: _____

21. Any relatives in VC: No

22. Any relatives in GVN: One brother works for ARVN
One cousin is a policeman

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by:
(a) French
(b) GVN
(c) VC one brother who was a local force company leader, was killed

24. When became a refugee: 10 days ago

25. Where took refuge first: _____

26. Parent residence: [redacted] Village, Quang Nam Province

INTERVIEW #AGR-101 MISSING—
THRU AGR-104

INTERVIEW NOT COMPLETED

AGR

INTERVIEW

105

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(A)

THE RAND CORPORATION

INTERVIEWS CONCERNING THE NATIONAL LIBERATION

FILE NO. AGR-105

Date of Interview : [redacted] June 1967

Subject's Category : Refugee

Area left : [redacted] Hamlet, [redacted] Village
Tuy Phuoc District, Binh Dinh
Province

This interview is for the information of US and Vietnamese official agencies and personnel on a need-to-know basis. Permission to distribute or show this interview to non-official persons requires the prior approval of The RAND Corporation and the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs.

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1. How long had you and your family lived in the village before you took refuge?

I lived in my village since my childhood. My family also lived in the village. We had never moved anywhere.

2. Was your village large?

My village was large, composed of five hamlets.

3. What did most of the people in your village do to earn their living?

They all earned their living by farming.

4. How did you earn your living?

I also earned my living by farming. Besides, I also organized a rice mill and a water pump to pump water into the fields.

5. How much land did you own? Did you farm all your land?

I had six mau of land. I farmed three mau, and the rest I rented to others.

6. How much rent did you collect?

According to the customs in Binh Dinh province, if the land was fertile, the harvest was divided in two equal parts, the landowner took half and the tenant the other half. If the land was bad, the landowner collected one third of the production, and the tenant the other two thrids. My fields were fertile.

7. Did most of the people in your village have enough to eat?

On the average, we had more than enough rice to eat.

8. How many members were in your family?

My family was composed of my wife and I and our three children. At the present time, my two sisters' families are living with us.

9. What is your religion?

I am a Buddhist.

10. What religion did most of the people in your village practice?

The majority of them were Buddhists. Just a few were Caodaists and Christians.

11. Was there ever any conflict between people of different religious affiliations?

Though there was some muted resentment, there has never been any grave conflict between people of different religious affilitations.

12. What do you mean by muted resentment?

Under Mr. Diem's regime, the Catholics were better treated and received more privileges As an example, all the Government cadres were Catholics. Though some of them were competent and virtuous, the majority of them weren't worthy to become cadres, or the people's representatives. Yet, he who wanted to earn his living in an easy way, who wanted to become a Government cadre, become a Catholic. Even in the selection of people to be sent to land resettlement centers, the Catholics were exempted. There were those whose names had been on the list of those who had to leave for the resettlement centers, who came to the priest to ask to be converted to Catholicism. Their names were dropped off the list immediately. That was why there was conflict between the Christians and people who practiced other religions. But they kept this disagreement to themselves and never let it be blown up into some regrettable affair.

13. Were there many Montagnards in your village?

My village was located near the Highlands, but there were no Montagnards there.

14. What grade were you in when you were young?

I was in the third year of the secondary school first cycle (8th grade).

15. Were there any well-educated persons in your village?

In my village, there was one who had a University degree and five or seven who had obtained their Baccalaureat diplomas (or 12th grade). But they were all earning their living in Saigon. None of them remained in the village.

16. Was there a school for children in your village?

There was an elementary school with five classes in the village. And in each hamlet there was a primary school. The VC destroyed them all when they took over the village. At the present time, the Government is getting them all repaired because it has re-established its control over my village again.

17. How did the people in your village live before 1954?

My village was under the Viet Minh control that time. The people farmed their land and the Viet Minh imposed a very heavy agricultural tax on the people. The people were forced to eat rice mixed with manioc-- one part rice and three or four parts manioc -- in order to have enough to eat. It was very miserable.

18. Did many people join the Viet Minh in your village?

Under the Viet Minh, most of the people had to join and work for them. Some went North to regroup in 1954. The rest remained behind and later worked for the GVN.

19. How many people in your village went North to regroup?

About 40 people went North to regroup.

20. What happened to those who had worked for the Viet Minh, but didn't go North to regroup after the GVN took over?

After the GVN took over the control of my village, those who had worked for the Viet Minh were classified in three categories: A,B and C. Classified in category A were those who had committed grave offenses, Party members who had worked actively and been harmful to the people. These were kept under watch in another area. Classified in categories B and C were those who had committed lighter

offenses. These were kept under house arrest, which meant they could remain in their village to earn their living, and weren't permitted to leave their village.

21. Were the people's conditions of living better after 1954?

After 1954, after the GVN had taken over the control of my village, the people's conditions of living were much better than before. It could be said that they were twice or three times better off. Take my family, for example. When the Viet Minh were still there, each year my family had to pay eight [illegible] of rice as agricultural tax. After the GVN took over, each year my family had to pay only over 100 piasters. That meant I could sell only one vuong of rice, and got enough money to pay for the tax, though the amount of land I owned remained the same throughout. It was because the GVN imposed light tax that everyone's income shot up many times and the people's conditions of living became so much better.

22. After the GVN took over your village, how did the Government officials treat the villagers?

When the GVN first took over the control of the village, all the villagers still remembered the miseries they had to endure under the Viet Minh. That was why all those who agreed to become GVN cadres did so because they wanted to serve the people, the common interests. Consequently, all the village officials were honest, served the people effectively and never oppressed anyone. But beginning in 1958, 1959, the situation changed. The officials from that time on were no longer honest people. They began to oppress the people, condoned bribery and abused their power. I can tell you some examples. Though most of the people in my village earned their living by farming, the exploitation of forest products was also a good income source. Trees, wood, coal, firewood and jungle fruits, such as cha dayén, xoay, could bring much money to the people. The authorities promulgated a law that anyone who wanted to go to the mountain should obtain a permit first. At that time, the price of each kilogram of fruit was 7 piasters. Anyone who picked these fruits and sold them to the authorities at 3 piasters per kg could obtain the permit anytime he wanted. Otherwise, it would be very difficult to get one. These officials squeezed the people so bluntly, especially during the years 1958, 1959, 1960 and 1961.

23. Were these village officials local people?

At first, all the officials were local people. But from 1960 to 1963, my village lived under the military regime. The chairmen of the Village Committee were the Master Sergeants, the Sergeants, the Platoon Leaders of the Militia platoons. They all came from other places.

24. Has any election ever been held in your village to elect the village officials since the GVN took over the control of your village?

All the officials, before and after, were appointed by the Government. None of them was elected by the people. The people only elected President Diem and the National Assembly.

25. What do you think about the Ngo Dinh Diem Government?

Mr. Diem, himself, deserved no blame whatsoever. I found that since his return to take over the Government, his aims and policies were all good. But the members of his family had much influence in the business of his Government. And this had caused many destructive mistakes. Take the building of strategic hamlets, for example. A family living peacefully in their home and garden, would suddenly be forced to leave everything and move to the strategic hamlet. Leaving their garden meant leaving the income from their garden, their land. The damage to that family's material well being was heavy. They must have felt enraged. So, the Government alienated the people. He who practiced Christianity was well treated. He who wanted to become hamlet chief, security officer, policeman or member of the Village Committee, must practice Christianity. Consequently, the people felt more enraged. The Diem Government had alienated the people and this fact had given the Communists a good opportunity to spread.

26. What did you and the villagers think about the overthrow of Mr. Diem?

I didn't think anything about that at all. A few regretted his death because they believed that he had been an honest man, and all the mistakes had been made by the members of his family. Even so, most of the people thought that the overthrow of Mr. Diem was justified.

27. You said the building of the strategic hamlets alienated the people. Would you describe how the building of the strategic hamlets was organized, and what contributions did the people make.

The building of the strategic hamlets was organized by concentrating the people in an area surrounded by barbed wire. Outside the barbed wire was a deep ditch, 3.50m wide. On the other side of the ditch, was another fence made of tree trunks -- the big ones were as big as a beer bottle and the small ones as big as my wrist. The digging of the ditch harmed the irrigation because when there was water, it all flowed into the ditch, not into the fields. Consequently, the production of rice was decreased. Furthermore, in the countryside, the people lived off their fields and gardens. The income from their gardens, no matter how small, was a very important source of income for their families. The concentrating of the people into the strategic hamlets forced the families to abandon their gardens, made them unable to look after their gardens. Consequently, the people were greatly affected by their heavy losses. Furthermore, the people had to contribute money and labor in the fencing of the village. The money was for buying trees. Generally speaking, each person contributed over 3000 piasters in terms of money and labor. Furthermore, the cadres whom the Government sent to the village to be in charge of the building of the strategic hamlet, were demanding and caused troubles to the people. As a result, the people became more and more frustrated and this fact pushed some of them to listen to the Communist propaganda. They met the Communist cadres when they went to the jungle to cut down the trees. The cadres urged the people to refuse to build the strategic hamlet by showing them the way and they would destroy the strategic hamlet. In short, the building of the strategic hamlets alienated the people from the Government, or was very harmful to the Government and very advantageous to the Communists.

28. When did you first hear about the Liberation Front?

I first heard about the Liberation Front in 1963. I was the village policeman then. Before that, I only heard about the VC. I was stopped by the VC once at Rung La when I was on my way to Saigon by bus. That was the day after the revolution in 1963.

29. At that time (1963), did many people in your village join the Front?

At that time, my village was still a safe area -- No one joined the VC then.

30. Were there Front cadres infiltrating to the village that time?

The VC couldn't infiltrate into the village then. But people who went to the wood to cut the trees often met them. They made propaganda and sometimes forced these people to hold meetings to listen to them talk.

31. What did the Front cadres say?

Generally speaking, they said that the Front was fighting against the Americans to restore independence to the country.

32. When and how did your village come under the control of the Front?

The general situation of Tuy Phuoc District was insecure. The VC came to my village after I had left it. I had been a village policeman. I had divided the village into squares and, together with the Militia, I kept a very tight control on these squares. When I resigned, I found that the Militiamen in my village were demoralized. At that time, the VC took over the villages one after another on the North side of the district, then they attacked [redacted] My village was 30 km long, surrounded by mountains on two sides. There were no reinforcement troops from the district. It was impossible to hold the village with just a few platoons of Militia. I realized that, in these circumstances, my village would sooner or later fall into the hands of the VC. Knowing what would happen, I left the village. Fifteen days later, the VC entered the village. They went to each family and forced the people to take part in a demonstration. Then they threw a few hand grenades and that was enough to make the Militiamen and cadres run to Dieu Tri and abandon the village to the VC.

33. After the VC took over the village, what did they organize in the village?

They organized Village and Hamlet Autonomous Committees to control the village.

34. After the VC took over the village, did they force the people to attend reeducation sessions?

Everyone was required to join their organizations and attend study sessions about their aims and policies.

35. In your opinion, was the Front a peace loving organization?

The VC used to say that they were peace loving people, but the truth was, they weren't that way at all. The facts were, during the truces, such as during Christmas, Buddha's birthday, they continued to kill people. Furthermore, no one could take their declarations at face value.

36. In your opinion, was the Front a patriotic organization?

I found that they were never patriotic people. According to the Geneva Agreement, North and South should came together and organized a general election. When this couldn't be realized, the Communists in the North sent cadres to the South to organize the Liberation Front with the purpose of taking over the entire country and to put the entire country under the Communists' yoke. This showed that they weren't patriotic people.

37. Were the VC compassionate toward the people?

According to the villagers in my village, who later told me about it, the VC had applied the lemon squeezing policy. They leaned on the people, ate the people's food, forced the people to work for them and yet they mistreated them. This showed they weren't compassionate toward the people.

38. Do you think that the VC fighters and cadres were courageous?

I found that the VC were, indeed, courageous. Take their taking over the control of my village, for example. With not a large troop strength and simple weapons, they charged in to take over the village. I also found that when the high echelons ordered the lower echelon people to go some place or to do something, the orders were carried out immediately.

39. Were there many young men in your village?

Many.

40. Did the VC cadres force these young men to join their army?

After the VC had taken over the village, all young men who had reached a certain age and were healthy were required to join the army. No one could refuse that.

41. That means all the young men in your village joined the Front army?

That is right. After the VC took over the village, they required all young men to join their army. Those young men whom they found with high morale were attached to the Main Forces. Those with lower morale were left on the local level as guerrillas.

42. Did any young men in your village join the ARVN?

Before the VC took over the village, when it was still a secure place, many young men joined the ARVN.

43. Didn't the young men and the villagers react to the VC forcing these young men to join their army?

No one wanted to join the VC. But no one dared say anything. If they complained at all, they complained among themselves within their families or kept their complaints to themselves. If the cadres heard any complaints from anyone, that person would be sent to the mountain to attend reeducation. Anyone sent to the mountain was expected to bring rice along with him to the mountain. He would be mistreated at the mountain. That was why everyone was afraid of being sent to be reeducated, and no one dared protest against the cadres.

44. Were there many guerrillas in your village?

According to what I heard from other people, each hamlet had from 20 to 30 guerrillas.

45. How were the families of those who worked for the GVN or joined the ARVN being treated?

The cadres treated these families very badly. That was why these families one by one had to find ways to leave the village. All the members of these families were under house arrest. If they wanted to go someplace, they had to have a permit. Unless they got permission from the cadres, they couldn't go anywhere. Furthermore, these families had to contribute more than the others. And they were forced to write to their family members to urge them to return to the village, to leave the ARVN and the Government service.

46. Were these appeals by mail effective?

How could these letters be sent away? How could it be effective if the mail couldn't be sent.

47. Did the cadres organize the land distribution?

The cadres confiscated all the communal land and the land that belonged to those who had escaped from the village and whom they called the exiles. They distributed that land to the poor, the landless or those with little land. But the cadres' families or families that had members in their army or in the guerrillas received priority in selecting the best land and they received more of it than others.

48. Did the VC take any of the land of the landowners who were then living in the village?

No.

49. Were those who received land satisfied?

A minority of the people who sympathized with the VC, seemed satisfied. But most of the people weren't happy because they all thought that, sooner or later, the GVN would reestablish its control over the village. Then those who had accepted the land distributed by the cadres could be suspected as VC. They didn't like to accept the land, but they didn't dare refuse because, to the VC, refusing would mean protesting against them.

50. Did the people have to pay taxes to the Front?

I am not so sure of the people had to pay taxes or not. I only heard that they had to make contributions. Each family had to contribute a certain amount of paddy, sugar and money to the cadres. The amount was fixed by the cadres. Furthermore, the cadres organized collections often. Every three or five days on some occasion, they came to each and every family to collect money and rice. Every family had to contribute.

51. Were there any changes in the amount of contributions?

The amount of contributions kept increasing. All those who took refuge after me complained about it.

52. Were the people ready to make contributions when the cadres asked them to do so?

No one was ready or happy to make contributions. They did so because they were afraid that if they refused, they would have to attend reeducation in the woods or the mountain. They wanted to be left alone.

53. Did the people contribute more money or more rice?

They usually contributed more paddy. They also contributed money and sugar.

54. What products in your village could be sold to the outside?

There were many products in my village: tobacco, dau rai, u, xoay and cinnamon, which was used to make Khuynh Diep. Products that could be sold to the merchants in Saigon were u, xoay and cinnamon. As for tobacco and dau rai and sugar, they were being sold to the villages and districts in the province.

55. While the VC controlled your village, did the cadres permit the people to sell these products outside of the village?

The cadres didn't permit the people to go to the woods. How could they get these products and sell them to the outside? As for products that could be got in the village, such as tobacco and sugar, they couldn't be sold outside the village because, in order to sell them, they had to be brought to Qui Nhon. The cadres didn't permit them to be brought to Qui Nhon. The VC were

afraid that if they let the people sell these products to the outside, they wouldn't have enough left for their own use. They were also afraid that those who brought these products outside of the village to sell might contact the GVN cadres.

56. Did the cadres buy any of these products from the people?

The cadres never bought anything from the people. They only made the people contribute to them, they only asked for them from the people. They got everything from the people from rice and sugar to tobacco and salt.

57. Where did the cadres in your village come from?

All the village cadres were local people. Only the cadres on the district and province levels were men from other places. The Village Chief of my village has rallied in Qui Nhon.

58. Were there any regroupees?

No. Many people in my village went North to regroup, but none has come back.

59. Did any of the cadres contact the Front before it took over the village?

The majority of the cadres were former Party members or those who had worked for the Viet Minh, but hadn't gone North to regroup.

60. How did the cadres treat the people?

After they became cadres, they found ways to avenge themselves for the troubles and difficulties they had had to endure while the GVN were still in the village. They mistreated the people, especially with pro-GVN families. There was nothing the people could do, except keep their thoughts to themselves and then find ways to escape from the village.

61. Were there female cadres in the village?

There were a few. They were all local people.

62. What did the people say about the female cadres?

The people didn't dare to say anything.

63. Did many people in your village like the cadres?

There were a few who liked the cadres. But it is more truthful to say that they kowtowed to the cadres with the hope that the latter would treat them better.

64. Was there any conflict about the village cadres?

The cadres quarrelled among themselves once. This conflict came about due to my brother-in-law's trial, which occurred in May 1965. The cadres accused him of being a spy. One cadre said that he should be sentenced to capital punishment. Another one disagreed. After my brother-in-law had been killed, these two cadres were transferred to other places because they had quarrelled with each other.

65. Were many people in your village killed?

Two other persons were killed at the same time as my brother-in-law. These two were really innocent. It was because they had made remarks against the cadres that they were thought to be pro-GVN. The cadres accused them of this and that crime. Finally, they set up a tribunal where the cadres were the judges and sentenced them to be killed. They were taken out to be shot immediately. Besides this, they arrested seven or eight other people and took them to the mountain. These people haven't been released yet.

66. What did people say about that trial?

That trial frightened the people and made them infuriated. That was why, after that trial, they tried to escape from the village. A while after the trial, about 4000 people moved out of the village. The population in my village was over 7000. Before the trial, the number of people who moved out wasn't big. They were men with GVN leanings, former GVN cadres and the rich families. They composed about 5% of the population in the village. It was after the trial that a great many more people left. There were hamlets, such as [redacted] Hamlet, which was located alongside [redacted] railway. All the people in this hamlet have moved out.

67. Did the cadres require the people to do labor work?

Doing labor work could be considered as a daily task. Usually, before each attack, about 200 people were required to transport ammunition for the troops. Each labor working wave lasted some five to ten days or half a month. The laborers had to transport food supplies. Sometimes, they even to had go to Phu Yen to carry salt to the VC in the jungle.

68. Who were those who had to do labor work?

All those who were healthy, except the cadres and guerrillas, had to do labor work.

69. What did the people say about having to do labor work?

No one wanted to go on transportation missions, but no one dared to refuse or to protest against it for fear of being sent away for reeducation. The term "reeducation" was more fearful than the term "imprisonment" in the GVN areas.

70. Did your village organize combat hamlets?

After the VC took over the village, they repaired, and consolidated the fences of the former strategic hamlets in the village to turn them into combat hamlets to counter the GVN troops.

71. How were the combat hamlets organized?

I don't know.

72. According to the people who took refuge after you, were the combat hamlets effective in countering the GVN troops?

They said they would fight against the GVN troops, but in reality, they couldn't do a thing. If the GVN troops, came in, the cadres and guerrillas all ran away, leaving the people to bear the consequences. They didn't do a thing.

73. Did the Northern cadres ever come to operate in your village?

I don't know.

74. When did the GVN reestablish its control over your village?

About July or August of last year.

75. While the Front was in control of the village, were there any changes in the behavior or activities of the cadres?

The cadres became more and more arrogant. They considered themselves as small kings. With their knapsacks on their shoulders, they went from one hamlet to another and everywhere they went, the people were expected to offer them delicacies and exotic food. It was this arrogant attitude of the cadres that made the people become more and more infuriated with them.

76. After the VC took over the village, did they reorganize the schools for the children?

No.

77. Did the cadres organize medical stations in the village?

No.

78. Did the people in the village receive news of what had happened in other places?

No. Those who lived in the VC controlled areas couldn't receive news of what had happened in other areas.

79. Were there radio sets in the village?

There were radio sets in the village, but the cadres absolutely forbade anyone to listen to the GVN station. They forced the people to listen to Communist stations. Anyone caught listening to the GVN station clandestinely would have his radio confiscated and he would be sent to be reeducated in the mountain.

80. Did anyone dare to listen clandestinely?

Yes. Though the cadres absolutely forbade it, there were some who listened secretly to the GVN station. That was why they learned that the GVN welcomed the refugees and they tried to find ways to come to the GVN areas. That also meant that some people learned about what had happened in

the GVN areas. But they kept their knowledge to themselves and didn't dare to tell others. They kept their knowledge secret, and then found ways to escape. One person made his escape and others imitated him.

81. Were there newspapers in the village?

No.

82. Did the cadres ever tell the people in the village about the conditions of living of the people in the North?

I don't know if the cadres told the people about that or not, because I didn't ask them for that information.

83. Before the VC took over your village, did hear about the Chieu Hoi program?

No. As far as I know, it wasn't until 1965 that the Chieu Hoi Center in Binh Dinh was built.

84. While the VC were in control of your village, did the people hear about the Chieu Hoi program?

At that time the people all heard about Chieu Hoi because the Government had dropped leaflets over the village. Many of these leaflets were safe conduct passes and many people used them to move to the GVN areas.

85. Did many village Front cadres rally?

Most of the village cadres from my village have rallied. They are now in the Chieu Hoi Center in Qui Nhon, along with the Village Chief cadre. When the GVN retook the village, he had left it to join the VC. But one month later, perhaps because of his inability to endure the hardships, he rallied.

86. Do you know how many cadres have rallied?

About 30 cadres have rallied. Besides these, there were the guerrillas and those who followed the VC and helped them. They have all rallied. Their total number may come up to 200.

87. Have any young men who joined the Front army rallied?

No one in my village joined the Front Main Forces. They only joined the district forces. They have all rallied and joined the 22nd Division of the ARVN. In short, there are only five or six guerrillas who haven't rallied.

88. While the Front was in control of the village, did the ARVN ever attack your village?

No. It was in the last mopping up operation that the GVN retook the village. My village was retaken before other villages because the Korean troops were stationed near by.

89. How did the ARVN retake your village?

When the ARVN took over the village again, no fighting occurred. Not one drop of blood was shed. Early in the morning, the ARVN and American troops landed from helicopters along the edge of the mountains which surrounded the village. The VC in the village who ran out to go hiding in the mountain were all captured and brought here by helicopters. The villagers were taken there also. There were former GVN cadres here and they separated the captives into categories on the basis of their offences: grave, light and medium and innocent. It wasn't until a few days later that the Government released the people to go home. I think the mopping up operation was very effective because it brought good result without loss of blood.

90. While the Front was in control of your village, did the airplanes ever attack your village?

During that time, only one hamlet was strafed and bombed by airplanes. It was [redacted] Hamlet. This hamlet was so utterly destroyed that even the district chief who came to my village later couldn't recognize it as the former [redacted] Hamlet.

91. When did that attack happen? How much damage did the people suffer?

It happened at the end of 1965. At that time, the people in [redacted] Hamlet had all moved out and only the VC were left there. I don't know if they were wiped out or not.

92. Was your village ever attacked by artillery?

Shelling occurred very frequently. Almost every night the village was attacked by artillery.

93. Did the people suffer damage from artillery attacks?

Yes. Some houses were collapsed. Some people were wounded, but only one person was killed during the whole time.

94. When was your village attacked by artillery most frequently?

The last half of 1965 my village was attacked by artillery most frequently.

95. What did the people say about these artillery attacks?

The people didn't dare say anything. Furthermore, at that time, the majority of the people had left the village.

96. Did you hear of the use of sprays to kill the trees?

The use of sprays to kill the trees had greatly affected the fields in my village. The Government sprayed to defoliate the mountains which surround my village and the sprays fell on the fields at the edge of the mountains, destroying a great deal of paddy and manioc.

97. Was the damage considerable?

Some fields were completely ruined. In others, about half of the production could be salvaged. My village had many secondary crops, such as potato, manioc, and tobacco. Most of these crops were planted at the foot of the mountains. Consequently, the damage to these secondary crops was considerable.

98. In your opinion, was the spraying to destroy crops done deliberately?

No. The people all realized that the Government only wanted to defoliate the mountains, but the wind had carried some of the spray to their fields and destroyed their crops.

99. What did the people say about that?

The people complained very much because the damage was quite great. Not only the crops were destroyed while the spraying was being carried out. Its effects still remain. . Take my fields, for example. I used to harvest about 150 vuong of paddy each season, but last harvest, I could collect only 40 vuong.

100. When was the spraying carried out?

The spraying was being carried once every year. The last time took place at the end of last year or the beginning of this year.

101. What did the Front cadres say about the spraying?

I don't know, but I am sure that they would certainly have exploited the spraying in their propaganda against the GVN.

102. Did you hear if the Government deliberately sprayed in some places to destroy the people's crops?

I didn't hear about that.

103. Did you meet any American before you left your village?

When I was still a village policeman, I often met the American who was an advisor to the district chief. He used to accompany the district chief to my village.

104. How did that American treat the people?

Because of the difference in language, he didn't socialize with the people in the village.

105. What did the Front cadres say about the Americans?

I didn't hear them say anything. I only heard the people repeat that the cadres had told them that the Americans came here to take over Vietnam, and the Americans were cruel towards the people.

106. Did the people in the village beleive it?

I think that there must have been a few, those who were pro-Communists, who believed what the cadres said. But the majority of the people didn't believe them. I have talked to many people in my village and none of them believed what the cadres had said.

107. In your opinion, are the Americans like the French before?

Before, the French came here to rule. They conducted themselves as very important people and never became friendly or nice to anyone. The Americans are completely different. They are very nice. But since four or five months ago, something has happened and I want to tell you so you will know. Frequently, people who ride on their bicycles or motor bikes, on the routes leading to the outskirts of the town, have been hit on their heads with broomsticks by the American soldiers sitting in their cars. I, myself, was subjected to the same treatment a few times, and my hat fell off. I don't understand if this is a joke or if there are other reasons that make the American soldiers behave like that. Another more important incident just happened. During Buddha's birthday, some American soldiers snatched and tore into pieces Buddhist and Vietnamese flags. I thought to myself that if these American soldiers tore the Buddhist flags because of religious discrimination, they could be forgiven. But the Vietnamese flags represents the soul of the country and their snatching and tearing them into pieces infuriated everyone. The same type of incident occurred in [redacted] After these incidents occurred, the province chief came to the Buddhist pagoda to apologize and his apologies were broadcast to the people. According to the province chief, there were some American soldiers about to leave for their country and they wanted some flags to take home with them as souvenirs and that was why they snatched the flags. I think that the province chief didn't tell the truth. If it was true that these American soldiers wanted to have some flags as souvenirs, they could buy them at the stores or go to the psychological warfare office and ask for them. They could have 50 flags if they wanted. Furthermore, they didn't only snatch these flags. They tore them into pieces in front of everyone. I and a group of other

people decided to write a letter to the American Ambassador about the mischievous American soldiers. They sat in their cars and either spat, threw empty cans or used their broomsticks to hit the people on the streets on the head. They didn't exempt anyone, either old or young. If you want to see it with your own eyes, you can borrow a motorcycle and ride it to outside the town following [redacted] bridge. For example, by the time you return, I am sure that you will have been hit on the head by the American soldiers somewhere in your rounds.

108. Have you ever seen Americans bringing gifts to the people?

Yes. I, myself, have received gifts from the Americans. Last Christmas, for example, the Americans brought many gifts here and distributed them to the people in this camp. Furthermore, there were two American doctors in charge of a medical truck and they often came here to distribute medicine and treat the people in the camp. These two doctors worked very hard and they never flinched before dirt and hardships.

109. Besides the Americans, do you know other foreigners who have come here to help Vietnam?

I know there are the Australians, the New Zealanders, the Filipinos and the Koreans.

110. Have you seen people from these countries?

I have seen the Koreans and the Filipinos.

111. In your opinion, why did the people from these countries come here to help Vietnam?

The danger of Communism is a common danger. These countries are helping to wipe out Communism in this country so that it won't spread in other places, such as their countries. I also think that, besides the reason I just mentioned, these countries must have other interests in our country.

112. In your opinion, which side is stronger, the GVN and its allies or the Front?

In terms of weapons and troop strength, the GVN is stronger.

The VC do not have anything except a nylon sheet, a hammock and simple weapons. They only possess a talent for making false propaganda, for threatening the people and causing some people to join them. Out of ten people, maybe one was wholeheartedly with the VC. I had lived in the area controlled by the Viet Minh. There was a world of difference. Life in their areas was very different compared to life in the GVN controlled areas. I still remember in 1954 when the GVN came to take over my village, I saw the food ration given to the German shepard of a captain. I thought to myself that if that food ration were sold, it could feed a man living in the area controlled by the Viet Minh for three months. Such being the case, how could people dare to join the Communists? I think that if the VC false propaganda could be made ineffective and if they could be stopped from threatening the people, then all the people would support the GVN. This, plus the weapons and GVN and allied troops strength, would make the GVN victorious in a twinkling.

113. Did you hear about the bombing on the North?

Yes.

114. When did you hear about the bombing on the North?

I heard about it when the GVN was still in my village, before the VC took over the control. It was immediately after the incident in which the American ship was fired on by the North.

115. In your opinion, do these bombing attacks have any effect on the North?

These bombing attacks have weakened the potentialities of the North. If these bombing attacks hadn't occurred, the potentialities of the North remain intact and the supplies sent from the North to the Front would be much greater. It was because the North was being bombed and its potentialities weakened that it hasn't send many supplies to the Front in the South. That is why the Front in the South can't become strong.

116. Do you mean the bombing on the North affected the Front in the South?

If affected the Front a great deal. If the Front in the South can fight, it is only because of the supplies it receives from the North. If these supplies are decreased, the Front will not be able to continue the fighting and it will become weaker and weaker.

117. In your opinion, what were the reasons that make the Americans bomb the North?

As I told you before, I think the Americans bombed the North in order to weaken the North's potentialities, to render the North incapable of sending great amounts of supplies to the Front and, therefore, to weaken the Front.

118. After you left your village, where did you go first before you came here?

I had stayed at [redacted] for four or five months before I came to this Buddhist camp.

119. Did you receive any assistance at [redacted]?

No. At [redacted] stayed at a friend's home. I had brought some money with me and, thanks to that, I could stay at [redacted] for a few months.

120. Were you the only one in your village who took refuge at that time?

Twenty or thirty people left the village at that time, but the Government hadn't organized any refugee camp then.

121. How long after you left your village did the people begin to move out of the village also?

The people began to move out when the VC took over the village. But they didn't all go at the same time. Every two or three days, four or five families left. It was after the trial, of which I told you before, that the people began to move out in great numbers. To people in the countryside, it was the last resort for them to leave their village because they had always lived off their fields and gardens. If they left their land, they would be hungry. The most a person could carry with him was two thung of paddy, but two thung of paddy couldn't last very long.

122. Did you make any preparations before you left?

I didn't make any preparations at all. I was lucky and I still had some money with me when I left. I took only a closet with me because I thought that since I was going to live with others, I should have a closet to put my clothes and personal belongings in so they wouldn't become an eyesore to others. I left everything else behind. I still had over 100 vuong of paddy and a lot of sugar. The property I left behind could amount to a few millions piasters. My family is composed of my wife and two children. We left. I had only two children then. I also took my two sisters' families along.

123. When you left, how long did you think you would be away?

When I left, I thought I could come back in two or three months. Had I known that I would have to be away for so long, I would have taken all my belongings with me. After I had been in Qui Nhon for two months, I found that the situation became more and more critical. The VC took over more and more villages and Qui Nhon itself was threatened. That was why I bought two airplane tickets and kept them in my pockets so as to be ready to go to Saigon anytime.

124. You said the GVN took over your village last year. How many more people were still in the village at that time?

At that time, about 500 people were still left with the VC in the entire village.

125. After the GVN took over your village, did all the villagers return to their village?

After the GVN took over the village, most of the villagers returned to the village. A few like me, who have obtained jobs here, haven't gone back. About 95% of the people have gone back.

126. Where did the people in your village take refuge?

Qui Nhon and [redacted]

127. Have you gone back to your village since the GVN reestablished its control over your village?

I went back the day after the GVN took over the village. Since then, now and then or when I had business there, and Saturdays and Sundays, my wife or I have gone back to the village.

128. While you were away, was there anyone to oversee your fields?

I had/rent them to others and when I was away, they continued to work on my fields. While I was away, I couldn't collect one grain of paddy.

129. Have you begun to collect your rent?

Yes.

130. While the village was under VC control, did anyone leave the village and then return?

No.

131. What kind of assistance have you received since you took refuge here?

When I came to take refuge in the [redacted] camp, the office of Social Action gave each person seven piasters a day for a month. In addition, we received some rice and oil. Recently, families with over 7 members were given blankets. Even so, my camp has received the least support of any refugee camp in Binh Dinh Province.

132. In your opinion, why is that?

When [redacted] camp was first organized, the authorities asked the various religions to be in charge of the supplies given by the Government and to distribute them to the refugees. Only the Buddhist Organization refused that request. The Buddhist Organization said that the Buddhist Church would try to help the refugees as much as it could. The refugees were Buddhists, but they were also citizens. If the Government wanted to help the refugee citizens, the Government could do what it liked. That was why the people

in my camp seem to be completely forgotten by the Government. Furthermore, all the people here thought that the Government was busy fighting against the Communists and doing other things. Therefore, we shouldn't depend on the Government for our living. We should be self sufficient. We only ask to be affiliated to the local village so that each family could receive a ticket permitting them to buy rice at official price. At that time, a bag of Thai rice cost 500 piasters at the official price and 1200 or 1500 piasters at the market price. As for working to earn our living, we think of ourselves as chickens. We have to scrape the earth to find food to live.

133. Have all the people in the camp found work to do?

Not everyone has found work to do. Fortunately, each family has two or three members who have found work. If the wife was unemployed, then the husband wasn't or if the husband was jobless, then the wife found work to do. If the parents couldn't find jobs, then the children could. Thanks to that they could live.

134. How many families are in the camp?

There are 135 families in the camp.

135. Were there any families with no jobs being held by anyone?

Yes. These families resorted to peddling. They lived day by day. They wouldn't die of starvation, but living like that was very hard and unstable.

136. How many families in the camp are from the same village as you?

My family was the only one from my village. Before, there were some that were from my village, but they have returned.

137. Are there any families in the camp whose villages have been taken over again by the GVN?

There are a few of them.

138. Why don't these families return to their villages?

I suppose that, though their villages have been taken over again by the GVN, the guerrillas are still lurking

around. That may be the reason these families haven't yet dared to return. Also, farming in the countryside has become difficult. Some dams and bridges have been damaged and, therefore, some fields don't have enough water. It is also very difficult to hire helpers. Before, it was 40 piasters for one planting day. Now, it is over 100 piasters because some people have gone to towns to work in American or allied companies and have received higher wages. It isn't that it is easy to find jobs in the towns, but some have found them. The living conditions in the towns are higher and people have become used to that. Returning to the countryside to live with salt and sauce and mud, doesn't seem attractive to these people any longer.

139. Where did the administrative officials come from?

All of the members of the camp administrative committee are under the direct command of [redacted] Village. They all carry out their duties with honesty and sincerity.

140. Did any foreigners come to visit the camp?

As I told you before, now and then, the American doctors come. At the present time, there is another group of foreigners in the "International Collective Progress" Organization who come to visit the camp. They have helped to dig a well for the camp and are in the process of making a survey to build a school for the camp.

141. Hasn't there been a school for children at all?

Since the camp was first organized, there has never been a school. That is why there are between 500 to 600 children in the camp who aren't attending school. A very few families who are acquainted with the teachers at the secondary school in Qui Nhon have squeezed their children into that school.

142. Who do you blame for all the hardships you have had to bear since you took refuge?

First, the Communists are to be blamed. If the Communists hadn't come to take over my village, the people in my village wouldn't have had to leave their homes, fields

and gardens to take refuge. But the GVN is also to be blamed. It was because of the corruption of the GVN cadres in the countryside that the Communists could spread their propaganda, and take over my village. Not only that, the Government was indifferent when faced with the VC taking over my village. It was over a year between the time when the VC took over my village and when the Government retook it. I don't understand why the Government let it go for so long, especially since the most the VC could have had was 20 guns. It took the ARVN only two hours to mop up and regain the control of the village. But the Government had let it go for over a year and the people had to suffer so much for it.

143. How much longer do you want to stay in the camp before you return to your village?

At the present time, the GVN is in control of my village, but the situation is still unclear. The VC can still sneak in. There is still the hazard of factionism in all the villages in Duy Phuoc District. They are all GVN, but they are fighting among themselves. If I return to my village, I will have to belong either to this or that faction. This would only bring more damage and I may even be wiped out. That is why, at the present time, I only need someone to oversee my fields and garden and I will wait until the situation becomes clearer. Perhaps, I will have to wait until peace is restored by some agreement like the Geneva Agreement, so I can return to the village. I have no intention of staying here permanently. My income in the village is very considerable and I have to live with my fields and garden.

144. Do you have a job to support yourself?

I have to work for others to earn my living. I am a [redacted] for a contracting company in charge of unloading goods at Qui Nhon Port. My salary is very small. I am very fortunate to have two meals a day.

145. This is the picture of a ladder with 10 rungs. Suppose the first rung (rung 1) represents the best possible life that you could imagine and the last rung (rung 10) represents the worst possible life that you could imagine. In your opinion, on what rung were you before you took refuge, and where are you now?

When I was still in my village, the income from my fields and garden enabled me to live comfortably without having to work hard. Furthermore, I had a water pump and a machine to mill the rice. That was why my income was very big; bigger than that of a Government official. Furthermore, I was very free, I could go away anytime I wanted, there was nothing to restrict me. My life could be said to be on rung 3 or 4. Now, after a period of unemployment, I have spent all the money I took along with me. I have a job now, but it isn't a steady one and my salary can get me only two meals a day. If I lost my job tomorrow, I would starve because I couldn't do as others and labor to earn my living. My life now is on rung 8.

146. In your opinion, what was the best possible life that you could imagine back in your village?

In the village, to have a large garden, plenty of fields, a tiled roof house with electricity and running water was the best possible life.

147. In your opinion, what was the worst possible life you could imagine?

There were many sources of income in my village, but a life without enough food to eat or decent clothes to wear is the worst possible life.

148. Do you have any sons?

I have a son who is 11 years old.

149. What kind of life do you wish your son to have later on?

I wish my son could continue to study so he could have a good educational background. I wish he could have a university degree. With that cultural level, he would have a good life.

150. If the Government agreed to give you three things, what would you ask?

I only ask for two things: First, that the Government give my son a scholarship so his schooling wouldn't be

interrupted. Second, that I be given a steady job in line with my capacity. My present job doesn't seem very enduring. In a way, my second wish isn't very important. With me, obtaining a scholarship for my son is the most important thing.

151. In your opinion, which Government could give you what you want?

I think the present Government could give me that.

152. In your opinion, how much longer will the war last?

I think that the war will last much longer.

153. Why do you think so?

In terms of troops strength, the GVN is much stronger than the VC because it has more troops and weapons. But the GVN hasn't been able to control all the people, and hasn't the support of all the population. Since the Government doesn't have the people's support, the VC still have room to operate, and consequently, the war still continues. I think that in order to get the people's support, there must be real freedom and democracy in the countryside. I also think that in order to do that, the Government machine in the countryside should be made sound. The aims and policies of the Government are sound, but when they are being applied in the countryside, they are mishandled. Mishandling will result in losing the people's support.

154. In your opinion, which side has the people's support, GVN or Front?

The people aren't supporting the Communists any longer. They compare life under the Communist regime with that under the GVN and find that life under the GVN is much better so they are leaning toward the GVN. Leaning toward the GVN doesn't mean supporting it entirely. As long as they find that there is still injustice and oppression in the GVN areas, they don't support the GVN wholeheartedly and there are still dissatisfied people. As long as there are dissatisfied people, the VC can continue to made propaganda and threats. I also think that, even in my own village, if the Government machine isn't going to change, the VC will return again and the people will have to take refuge once more.

155. In your opinion, what should the Government do to get the people's support?

As I told you just now, the first thing is to render the local Government healthy, which means that the rank and file cadres in the countryside should be purified immediately. The people in the countryside should enjoy the real freedom, should be treated justly and there shouldn't be factions among the cadres. Take, for example, just recently people whose homes were damaged or collapsed by the bombing and shelling received war indemnity. Those who knew about that GVN program made application and received war indemnity. Those who knew about that GVN program made application and received indemnity. Those who didn't know about that received nothing. Those who had good connections and power received theirs most easily. Others faced more difficulties.

156. In your opinion, could the GVN win in the end?

I think that the GVN could win very easily if the Government has the people's support.

157. In your opinion, what would happen to the people's lives if the Front wins?

If the VC wins, the people will be very miserable. Experiences under the Viet Minh era and experiences in the areas now controlled by the Front show us that very clearly. As for me, if the VC win, I will have to find a way to leave the country.

158. If the GVN wins what would happen to the people's lives?

If the GVN wins, the people could work in peace. With our country's wealth, if people could work in peace, they could live comfortable lives.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

The subject was intelligent and spoke eloquently. He never hesitated when he answered, and seemed sincere. He was very cooperative during the interview.

PHOTOCOPY

QUESTIONNAIRE

For [redacted] 5

1. Name of Interviewer: [redacted]

2. Name and Date of Interview:

3. From 3:30 PM to 5:50 PM on [redacted] June 1966 7

From _____ to _____ on _____ 1966

From _____ to _____ on _____ 1966

From _____ to _____ on _____ 1966

Total time: 2:20'

Interview based on: tape (X) hand written notes ( )

4. Place of Interview: _____

5. Sex of subject: Male (X) Female ( )

6. Age of subject: 35

7. Ethnic background: Vietnam

8. Place of birth:

hamlet [redacted]

village [redacted]

district Tuy Phuoc

province Binh Dinh

9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee:

hamlet _____

village [redacted]

district Tuy Phuoc

province Binh Dinh

10. (a) Length of residence in last location: 4 months

(b) Who controlled the place of residence:

GVN ( ) VC ( ) Contested ( )

(c) Since when controlled or contested? July 1964

[redacted]

REPRODUCTION COPY

No. AGR 105

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

1. Name of Interviewer: [redacted] 5

2. Name of Subject : [redacted]

3. Time and Date of Interview:

   From 3:30 PM to 5:50 PM on [redacted] June 1966 7

   From _____ to _____ on _____ 1966

   From _____ to _____ on _____ 1966

   From _____ to _____ on _____ 1966

   Total time: 2:20'

   Interview based on: tape (x) hand written notes ( )

4. Place of Interview:

   _____

5. Sex of subject: Male (x) Female ( )

6. Age of subject: 35

7. Ethnic background: Vietnam

8. Place of birth:

   hamlet [redacted]

   village [redacted]

   district Tuy Phuoc

   province Binh Dinh

9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee:

   hamlet _____

   village [redacted]

   district Tuy Phuoc

   province Binh Dinh

10. (a) Length of residence in last location: 4 months

    (b) Who controlled the place of residence:

    GVN ( ) VC ( ) Contested ( )

    (c) Since when controlled or contested? July 1964

11. Number of brothers ( ) and sisters ( )

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age: 1

13. Marital status: Married

14. Number of children: 3

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age: _____

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Sisters ~~Brothers~~ with subject (X) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject (X) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject (X) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion: Buddhist

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge: farmer

19. Economic status:
(a) VC designation _____
(b) Landowner? yes How much land 6 mãu

20. Education:
Illiterate ( )
Literate (X)
Schooling completed: 5 years of high school

21. Any relatives in VC: 2 relatives regrouped in the North

22. Any relatives in GVN: 1 cousin is the head of medical service

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by:
(a) French
(b) GVN
(c) VC: one brother-in-law was killed by the VC; a father was killed by viet Minh.

24. When became a refugee: July 1964

25. Where took refuge first: [redacted]

26. Parent residence: [redacted] Hamlet
Qui Nhon Village, Binh Dinh Province

AGR

INTERVIEW

106

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MASTER COPY

(A)

THE RAND CORPORATION

INTERVIEWS CONCERNING THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT OF SOUTH VIETNAM

FILE NO. AGR-106

Date of Interview : June [redacted] 1967

Subject's Category : Refugee, 1964

Area Left : [redacted] Hamlet
[redacted] Village
An Nhon District
Binh Dinh Province

This interview is for the information of US and Vietnamese official agencies and personnel on a need-to-know basis. Permission to distribute or show this interview to non-official persons requires the prior approval of The RAND Corporation and the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs.

1. How long had you and your family lived in your village before you took refuge?

   The village I had lived in before I took refuge was my wife's native village, not mine. I had lived in that village for 15 years before I took refuge.

2. How big was the village?

   The village was very big, composed of [redacted] hamlets. The population was about 5000.

3. How did you earn your living when you were still in your village?

   I farmed and engaged in commerce.

4. How much land did you have? Did you have enough to eat?

   I had five mau of land. I lived comfortably.

5. What did most of the people in your village do to earn their living? Did they have enough to eat?

   Most of the people in the village earned their living by farming. Most of them were well-to-do.

6. Did many of them have to rent land from others? How much rent did they have to pay?

   Many people didn't own land and had to rent land from others. In my village, the rent was only 25% of the harvest.

7. How many members were in your family?

   My family was composed of myself, my wife and our six children.

8. What is your religion?

   We worshipped our ancestors.

9. What religion did most of the people in your village practice?

   Most of them were Buddhists. A few were Catholics and some worshipped their ancestors. The number of Buddhists amounted to 50% and the number of Catholics 20%.

10. Was there any conflict between people of different religious affiliations?

Now and then, there were conflicts, but they were only small and unimportant incidents between individuals.

11. Were there any Montagnards in your village?

No.

12. How much education did you have when you were young?

I went as far as the first year in Junior High (6th grade).

13. Was there anyone with a high educational background in your village?

There were some in my village who received their Junior High and Senior High diplomas (9th and 12th grades).

14. Were there schools for children in the village?

There were many schools in the village. Each hamlet had a school which had three grades (1st to 3rd), and there was one elementary school which served the entire village and had five grades (1st to 5th). Most of the children had facilities to attend school.

15. Was there anyone in your village who especially enjoyed the people's trust and respect?

[redacted] was the one who enjoyed the most trust and respect from the people. He was a landowner. He was elected to the province council. He has taken refuge in Qui Nhon. He left the village before the VC took control.

16. How did the people in your village live before 1954?

Before 1954, during the Viet Minh era, the people in my village lived in misery and need because they had to contribute a lot so that the Viet Minh could feed their troops who were fighting against the French. Furthermore, the people had to go on transportation missions. It was very strenuous and miserable.

17. Did many people work for the Viet Minh then?

Many people in my village worked for the Viet Minh then. Many were Party members. About 150 people went North to regroup in 1954. There were some who had worked for the Viet Minh, but didn't go North to regroup. They remained with their families and earned their living by farming.

18. Did anything happen to those who had worked for the Viet Minh, but remained in the village after the GVN took over the village?

They were all put under surveillance. They were required to remain in their village and weren't permitted to move to other places freely.

19. After 1954, after the GVN took over your village, how were living conditions of the people in your village?

After the GVN took over my village, living conditions of the people changed completely. They all had enough food to eat and clothes to wear. Some became rich, and were able to build houses. The children could go to school because many schools were built.

20. Why did the people have better lives?

It was because the GVN didn't levy anything on the people. The people didn't have to make contributions, to pay high taxes. They could work more easily and so their income went up and their lives were more comfortable than before.

21. How did the GVN officials in the village treat the people?

Most of the officials treated the people nicely. They were always patient and acted democratically, except for a very few, one or two, who threatened the people and indulged in bribery.

22. Were the officials in your village local people or were they from other places?

They were all local people.

23. Were they elected by the people?

When the Government first took over, all the officials were appointed by the Government. But five or six months later, the people elected the village officials.

24. Were these elections free?

Outwardly, the people were free to chose whom they wanted to vote for. But, in reality, the Government sent cadres down to guide the people to vote for those whom the Government.

25. Did the elected people deserve to be elected?

Most of the elected officials worked hard and seemed deserving.

26. What did you know about the Ngo Dinh Diem Government then?

I confess that I only concerned myself with farming and trading and didn't pay attention to other things, and so I don't know much.

27. What do you think about the overthrow of Mr. Diem?

I don't know anything, but I heard the people in the village say that Mr. Diem had oppressed Buddhism, wanted to wipe out Buddhism and render the Buddhist people miserable. That was why the entire people had stood up to overthrow Mr. Diem so that they could enjoy religious freedom. Most of the people considered the overthrow of Mr. Diem justified. As for me, I didn't know anything. I thought to myself that there were many well-informed people and if they had cooperated with each other to overthrow of Mr. Diem, it must be justified.

28. Were there GVN soldiers stationed in your village before the VC took over?

At that time, there were some SDCs and Militiamen stationed in the village, but there were no Civil Guards or ARVN. Also, the SDCs and Militiamen were stationed in the hamlet where the village headquarters was located, not in other hamlets.

29. How did the SDCs and Militiamen who were stationed in your village treat the people?

The SDCs and Militiamen stayed only in the hamlet where the village headquarters was located. They never went to other hamlets and so I don't know about their treatment of the people.

30. Did the ARVN ever conduct their operations in your village?

Now and then, the ARVN conducted their operations in the village.

31. How did the ARVN treat the people?

The ARVN were nice, they didn't do any harm to the people.

31. Were there Strategic Hamlets in your village?

There was a Strategic Hamlet in each hamlet. These Strategic Hamlets were built under Mr. Diem, but I forget the date.

33. Did the people have to make contributions when the Strategic Hamlets were being built?

Everyone had to go to the woods to cut down trees and then bring them back to fence in the hamlets. Those who couldn't go had to pay others to do it for them.

34. Did the people say anything about having to make contributions to the building of the Strategic Hamlet?

Some complained because they had to spend money and labor. But their number was small. Most people said nothing.

35. In your opinion, did the people like to live in the Strategic Hamlets?

I found that the people liked to live in the Strategic Hamlets because they were all afraid of the Communists sneaking into their hamlets. Thanks to the fence, those who lived in the Strategic Hamlets didn't have to worry about the Communists sneaking in. As for me, I liked to live in the Strategic Hamlet, also. If it hadn't been for the fence, the VC could have gone into the hamlet to assassinate the people anytime they wanted. That would be very dangerous.

36. What did you like most in the Strategic Hamlet?

What I liked most in the Strategic Hamlet was security. We could sleep in peace without having to worry about the VC sneaking in for assassinations.

37. Was there anything that you didn't like?

There was nothing that I didn't like.

38. Did you have any problems or frustrations then?

No.

39. What did you think about your future then?

At that time, I was like the rest of the people in the village, I could earn my living easily. I had some savings because I didn't have to make any contributions. Furthermore, now and then, we received fertilizer from the Government. The paddy harvests became better and better. I also engaged in commerce. Since the people in the village earned their living easily, I made more and more profit in my commerce. I thought that if my business went smoothly like that, I could be rich in the future. I intended to build a tiled-roof house then.

40. When did you first hear about the Liberation Front?

I first heard about the Liberation Front in 1963, right after the overthrow of Mr. Diem.

41. Who told you about that?

I heard people around discuss with each other that there was a Liberation Front. But that was all they said because none of them knew what it was. It wasn't until 1964 that I heard others say that the Communists had taken over some hamlets in [redacted] and these Communists were members of the Front. It was then that I knew that the Front was Communist, was VC.

42. Did anyone in the village join the VC then?

At that time, two persons in the village left, saying that they were going to earn their living in faraway places. We all believed they were telling the truth. It wasn't until the VC had taken over the village that we realized that these two had gone to join the VC, instead of going to faraway places to work.

43. How did the VC take over your village?

The VC began to take over my village in June 1964, but they didn't take the entire village all at the same time. About June, they took over the lowest hamlet, which was separated from my own by four others. Since the distance was quite great, I don't know how they took over that hamlet. It wasn't until three months later that they took over my hamlet, but by that time, I had left it about 10 days before. And so, I don't know how they took over my hamlet.

44. When you left your hamlet, did many other people in your hamlet leave it at the same time with you?

Very few. Only about 20 families left with me because my hamlet was still secure right before I left.

45. What social class did these families belong to in the hamlet?

All these 20 families belonged to the rich and landowner class. At that time, I had foreseen that the VC would come to take over my hamlet. I knew they hated the rich landowner class. If I remained in the village, I would be mistreated. Furthermore, I was afraid they would make me do labor which I wasn't strong enough for.

46. Did families who had members who had joined the armed forces or worked for the GVN leave with you?

Just a few of them did.

47. Did you know the aims of the Front then?

No.

48. Do you know them now?

Later, some people who took refuge after I did told me that the regroupees had returned to the village with the Front people. This meant that the Front was Communist for sure. They called themselves the Front to deceive the people. And so, their aims were to communize everyone.

49. In your opinion, why are the Communists fighting against the GVN?

I think that the Communists are fighting against the GVN so that they can take over the South and turn it into a Communist society like the North.

50. In your opinion, is the Front a peace-loving organization?

The Front is trying to invade the South to turn it into a part of the Red Imperialist bloc. Since they are invaders, how can they also be peace-loving people.

51. Do you think the Front people are patriotic?

How can anyone say that they are patriotic? If, indeed, they are patriotic, they should have withdrawn to the North to restore peace here, why are they continuing to fight against the GVN to make brothers kill brothers, to force our children to join the army to fight and get killed, to force the people to take refuge and render them so miserable?

52. Do they love the people?

They don't love anyone at all. They always found ways to assassinate this or that person. Now and then, when the GVN conducted an operation, they mingled with the people and fired a few shots and then ran into hiding. The GVN soldiers retaliated with bombs and artillery which killed people and burned down their homes. That means they deliberately wanted to make the people miserable, they didn't care about the people.

53. In your opinion, are they courageous?

I think they are cowards. If they are courageous, they should deploy their troops and fight against the GVN. Instead, they were always in hiding like thieves sneaking in the people's homes to steal their possessions.

54. Did you ever hear the Front cadres making propaganda?

I never heard the Front cadres making propaganda, but people who took refuge after me told me that the Front cadres had told them that they were liberating the people, distributing land to the people and making the people's lives comfortable. The people said they didn't find their lives comfortable at all, except they found they had to make contributions and do labor work which was very strenuous and miserable.

55. Did the cadres require the people to attend reeducation?

According to what the people said, they required everyone to study their policies. Furthermore, they arrested some people and took them to the mountains for thought reform. It seemed that these people were released after a while

56. Did the cadres kill anyone?

Two people were killed.

57. Why did they kill these two persons?

They said those two people had worked as security agents for the GVN and oppressed the people. They accused those two of that crime in order to kill them, but the truth was that those two had never oppressed anyone.

58. The cadres arrested people and took them to the mountain, and killed people. What did the people say about that?

The people were infuriated and very frightened. Some complained secretly among themselves and didn't dare let them hear it because everyone was afraid of being deported to the mountains.

59. Did the cadres force the young men to join their army?

They forced many young men to join their army. Some joined the army, some the guerrillas. According to the people, out of those who joined their army, some have rallied, some have been killed and some just couldn't return.

60. Do you know the number of young men who joined their army?

I only heard the people mention that in passing, but I don't know their number. It seems that their number was about 100 people. Children of 15 were also forced to go. But as I told you, the majority of them have rallied.

61. Did many of those who joined the Front army do so voluntarily?

No one volunteered. They told some, especially the very young people, that they had to participate in the revolution, to kill the enemy and defend their villages and hamlets. They told others, especially families who had members in the GVN armed forces or working for the GVN, that their other members should join their army to atone for their crimes. In a few words, in one way or another, they forced the young men to join their army.

62. Did many people in your village join the GVN army before?

Before, a great many people joined the GVN army, such as the GVN, the Rangers, the Civil Guards and Militia. Their total number was about 150 men.

63. Did the cadres require women to join their army?

According to the people, between 10 to 15 women joined their army. But they have all rallied.

64. While the Front was in control of the village, how were the families who had members in the GVN armed forces or working for the GVN treated?

According to the members of these families, the cadres forced them to write letters to urge their family members to return to the village, and at the same time, they had to shoulder heavier work than the rest because the cadres considered these families to be guilty.

65. Did the Front cadres organize land distribution among the people?

The cadres confiscated all the land, the land which belonged to those who had left the village and whom they called the exiles. They distributed that land to the poor to work on, but these people couldn't enjoy much because they had to pay heavy taxes.

66. Were those who received land satisfied?

I don't know, but one thing is sure, and that is they couldn't benefit from the land much, as I said.

67. Did you hear any news about your land in the village?

My land was also distributed to the poor to work on.

68. Do you know the amount of agricultural tax the people had to pay?

According to those who took refuge after I did, the cadres forced the farmers to pay them half of the production.

69. Did the people have enough rice left to eat after taxes?

Except for a few, those who worked hard and received fertile land had enough left to eat. The majority of the people lacked food to eat. Those who lacked rice to eat had to work as hired laborers or do some other work, such as raising pigs and chickens, so they could buy more rice.

70. Were the contributions carried out fairly?

The amount of contribution was fixed by the cadres. Take two families, for example. They had the same amount of land, the same number of people in their families, but the amount of their contributions might be different. This was because one family might have one buffalo more than the other, or one of the family members engaged in commerce. The cadres called that family the "family with capacity" and it had to contribute more.

71. While the Front was in control of your village, did the amount of contributions from the people increase or decrease?

According to the people, they had to make more and more contributions because the cadres had told them that they had to send more supplies to the battlefield for the fighters to fight against the Americans.

72. Were there any products in your village that could be sold outside your village?

Usually, the people sold peanuts, green beans and kidney beans outside of the village.

73. While the Front was in control of the village, were the people permitted to sell these products outside of their village?

Before the VC took over the village, the people used to carry these products to Binh Dinh market for sale. But since the VC took over the village, they wouldn't let the people sell them outside of the village any longer. They didn't permit them to sell even one chicken. Chicken eggs weren't permitted to be sold outside of the village either.

74. What did they do with those products?

The people planted less beans, but there was still a surplus and the cadres bought it. They even bought chickens and pigs and any surplus paddy from the people.

75. What prices did the cadres pay for those products?

They bought everything with the prices fixed by them. The prices were much lower than those in the GVN areas. For example, at that time at Qui Nhon, it was 15 piasters for one kilogram of paddy. In the village, the cadres paid only 7.

But after a great number of people had left the village, the price of rice in the village was higher than the price of rice here. This was because the Government had transported a great deal of foreign rice here, meanwhile back in the village, a number of fields were left untended. Almost all the people in the village have left the village, especially since March of last year, when the GVN conducted their operations.

76. Before the people left their village, did the VC set up any organizations in the village?

I don't know.

77. You said there were regroupees who came back and became village cadres. Were there many of them? Were all the village cadres regroupees?

I only heard the people say that the regroupees had returned as village cadres, but I don't know all the details. According to some, the regroupee cadres returned to the village, but didn't stay there. Only those in the village who had received training from the VC to become cadres remained in the village to operate there.

78. How did the cadres, either local or regroupee, treat the people?

I don't know about that.

79. How did the people treat the cadres?

According to the people, many complained about the cadres. They required the people to do many things: to go on transportation missions, to stand guard. They permitted no one to go to the market. And, now and then, they unjustly accused this one of this crime and that one of that crime in order to force these people to attend thought reform in the mountains.

80. Were there female cadres in the village?

There were only two or three female cadres, but they have all rallied and are at the Chieu Hoi Center

81. You said the people complained about the cadres. Did the people complain about them when they first came to the village or afterwards?

When the cadres first came to the village, though there were some people who didn't like them, no one complained about them. But, as time passed, the cadres began to mistreat the people more and more, and so the people complained about them more and more.

82. Were there any changes in the behavior and attitudes of the cadres?

When the cadres first arrived in the village, they were very strict with the people. Afterwards, perhaps because they heard that the allied forces had come in great strength, they seemed to be frightened and treated the people better than before. For example, before, whenever they heard that an operation was being conducted near my hamlet, they forced the people to run into hiding in the mountains. But last March, when they heard the allied forces were conducting an operation near the hamlet, they didn't force the people to go to the mountains to hide at all. That was why the people took advantage of that operation to move to the GVN-controlled areas. According to the people, not only did they not force people to go to the mountains to hide, but also, some of them took advantage of the operation to rally to the GVN.

83. Did many cadres rally?

Many did, such as hamlet chiefs, assistant hamlet chiefs, and the cadres on my hamlet Autonomous Committee. Almost all guerrillas in my hamlet have rallied to the GVN. When the people moved out of the village, they moved out with the people to rally.

84. Were there any cadres who came from other places or regroupees among the cadres who rallied?

All the cadres who rallied were local people.

85. You said the people in the village had to do labor. Would you tell me how the people did the labor and what they did?

All the healthy people in the village had to do labor, women as well as men. Usually, at night, they transported rice, which had been contributed by the people, to the mountains. There were times when they had to carry things for the cadres from one village to another. These transportation missions lasted from five to seven days. But there were times when they were required to transport these supplies to the jungle or mountains, and these trips lasted from one to two months. I only heard the people mention it in a general way. I don't know all the details.

86. While the Front was in control of your village, did Front troops ever come to your village?

According to the people, every four or five months a VC company came to the village. Each time the troops arrived, the people had to contribute money to buy pigs and and cows to feed them. Each time, they stayed in the village for five or seven days, but they never stayed in one place for long. They stayed in this hamlet for one day, then moved to another hamlet where they stayed for one day, and then moved on to the third hamlet. They moved around the village and never stayed more than one day in any hamlet.

87. Were there any Northerners among the Front troops that came to your village?

Yes.

88. How did the people treat the Front troops?

The people were afraid of the VC troops. And so when the cadres told them to contribute money to buy pigs and cows to feed the troops, they obeyed them instantly.

89. Why were the people afraid of the Front troops?

According to the people, they were all afraid that the cadres would report them to the Front troops and the latter would force them to follow them.

90. Were the schools in the village still in operation when the Front was in control of your village?

When the VC arrived, they burned down all the schools. Later, they organized some classes at the homes of the exiles. But there were classes reserved for the illiterate.

91. Did the cadres organize hospitals in the village?

There were no hospitals in the village, and there was no medicine. The people told me that some people went to GVN areas to buy medicine and were arrested by the GVN.

92. While the Front was in control of your village, did the people know of what had happened in other places, in the GVN areas?

The people weren't permitted to leave the village, how could they know what happened in other places?

93. Were there radio sets in the village?

The rich families had radio sets, but they took them away when they left. There were just a few left in the village, but the cadres forbade the people to listen to GVN stations.

94. Were there newspapers in the village?

No.

95. Did the cadres tell the news to the people?

They only told military news, but it was all lies. They said the VC won this battle and killed many American soldiers, the VC won that battle and killed many ARVN. They spread the news that Qui Nhon, Dap Da and An Khe had been liberated, but the people knew that these areas were still under the control of the GVN. They also claimed that this or that area had increased their production considerably, but since they continued to force the people to contribute to them, the people didn't believe them.

96. Did the cadres ever tell the people about the failures of the Front troops?

They never mentioned failures. Whenever they talked, they always claimed that their troops were winning. But no one believed them.

97. Why didn't the people believe them?

They lied about Qui Nhon, Dap Da and An Khe. Who dared believe them when they talked about other things?

98. Did the cadres say anything about the GVN?

They used to say that the GVN sold the country to the Americans. When I heard others report that, I replied immediately that the cadres had told them lies. The Americans were helping the GVN to fight against the VC. They were helping the people also, and that was all, and so how could they be accused of taking over the country?

99. In your opinion, is the GVN strong?

The GVN is strong. Wherever the GVN troops conduct their operations, the VC run into hiding. The Government is reestablishing its control in more and more VC areas. The Government is taking over the countryside to bring back security to the people.

100. In your opinion, does the GVN have compassion towards the people?

The Government has great compassion for the people. Take the refugees for example. The Government welcomed them, helped them in everything, gave them rice and clothes and built houses for them.

101. In your opinion, is the Government just?

I don't know.

102. Were the GVN officials dedicated to the service of the people?

I found that the officials in every place were dedicated, not lazy nor did they refuse to come to the aid of the people.

103. Before you took refuge, did you hear about the Chieu Hoi program?

At that time, I heard nothing about the Chieu Hoi program. It wasn't until 1965 that I heard about the Chieu Hoi program.

104. Who told you about it?

I heard it from the district officials.

105. In your opinion, what does Chieu Hoi means?

Chieu Hoi is a way out for those who have gone astray in following the VC. If these people realize that they have gone astray, that they are guilty, and if they repent and return to the GVN, the Government will be lenient with them and forgive them.

106. In your opinion, has the Chieu Hoi program been effective?

I find that the Chieu Hoi program has been very effective because many VC have rallied to the GVN. According to the radio and newspaper, last year alone, some dozens of thousands of VC rallied. Take my village, for example, I find that many cadres and guerrillas in my village have rallied.

107. While the Front was in control of your village, did the GVN troops often conduct their operations in your village?

The GVN troops conducted their operations in my village frequently. Every one or two months, there was an operation. But each time there was an operation, the VC went into hiding. They didn't come back until the GVN troops had left.

108. Was there any fighting?

It happened once at [redacted] Hamlet. The guerrillas fired, the GVN troops retaliated by shooting back, and the guerrillas ran into hiding.

109. Was there any damage to the people?

The GVN troops retaliated with artillery, and so a great number of the people's homes at An Cuu were burned down.

110. Was your village bombed?

[redacted] Hamlets were bombed in 1965 and 1966. Many houses were destroyed. One trench in [redacted] collapsed, killing seven or eight persons.

111. Did the Government warn the people, in advance, about the bombing and artillery attacks?

The Government dropped leaflets, urging the people to move out of their village and come to the GVN areas to live to avoid bombs and bullets. But the cadres wouldn't let the people go. They said that when the bombing and shelling attacks occurred, the people could go to their trenches for protection and didn't have to move anywhere.

112. What did those who suffered from the damage say?

The complained very much. They said it was because the VC had come and caused trouble, and that was why their homes were destroyed, their family members wounded and killed.

113. Did they blame the GVN?

When they talked with me, they only blamed the VC. They said it was because the VC had come to their village that they had to endure bombing and artillery attacks. They didn't say anything about the GVN at all.

114. Did those who had suffered damage caused by the bombing or artillery attacks ask for compensation from the Government?

Those whose homes had been destroyed or burned down because of the bombing or artillery attacks applied for compensation after they moved to the G.N areas in March of last year. Some have received money from the Government.

115. Did you see or hear about the spraying carried out by airplanes to kill trees?

I have never heard of that.

116. Did you meet any Americans before you took refuge?

No Americans came to my village when I was there. I only met them after I had left my village.

117. In your opinion, what are the Americans like?

I find that the Americans are rich. They came here to help the GVN fight against the Communists. I think that if the Americans hadn't come to Vietnam, the Communists would have taken over the South already.

118. In your opinion, are the Americans like the French before?

The Americans aren't like the French before. The French came to rule Vietnam. The Americans, now, come here to help Vietnam. They have sacrificed their lives helping the GVN fight against the Communists. The Americans also help us economically, supplying us with rice and other things.

119. Did you ever see the Americans distributing gifts to the people?

I have seen that many times. I, myself, have received gifts from the Americans, such as rice, corn, bread and even money.

120. Usually, what did the Front cadres tell you about the intentions of the Americans in Vietnam?

The cadres used to tell the people that the Americans came here to take over Vietnam.

121. Did the people believe this propaganda?

I suppose there must have been some in the village who believed it. But when they moved out of their village to take refuge here, they realized that what the cadres had told them wasn't true. Some came here empty handed, having no fields, no land, and yet they continued to live comfortably because they have found jobs with the American companies. Many told me that it was, here, that they found that the Americans only spent their money to help us and took nothing back in return. And this showed very definitely that the VC propaganda was all lies.

123. Besides the Americans, did you hear of any other countries that were helping Vietnam also?

I heard a great many countries have sent their men here to help Vietnam, such as Australia, New Zealand, Korea and Republic of China.

124. In your opinion, why do these countries help Vietnam?

I think that it is because these countries are also members of the Free World, like Vietnam, and are against Communist dictators, like Vietnam. And so, they are Vietnam's allies and are helping to fight against the Communists.

125. In your opinion, which side is stronger, GVN and the allies or the Front?

The GVN and the allies have more troops and weapons. The VC have nothing, few troops, simple weapons. Furthermore, the people in the VC-controlled areas have all moved to the GVN areas. Without the people to lean on, what could the VC do.

126. Did you hear about the bombing in the North?

I heard the North was being bombed, its communication routes, its secret zones and missile bases were all destroyed.

127. Who told you about it?

I heard it on the radio.

128. In your opinion, did these bombing attacks have any effect on the people in the North?

The people in the North must have suffered extensive damage.

129. In your opinion, why was the North being bombed?

The North sent troops to the South to cause trouble. And so, the allies had to bomb the North to stop that infiltration. The bombings created havoc, which might force the North to accept peace negotiations.

130. What effect did the bombing in the North have on the Front in the South?

The Front in the South is supported by the supplies sent from the North. If the supplies were to stop coming, the Front in the South would be isolated.

131. In your opinion, should the bombing of the North be continued?

I think that the bombing of the North should continue until the day the havoc created by the bombing can force the North to stop fighting and accept peace negotiations. If the bombing of the North is discontinued, the North would continue to send troops and weapons to the South, and the war would last forever.

132. Did you know about the American peace proposals?

I listened to the radio and so I knew about it. I also knew that the North had turned these proposals down.

133. In your opinion, was the North justified in turning down these proposals?

No. If the war continues, the country will be desolate, homes destroyed and burned down, fields and gardens abandoned, people will live in misery and starvation, brother killing brother. It is extremely unreasonable to turn down peace.

134. In your opinion, why did the North turn down peace proposals?

Red China is the North's mentor. Red China won't let the North negotiate for peace because it is nursing its dream of conquest.

135. You said you belonged to the rich-landowner class. The VC hated this class. You were afraid they would arrest you and so you left your village to take refuge here. Besides that, were there any other reasons that made you decide to leave your village?

There was another reason: I had worked for the GVN before. The VC hated those who worked for the GVN and used to find ways to assassinate them. I was afraid they would assassinate me and so I left my village.

136. Did you take refuge before?

No.

137. Before you took refuge, did you know about living conditions in the GVN areas?

Before, I used to go back and forth to the GVN areas and so I knew that the people in these areas engaged in commerce and worked freely to earn their living

138. Did you make any preparations before you took refuge?

I sold some paddy so I could have some money with me when I left. I also brought with me some light household objects. I didn't make better preparations because I thought that the most the VC would stay to harass my village would be from five to seven months or one year, and then the GVN would reestablish security there. I didn't know that I would have to stay away for so long.

139. Before you left your village, did anyone there take refuge?

No one had taken refuge before I did. When I left, only about 20 families moved out at the same time. Most people left after I did.

140. When did most people leave?

It wasn't until March of last year (1966), when the GVN conducted its operation and the people were so frightened by the intensity of the bombing and firing that they moved out in great numbers. Before that time, few people dared leave because they were all afraid that they couldn't earn their living away from their land, or wouldn't have shelters to live in once they abandoned their homes. They didn't know then that the GVN would come to their aid. It wasn't until they had left their village that they found out that the GVN would come to their aid wholeheartedly and wouldn't let any of them go hungry.

140. Did any of those who had taken refuge return to their village?

No one has returned to their village.

141. Would you go back to your village if you are given the opportunity?

There must be security before I return. Otherwise, the VC would kill me immediately if the ARVN weren't there.

142. What type of help have you received since you took refuge here?

I have received rice, corn, manioc, a blanket, mosquito nets and a money allowance for some months. Afterwards, I received a ticket which enabled me to buy rice at the official price.

143. Did those who took refuge after you receive any help?

They all received help and have found jobs to earn their living.

144. Have all the refugees who are living in this camp found work to do?

The majority of them have found work to do. There are a few who had work, but were laid off and are unemployed now because their companies wanted to reduce the number of employees.

145. Are there training classes for the refugees in the camp?

No.

146. Does anyone want to learn a trade?

Many people want to learn some trade so they can have steady employment, but there is no one to guide them.

147. How many families are living in the camp?

There are 155 families, but only 75 houses.

148. Are the members of the camp administrative committee appointed by the Government?

No. The members of the camp administrative committee are all refugees and elected by the people in the camp.

149. How do they conduct their business?

They are all refugees, and have suffered, so they are very dedicated in helping the other refugees who came later.

150. After the people in your village had moved out, did you receive any news about your village?

I heard that a lot of the fields were left unharmed, and were overgrown with weeds. And grass covered the roads in the village.

151. Who told you about that?

I know some militiamen. They passed my village on their operations and told me about it when they came back.

152. Did foreigners often come to the camp?

The Americans, Koreans and Filipinos often came to the camp. They came to visit the camp and ask about the affairs of the people in the camp, that was all.

153. Is there a school in the camp for the children?

No. I just heard that a school with three classes would be built for the children. I don't know if that is true or not. At the present time, there are many uneducated and untrained children in the camp. I want to give them some professional training so they can earn their living, but I don't know how to go about it.

154. What are you doing to earn your living now?

My wife and I engage in peddling to earn our living. Once every ten days, I take merchandise to An Khe to sell.

155. Who do you blame for the miseries you have to endure now?

I think the VC are the cause of it all. If the VC hadn't made trouble, I wouldn't have left my village to take refuge. In the village, I had a home, garden, land and a rather big store. I lived comfortably. Now, we are refugees, with many children. My wife is often sick and we have spent all our money. It is extremely arduous and miserable.

156. Do you have any intention of leaving this camp in the days ahead?

I intend to stay in this camp until the Government orders the people to return to their villages. I have no other place to live.

157. This is a picture of a ladder with ten rungs. Suppose rung one at the top represents the best possible life that you can imagine, and the bottom rung, rung ten, represents the worst possible life that you can imagine. In your opinion, where were you when you were still in your village and where are you now?

When I was in my village, I lived comfortably, having more than enough to eat and to wear. I was on rung three. At the present time, we are refugees living in the camp. Though I make profits with my peddling, I have to work very hard to be able to provide two meals a day. My wife gets sick often and my six children are too young to work. My life is now on rung nine. Though most of the refugees are living far more miserably than before, there are a few whose lives have become better. They are those who belonged to the poor class when they were in the village. Now, they are refugees, but thanks to their sturdy health, and to the many members in their families who can work, they are living better now.

158. In your opinion, what kind of life in the village could be considered to be the best possible life that can be imagined?

In the village, to have many fields, a great deal of paddy, a prosperous business, large houses, and guaranteed security. This is the best life possible.

159. What life would be considered to be the worst possible life that can be imagined?

The worst possible life is when one has to work in rags and dirt, day and night, as a hired hand all year round, a hand-to-mouth existence, and if one gets sick and stays home for one day, one has to go hungry.

160. Do you have sons?

I have five sons.

161. What kind of future do you wish your sons to have?

I wish my sons could go to school until they have a high level of education, so that they can work for the Government and receive a salary which would enable them to live in comfort. If any of them couldn't continue with their formal education, then they should have some vocational training so they could support their wives and children properly. Having fields all over can't be compared to having a trade.

162. If the Government agreed to give you three things, what would you ask for?

First, I would ask the Government to find me a job, which would be in line with my capacity and enable me to support my family. Second, I would ask the Government to help my children so they could continue their studies. Third, I have a 15-year old son who has epilepsy. I wish the Government would help me to cure him.

163. In your opinion, could the present Government grant you these three things you ask?

Of course. I am sure the present Government could grant me these things.

164. Why do you believe that the present Government could grant you these requests?

The Government is helping and taking care of the refugees. And, so, I am sure that the Government will grant me these things.

165. In your opinion, how much longer will the war last?

I think that the war will last much longer and there is no way to know when it will be over. I think so because the North has repeatedly refused to consider peace negotiations and continues to send troops to the South. This means that the North doesn't want the war to end and wants it to continue.

166. In your opinion, which side will win in the end, the GVN or the Front?

I believe that the GVN and allies will win in the end because, if the war lasts much longer, the people living in misery because of the mistreatment they receive from the Front, the taxes they have to pay, the labor work they are forced to do, .. will all move out to the GVN areas. Without the people, the Front will lose, no matter how much aid it receives from the North.

167. In your opinion, which side has the people's support, the Front or GVN?

I think that the people are supporting the GVN, not the Front. The GVN helps them, while the Front takes away their possessions. The people support the side which can assure them a better life.

168. In your opinion, what should the Government do to receive more support from the people?

I think that the Government should try to enlarge the secure areas so that the people can return to their village and hamlets to work on their fields and land. If that could be realized, all the people would support the Government.

169. In your opinion, if the Front wins, what would happen to the people's lives?

The people have had enough experience living under the Communist regime. They lived under this regime from 1945 until 1954. They had to farm to make contributions. There were no industries. No one was permitted to engage in commerce or enjoy any kind of freedom, no one had decent clothes, and everyone went barefoot. Not one bicycle was to be seen and all lived in misery. If the Front wins, I am afraid that the people would have to live in worse conditions.

170. If the GVN wins, what would happen to the people's lives?

The GVN only helps the people and never takes anything away from them. If the GVN wins, security will be restored to the villages and hamlets and the people would be helped to earn their living in freedom. I believe that when that time comes, everyone will have tiled roof houses, motor vehicles, and all will live in happiness.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

The subject wasn't very intelligent. He seemed relaxed during the entire interview, though he was slow in giving answers and, many times, was unable to understand the questions. The subject was very sincere and cooperative during the interview.

No. AGR-106

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

MASTER COPY

1. Name of Interviewer: [redacted]
2. Name of Subject : [redacted]
3. Time and Date of Interview:

   From 3:15 PM to 5:20 PM on June [redacted] 1966

   From _____ to _____ on _____ 1966

   From _____ to _____ on _____ 1966

   From _____ to _____ on _____ 1966

   Total time: 2 hours 5'

   Interview based on: tape (X) hand written notes ( )
4. Place of Interview:

   Qui Nhon
5. Sex of subject: Male (X) Female ( )
6. Age of subject: 44
7. Ethnic background: Vietnam
8. Place of birth:

   hamlet [redacted]

   village [redacted]

   district An Nhon

   province Binh Dinh
9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee:

   hamlet [redacted]

   village [redacted]

   district An Nhon

   province Binh Dinh
10. (a) Length of residence in last location: 15 years

    (b) Who controlled the place of residence:

    GVN ( ) VC (X) Contested ( )

    (c) Since when controlled or contested? 1964

11. Number of brothers (3) and sisters ( )

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age: 3

13. Marital status: Married

14. Number of children: 6

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age: 2

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion: Ancestor worship

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge: Trade and farmer

19. Economic status:
(a) VC designation Landlord
(b) Landowner? X How much land 5 mau

20. Education:
Illiterate ( )
Literate (X)
Schooling completed: Six years of schooling

21. Any relatives in VC: No

22. Any relatives in GVN: 6 nephews joined the ARVN

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by:
(a) French 2 cousins was killed
(b) GVN No
(c) VC 1 was killed

24. When became a refugee: 1964

25. Where took refuge first:

26. Parent residence: Thap Doi District, Qui Nhon Village
Binh Dinh Province

AGR

INTERVIEW

107

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY (A)

THE RAND CORPORATION

INTERVIEWES CONCERNING THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT OF SOUTH VIETNAM

107

FILE NO. AGR-[redacted]

Date of Interview : June [redacted], 1967

Subject's Category : Refugee

Area left : [redacted] Hamlet, [redacted] Village, An Nhon District, Binh Dinh Province.

This interview is for the information of US and Vietnamese official agencies and personnel on a need-to-know basis. Permission to distribute or show this interview to non-official persons requires the prior approval of The RAND Corporation and the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs.

1. How long had you and your family been living in your village before you took refuge?

   I had been living in my village since I was young. All my family had been living in the village for a long time.

2. How large was your village?

   My village was very large, it had 11 hamlets. Over 4,000 people lived there.

3. What did you do for a living when you were still in the village?

   I farmed for a living. I also traded a little.

4. How much land did you own?

   I had 3 sao and a half of ricefield. I addition, I rented 1 mau and a half of public land to farm.

5. How much did you have to pay in rent for the public land?

   I had to pay 40% of the yield of the land in rent. This was the result of a bidding that I won.

6. What did most of the people in the village do for a living?

   Almost all of them lived on farming.

7. Did many of them have to rent land to farm?

   Yes, many of them had to rent land to farm. The rent was agreed upon by the tenant and the landowner. The rent depended on the price of paddy. If the price of paddy was high, then the rent was high, if the price of paddy was low, then the rent was low. Usually, the rent was either 500 or 700 piasters per sao.

8. Didn't the people in your village observe the practice of dividing paddy between the tenant and the landowner?

Yes. This was what the share-croppers did. There were a few share-croppers in the village. Usually, the share-croppers had to give half of the harvest to the landowners -- they were allowed to keep only half of their harvest.

9. Did you have enough to eat?

Yes, I had enough to eat by farming.

10. Did the villagers have enough to eat?

Most of the people had enough to eat.

11. How many people were there in your family?

My wife and I lived with our son, his wife, our daughter and her husband, and all our grandchildren. There were over ten people in the family. Before we left the village to take refuge, our daughter moved and lived separately with her husband and children. It was only after we went to take refuge that they came to live with us.

12. What is your religion?

I am a Buddhist.

13. Were there many Buddhists in your village? Did any villagers belong to other faiths?

There were Buddhists, Catholics and Cao Dai, as well as people who didn't belong to any faith and who only worshipped their ancestors. For example, only two out of every ten people were Buddhists, One out of every ten was Catholic. One out of every ten was Cao Dai, and the rest didn't belong to any faith.

14. Have there ever been any religious conflicts in the village?

There was some conflict between Catholics and Buddhists under the Diem regime, but since the Catholics were in the minority, nothing regrettable happened.

15. Were there any Montagnards in your village?

No.

16. Did you go to school when you were young?

Yes, I went to school when I was young, but I only studied Chinese characters.

17. Did anyone in your village have a high educational level?

One person in my village passed his trung hoc exams (TN: exams taken at the end of the 5th year of High School.)

18. Was there a school for the children of the people in the village?

There were four schools in my village. There were 11 hamlets in the village, so there was one school for every two or three hamlets.

19. Did you have any close friends when you were still in the village?

I had a very close friend. He died last year.

20. When you were still living in the village, could you tell your close friend everything?

We went to see each other and ate together very often. We could tell each other everything.

21. After the VC took over the village, were you still able to tell your close friend everything?

After the VC took over the village, we were still able to tell each other everything. While talking with each other, we could even criticize the VC, but we only did this when we were alone together, and we didn't dare let anyone overhear us.

22. Was there anyone in the village that the people respected and trusted most?

There was one man in [redacted] hamlet whom the people most respected. He was younger than I. But he died a long time ago.

23. What did that man do?

He was only a Hamlet Chief. He treated everyone nicely. He was serious, and this was why everyone in the village liked and respected him.

24. Did he stay in the village after the VC took over?

He died five or six days before the VC took over the village. He died of illness.

25. Before 1954, when the Viet Minh were still around, how was the life of the villagers?

When the Viet Minh first came to my village, no one knew that they were Communists -- everyone thought they were nationalists. Everyone joined their ranks and worked zealously for them. The people only discovered that they were Communists in 1948 and 1949. At first, I myself participated in their movement. But when I found out that they were Communists, I refused to join the Party even though they were trying to drag me in. They forced me to join the Lien Viet Front, and from then on, they did all sorts of things to me. At first, the people contributed money to them with enthusiasm, but gradually they stopped calling on the people to make voluntary contributions. Instead, they forced the people to pay all sorts of taxes -- property taxes, agricultural taxes, and labor taxes. The people had to pay heavier and heavier taxes as time went by, so their financial resources were exhausted and all had to endure privations and miseries.

26. After 1964, how was the life of the people when the GVN came to take over the village?

After the GVN took over the village, the life of the people became happier. The people didn't have to pay much in taxes and so everyone had more than enough to eat -- or at least enough to eat. The people could work in peace, no one suspected anyone and no one hated anyone. But this lasted only for a few years. Then the government gave preferential treatment to the Catholics and the people became miserable again. For example, the Catholics didn't

have to move to Land Development Centers and they were allowed to hold good positions. From then on, conflict erupted in the village. People began to hate each other, some joined one faction and others joined another faction. They hated each other and fought with each other.

27. How did GVN officials treat the people at the time?

At first, all the GVN officials were nice and treated the people well. But gradually, they were transferred and replaced by others who only thought of extorting money and who didn't care for the people at all. For example, in the bidding for the rent of public land, it was decided that the village would collect 40% of the yield of the land from the tenants. But when they made out papers, the GVN officials reduced the figure so as to get the rest of the money. I myself knew of this practice. Many of the villagers knew this, but no one could say anything, because the officials formed a clique and they protected each other.

28. Were the GVN village officials natives of the village?

Yes, they were all local people.

29. Were they elected by the people?

No, they were all appointed by the government. The people only elected the National Assembly and the President. But the people weren't free to vote as they pleased. Government cadres came to the village to guide the people and tell them to vote for the candidates who had been chosen in advance by the government. It was only much later that the people were allowed to elect the village officials.

30. Were the officials who were elected later on good people?

Some of them were competent, virtuous and worthy people. But not all of them were like that.

31. What did you think of the Ngo Dinh Diem government?

I noticed that the Diem Government sowed conflict among the people because it gave preferential treatment to the Catholics.

32. At that time, did the people say anything about the overthrow of Mr. Diem?

Most of the people in my village were happy when Mr. Diem had let people in his family, such as Madam Nhu, do many things that were harmful to the people. They said that Mr. Diem practiced nepotism and that this had made the people suffer. This was why they said that overthrowing Mr. Diem was the right thing to do.

33. Were GVN soldiers stationed in the village at the time?

There were only SDC stationed in the village then. As for the ARVN, they only passed through the village once in a while.

34. How did the ARVN behave toward the people whenever they passed through the village?

They were very nice to the people.

35. How did the SDC behave toward the people?

The SDC were the same -- they were nice to the people, they never bothered the people or damaged their property.

36. Were there Strategic Hamlets in your village at the time?

Yes, there was a Strategic Hamlet in each hamlet. They were built when Mr. Diem was still in power. I don't remember in what year they were built.

37. When the Strategic Hamlets were built, did the people have to make any contributions to their construction?

Yes, all the villagers had to contribute money and labor to the construction of the Strategic Hamlets. The Government only gave us barbed wire. The people had to use their own money to buy poles, bamboo or wood, in accordance with the measurements of the government. Then the people had to fence in the hamlets themselves. In all, each villager had to contribute a few hundred piasters and three days of work.

38. Did the people complain?

A few people complained because it cost them money and labor. But they were in the minority. The majority of the people said that they had to try their best to build the hamlets to prevent the VC from sneaking in.

39. From what you noticed, did the people like living in the Strategic Hamlets?

I noticed that the people liked living in the Strategic Hamlets because they could work in peace and they were no longer afraid that the VC might sneak in.

40. Did you, yourself, like living in the Strategic Hamlet?

Yes, I did.

41. What did you like best in the Strategic Hamlet?

The thing I liked best in the Strategic Hamlet was the fact that houses were built in neat rows and we had sanitation there.

42. What did you like least about the Strategic Hamlet?

I didn't like living in close quarters and in a narrow house, but I thought that since we were at war, the Government had to maintain control, and so we had to live in close quarters so as to facilitate control. When the war ended, we wouldn't have to live in such close quarters.

43. What happened to the Strategic Hamlets in your village?

When the VC took over the village, they destroyed all the Strategic Hamlets.

44. How was your life before the VC took over the village?

Before the VC took over the village, I could earn my living easily, the same as all the other villagers.

45. At that time, did you think that you would have the opportunity to improve your life?

At that time, I thought that if I could continue to work in peace, I would be much better off in the future.

46. At that time, was there anything that made you dissatisfied?

No.

47. When did you first hear of the National Liberation Front?

At the beginning of 1964, the VC came to make propaganda in the villages close to mine. I heard the people there say the VC had said that they were members of the National Liberation Front, and that they were fighting for the people.

48. Did the people believe the VC when they said that?

I think that a number of youths who had never known anything about the Communists must have believed them readily. As for the older people who had lived under the Viet Minh, I'm sure that none of them believed the VC.

49. Did anyone in your village join the Front then?

A man in my hamlet, by the name of [redacted] joined the Front. He went to the jungle to fell trees and met the VC there. He followed the VC and left the village. Later on, he returned to the village and became a hamlet cadre. But he has left the hamlet to go, no one knows where, and no one has heard of him again. I don't know whether people in the other hamlets joined the Front or not.

50. Did many people in your village work for the Viet Minh during the Resistance?

Yes, many of them did. A number of them also joined the Party.

51. What happened to these people when the GVN came to take over the village in 1954?

All the Party members had regrouped to the North. Those who had worked for the Viet Minh, but who weren't Party members, stayed behind. When the GVN took over the village, nothing happened to them because the people knew that they had never done anything to harm them. Some of them even worked for the GVN.

52. How did the VC take over your village?

My hamlet is near [redacted] Hamlet. The VC came to [redacted] in December 1964. They had spies in the hamlet, and they attacked it from without. There was no one standing guard in [redacted] that night, so the VC could penetrate the hamlet very easily. After they took over [redacted] they went to my hamlet. There were only six rifles in my hamlet. When the defenders fired all their ammunition --- it was around 5:00 a.m. then -- the VC poured into the hamlet and occupied it. After they entered the hamlet, they arrested me and took me away immediately. They arrested me because my son was working for the GVN, and because I was a member of the Village Advisory Council.

53. Where did they take you?

They took me away for indoctrination. They let me stay in a house in a hamlet near the foot of the mountain. If the situation was calm, I studied about their policy. If GVN troops conducted an operation near by, they forced me to hide in the mountain.

54. How long did they keep you there?

I was detained there for nine days.

55. Were you released at the end of those nine days?

No, they didn't let me go. On the ninth day, GVN troops suddenly conducted an operation in the area. The VC didn't have time to take me and the other people away with them. They all fled and the GVN troops liberated us. There were 97 people who were jailed there, and they were all liberated. A number of people who were jailed high up in the mountain couldn't be liberated. The troops took me to Binh Dinh.

My Village Chairman was there at the time. I went to see him and asked him for a certificate, and then came straight here to take refuge.

56. Has the GVN reoccupied your village?

No, not yet. I heard the people from my village say that whenever GVN troops came on operations, all the VC fled the village. After the troops were gone, they came back. The VC don't control the entire village, they haven't been able to take over the hamlet where the office of the Village Council is located.

57. Do you know what the VC did after they took over the village?

They arrested me and took me away immediately right after they penetrated the hamlet. Then after the GVN troops liberated me, I went straight to Binh Dinh, and this is why I don't know what they did after they came to the village.

58. Did you hear how the VC cadres treated the people in the village?

No, I haven't heard anything about this.

59. In your opinion, what are the goals of the Front?

I don't know very well what their goals are. The VC said in their propaganda that the Front was going to liberate the South. But I think that they only said that to deceive the people. I think that they fight against the GVN because they don't recognize it as the government of the South and because they want to take over the South for themselves.

60. Do you think the Front is for peace?

The cadres said that the people would have to carry out a long-term struggle. This means that they want to fight forever, and that they aren't for peace at all.

61. Do you think that the Front is patriotic?

The cadres said that they loved the people and the country. But, in reality, they only loved their own Communist regime.

62. Do you think that they love the people?

They said they loved the people, but, in reality, they don't love. They maltreat everyone and make everyone suffer. Even those who who work for them are denounced and executed when they commit errors.

63. How many people in the village were arrested at the same time as you by the VC?

At that time, about 30 people in the village were arrested and taken away. But of the 37 people who were released by the GVN troops, only four or five women and I were from the village.

64. What crimes were these women accused of?

These women were innocent. They were arrested by the cadres because their husbands worked for the GVN.

65. Were any villagers killed at the time?

I think that some of those who were arrested by the VC must have been killed. But the cadres must have taken them somewhere else to kill them to prevent the villagers from seeing it.

66. Before the VC took over your village, did any youths join the Front?

No. When I was still at home, none of the youths enlisted in their forces. After they took over the village, they forced the youths to join their forces. This is what I heard from the villagers who came here to take refuge after I did. Many youths had been forced to join the VC forces.

67. Does this mean that all the youths in the village have been forced by the VC to join their forces?

Many youths were forced by the VC to join their forces, but the VC couldn't force all the youths in the village to join, because a number of them have fled here.

68. Were the women forced to join the Front troops?

No, the women only worked as cadres for the VC.

69. Did anyone join the GVN army before?

Before the VC took over the village, many people joined the GVN army. They now number about 40.

70. How did the cadres treat the families with relatives in the GVN army or working for the GVN?

The cadres forced these families to write letters to their relatives in the GVN asking them to go home. Most of them were taken to the mountains for indoctrination.

71. Did their letters have any results?

[illegible]y wrote the letters, but they couldn't mail them.

72. Did the cadres distribute land in your village?

The cadres seized the public land and the land of the families that had moved from the village. They distributed this land to the poor in the village. The VC called those who moved from the village "the exiles".

73. Did these people leave the village before or after the VC took over?

These exiles left the village before the VC took over. Some of them left the village four or five months before the VC take-over.

74. How many exiled families were there?

There were many of them. Up to five families in my hamlet left the village before the VC take-over.

75. Were the people who were given land by the cadres happy?

Only the youths from 20 to 25 years old seemed enthusiastic, but they could only farm the land that was given them for a year, at most, because the cadres forced them to join the Front troops or to do one thing or another for the Front.

The cadres made life so miserable for them that gradually they all fled the village. Every time a GVN operation was conducted in the village, a number of youths left the village with the troops.

76. Did the cadres force the people to pay taxes?

I left the village without my wife and children, who were stuck there. They could only flee from the village about four months later. My wife and children said the VC didn't force the people to pay taxes -- they only forced the people to buy Resistance bonds and to contribute paddy to feed the troops. The people had to buy Resistance bonds with cash. My wife had to sell our belongings and paddy and to eat less rice in order to have enough money to buy the Resistance bonds. She also had to contribute paddy to feed the troops. I don't know how much paddy each family had to contribute. I only know that every family had to contribute paddy. No one dared refuse, because everyone was afraid of being taken to the mountains for indoctrination. The VC also thought of another way to get money out of the people's pockets. They forced all those who had borrowed from the GVN Agricultural Credit fund to repay the loans to them -- as though they were working for the GVN themselves. During the time that my wife and children were still in the village, they had to contribute over 2,000 piasters to the VC.

77. Were the people willing to make these contributions?

No one wanted to make these contributions. The cadres forced the people to attend meetings to determine the purchase of bonds. If the people refused to buy them at the first meeting, then another meeting was held the next night and so on, until the people agreed to buy the bonds. But as I've told you, no one dared to refuse absolutely to buy the bonds because everyone was afraid of being taken to the mountain.

78. What products could the villagers sell outside the village?

Usually, the people could sell pigs, chickens, bananas and beans outside the village.

79. Did the cadres allow the people to sell their products freely?

The cadres didn't allow the people to take their products to the cadres at extremely low prices.

80. Did the cadres buy paddy from the people?

Usually, very few people had more paddy than they needed. But the cadres never bought paddy. They forced the people to contribute paddy to the front bit by bit, and they asked the people to give it to them to eat, so gradually, the extra paddy that the people had disappeared.

81. Did the cadres allow the people to go out of the village?

No one was free to go out of the village. If anyone wanted to go out of the village, he had to ask the cadre's permission. Usually, permission was granted only when a villager had to go to the GVN areas on urgent business -- such as buying basic commodities or medicine for the sick.

82. Did the Front set up any organizations in the village while the village was under its control?

The Front set up organizations to control the village -- such as the Village Committee, the Hamlet Self-Administration Committee - the Village Guerrilla Unit and so on.

83. Were the village cadres local people or people from other areas?

Most of the cadres were local people. For example, eight out of ten cadres were local people, and the other two were regroupees who had just returned from the North. The two regroupees were appointed to keep an eye on the local cadres.

84. How did the cadres treat the people?

The high ranking cadres -- such as the regroupees -- seemed nice to the people, they were very tactful while talking to the people. It was only the local cadres who got on everyone's nerves and who made life miserable for the people.

85. Did any of the villagers like the cadres?

When the VC first took over the village, they talked very nicely to the people and so a number of villagers liked them. But as time went by, the local cadres became harsher and harsher and denounced this and that villager. So, gradually, everyone got to dislike them, and everyone wanted to find ways to flee the village. Even the youths who joined their forces complained a lot when they went home about fighting without pay, about not having enough to eat and about not being able to stand hardships.

In a few words, at first, the people were nice to the cadres, but gradually, the people became more and more dissatisfied and they began to dislike the cadres.

86. Did the villagers have to perform civilian labor tasks?

Everyone in the village had to perform labor tasks. They had to dig up the road, destroy bridges, and carry rice to the mountains. The labor tasks made the people miserable, and they complained a lot, but they only talked softly to each other and didn't dare say anything to the cadres.

87. During the time the Front controlled the village, were there more or fewer labor tasks?

The people had to perform more and more labor tasks, and this was why they became more and more dissatisfied. The villagers who came here to take refuge after I did also said so.

88. Were there any North Vietnamese among the cadres who worked in the village?

No, there were no North Vietnamese among them. There were only regroupees, as I've told you.

89. Did the cadres say anything about the GVN?

I heard that the cadres only said bad things about the GVN. They told the people that they should try to bear the hardships and stay with the Front, because they might be miserable now, but when the South is liberated, they would be very happy. They told the people that if they left the Front areas to follow the GVN, they would be maltreated by the GVN and they would never be happy.

90. Did the people believe the cadres?

I didn't believe the cadres because I had lived under the Viet Minh during the Resistance. The villagers who came here to take refuge after I did told me that no one believed the cadres, and that only the families of the cadres believed them. I think that those who joined the Front out of personal dissatisfaction with a few GVN officials because the latter were dishonest, unvirtuous, or unjust, stayed in the Front because they were struck there and not because they were confident in the Front.

91. While the VC controlled the village, did the people get news from other areas?

The people weren't allowed to go anywhere, so how could they have news from other areas?

92. Were there radios in the village?

Yes, but only a few. The cadres forbade the people to listen to GVN stations. They spied on the people, and anyone who was found listening to GVN stations had his radio seized. So no one dared listen to GVN stations, and everyone listened to Radio Hanoi.

93. Did the people believe news from Radio Hanoi?

No.

94. How do you know they didn't believe it?

The refugees from my village told me so. They said they listened to Radio Hanoi because the cadres forced them to, but none of them believed the news from this station. How could they believe that the VC in the North had shot down hundreds of American planes?

95. Did the cadres ever announce news to the people?

Usually, the cadres announced military news. But they always said that they won all the battles. The people listened, but they didn't believe it.

96. Why didn't they believe it?

They didn't believe it because they all knew that the cadres didn't tell the truth. Take the attack in [redacted] for example. The cadres said that the VC troops had won, and that the VC had killed many American and GVN soldiers. But, later on, some people from [redacted] came to the village and said that a lot of VC got killed and the survivors fled the battlefield. They lost the battle, but the cadres said they had won, so how could the people believe what they said afterward?

97. Did the cadres ever talk of the Front's defeats?

No, they always talked about the Front's victories.

98. Did the schools in the village operate when the VC controlled it?

None of the children could go to school. The VC didn't destroy the schools, but they were deserted. The VC only destroyed the Village Council Office and the bridge. They organized classes for illiterate adults and children in each hamlet. - These adults and children were only taught how to read. These classes were conducted in the people's houses or in the orchards, and not in the schools.

99. Did the cadres set up a medical station in the village?

No, there was no medical station in the village, and there were no drugs available.

100. How were the sick people in the village taken care of?

Those who were slightly ill had to go without medical treatment. The cadres only allowed the relatives of the seriously sick people to take them to the GVN areas for treatment.

101. Do you think that the GVN is strong?

The GVN is very strong. It hasn't been able to wipe out the VC because the South Vietnamese people harbor them and feed them. This means there are a number of people who are dissatisfied with the GVN. Their dissatisfaction is caused by a number of local GVN cadres. Now, if the GVN gets rid of all its corrupt local cadres, then no one will be dissatisfied, no one will join the VC and no one will want to feed the VC. I've heard of many cases of corruption. Some of the VC who

were captured by Allied troops bribed GVN cadres and were sent to the Chieu Hoi center instead of to prison. After a short time at the Chieu Hoi center, they were released to go home. When they returned to the village, they went back to work for the Communists, forcing the people to make contributions and so on. If this goes on, how can we wipe out the VC? I've also heard of the case of six youths, members of the Front, who were arrested and who were allowed to go to the Chieu Hoi center instead of going to jail. After they were released, they went home and joined the Combat Youth. The GVN gave to each of them a rifle. But they defected and rejoined the VC. Then, some time later, they came out to rally, but they didn't bring their weapons with them. This means that the weapons that were given them by the GVN went to the VC. I think that the GVN is too nice and too merciful, and the VC take advantage of this. Chieu Hoi is advantageous for us, but it is only 80% good and 20% harmful. This is due to the fact that GVN cadres are bad and incompetent, and also because they are corrupt.

102. Do you think that the GVN loves the people?

Yes, the GVN loves the people a great deal. If the GVN didn't love and help the people, all the refugees would have died of starvation a long time ago.

103. Do you think that the GVN is just?

I think that the GVN is just. All the refugees are helped in the same manner. However, there have been cases of unfairness. Take the case of compensation to the people in my village for houses burned down in bombing, for example. A number of people have received compensation, while others haven't. Take my case, for example. I submitted my application three times, but so far, I haven't received any compensation money. Each time I went to the district town, I was told that funds had run out and that I would have to wait for the next time.

104. Do you think that the GVN officials were devoted or lazy?

Some were devoted to serving the people, but others didn't do their best to serve the people. They weren't lazy, however. They only worked for their own personal interests. When a villager came to apply for some papers, these officials issued the papers to them right away and welcomed them warmly if the villager was in the same clique with them, or if they

got something out of the deal. On the contrary, if they didn't get anything out of the deal, they took their time, were very difficult and indifferent.

105. When did you first hear about the Chieu Hoi program?

I heard about this program in 1964.

106. Who told you about it?

I heard about it from the radio.

107. In your opinion, what does Chieu Hoi mean?

The VC or those who work for them can rally to the GVN when they repent their errors. If they rally, they will be welcomed and forgiven.

108. Did the people in your village know about the Chieu Hoi program?

I heard the villagers say that the GVN had dropped many Chieu Hoi leaflets in my village, so I'm sure that the people there must know about it.

109. Do you think that the Chieu Hoi program is effective?

Many VC and many of those who work for them have rallied, and this shows that the program is effective. But there are shortcomings in this program, as I've told you earlier.

110. How many VC in your village have rallied?

VC from every hamlet in the village and those who work for them in the hamlets have rallied, but I don't know much about this. I only know that, with the exception of three people, all those who worked for the VC in my hamlet have rallied to the GVN. We haven't had any news about those three people -- they must have followed the VC into the mountains.

111. Was your village ever attacked by the GVN while it was under Front control?

The village was never attacked by GVN troops, but later on, many of the villagers went to the district to ask the District

Chief to send troops to the village to chase the VC away. The District Chief promised to do so, but he kept putting it off. It was only much later that the GVN conducted an operation in the village, but there was no fighting, because each time GVN troops came to the village the VC fled elsewhere.

112. Was your village ever shelled?

My village was shelled very often in 1965 and 1966.

113. Was there any damage?

The people suffered heavy damage. A number of people got killed and many houses were burned down.

114. Did the people complain?

I didn't hear anyone complain about the damage. I think that one can't avoid having material damage in a war.

115. Did those who suffered damage receive any compensation?

Only five or six people whose houses burned down received some money in compensation, but the majority didn't get anything. The government promised to compensate everyone.

116. Was your village bombed often?

It was bombed very often in 1965, and it was because of these bombings that houses burned down.

117. Did the GVN give the people advance warnings before the shellings or bombings took place?

The GVN warned the people in advance by dropping leaflets in the village asking them to move to the GVN areas. Only those who stayed behind because they were afraid the VC would cause them trouble or because they didn't dare leave their land had their houses burned down.

118. Do you think that the GVN was right in shelling and bombing the village?

I think that since we're at war, the GVN has to find ways ways to wipe out the VC. They stayed in hamlets and villages,

and there was nothing better the GVN could do except shell and bomb the villages. If the people got hurt, this was only accidental. Besides, the GVN asked the people to leave before bombing or shelling the village. The VC are to be blamed for everything. If it hadn't been for the VC, the GVN would never have shelled and bombed the village. Now that it's rebuilding the countryside, the Government should help those who have suffered in the bombing and shelling, and whose houses have been burned down, so that they can return to their village, rebuild their houses and work in peace. Most of the Vietnamese people live in the countryside and they have to depend on their land for a living.

119. Have you ever heard of chemical sprays to kill trees?

I've never seen any chemical sprayings, but I heard the people in my village say that, at the end of 1965, my village was sprayed very often. All the fruit trees in the orchards died.

120. Were the ricefields sprayed also?

Some of the ricefields were sprayed and some of the crops were destroyed. These ricefields have been left uncultivated since they were sprayed.

121. Did the people say anything about the destruction of their crops?

I only heard about the damage from the others and I don't know whether the people complained about it or not.

122. In your opinion, why did the GVN spray chemicals to destroy the people's crops?

I think the GVN did that to hurt the VC. They hide among the people, and if the GVN doesn't do that, it will be very difficult to fight and kill them.

123. Did you meet any Americans before you went to take refuge?

No, I didn't meet any Americans until I came here to take refuge.

124. How did the Americans treat the people?

The Americans were very nice and treated the refugees in a very kind manner. They welcomed the people warmly and very often distributed gifts -- especially food -- to the people. To tell you the truth -- please don't think I like to say nasty things about the Vietnamese -- I think that the Americans are much nicer to us than our own people.

125. Do you think that the Americans are similar to the French before?

No, they are different from the French. The French were cruel and cunning, they ruled the Vietnamese people through Vietnamese. They forced our people to pay all sorts of taxes, they imposed restrictions on our people, they didn't allow Vietnamese to work freely or to go to school freely -- they wanted to keep our people ignorant. Things are completely different now, everyone can work for his living as he pleases and everyone can go to school. The French wanted to keep our people stupid and naive so they could rule us more easily.

126. In your opinion, what did the Americans come here for?

I think that the Americans, seeing us being attacked by the Communists and isolated, and hating the Communists, have come here to help us fight against the Communists. I'm sure that the Americans will go home when the Communists are defeated, and that they won't look for ways to rule us as the French did before.

127. What do you think of the VC propaganda which says that Americans are here to take over the country?

There are American troops stationed in West Germany, in South Korea and in many other countries. But in spite of this, the Americans aren't ruling these countries. The Americans have brought their troops here because they are afraid that "the fire will spread to their own house". They are here to help us and not to rule us.

128. Besides the Americans, do you know of people from other countries who are here to help our country?

I've heard that many other countries, such as New Zealand, Australia, Korea and a number of other countries, have sent troops here. I've heard that seven or eight countries are our allies.

129. In your opinion, why do these countries help us?

The countries that help us are like friends or neighbors trying to help put down the fire that's burning down our house. South Korea has been helped by the United States and many other countries. These countries are all friends of the United States. They listened to the Americans and came here to help us.

130. Have you ever heard of bombing raids in the North?

Yes, I learned about the bombing from GVN radio stations. Other people who listened to the station of the "Patriotic Sword Movement" said that this station also mentioned the bombing in the North. This station also said that Ho Chi Minh had caused the death of many people, and asked Ho Chi Minh to put an end to the war.

131. Did the bombing cause heavy damage in the North?

According to the various radio stations, the damage was very heavy. Recently, Russia has decided to help the North absolutely.

132. In your opinion, did the bombing have any effect on the people in the North?

Since the damage was heavy, the people must have been affected. The people there must be all shaken up, with the exception, perhaps, of the Communists. Even though they are Vietnamese like US, Communists are completely different from us because they imitate foreigners. They're very cruel. Human lives are short, and yet they don't hesitate to make the people die and suffer.

133. In your opinion, does the bombing of the North affect the VC in the South?

Yes, certainly. The VC here in the South are demoralized by the bombing of the North and the heavy damage there. I'm afraid that, since they are bombed so heavily, the Communists in the North might bomb the South in retaliation.

134. What was the main reason why you decided to take refuge?

The main reason was that I couldn't live with the VC. I have lived under the Viet Minh before. Life under the Communists is extremely miserable. It would be better to die than to live under them.

135. Did anything make you hesitate about leaving the village?

No.

136. Have you ever moved elsewhere to take refuge before?

No, never.

137. Before leaving the village to take refuge, did you know how your life as a refugee would be?

I had worked for the GVN, so I knew that if I went to take refuge, the GVN would help me in every way.

138. Were you able to make any preparations before you left the village?

I left the village in a hurry and didn't have time to make any preparations in advance. I didn't even take my ID Card with me. My wife brought it here for me later on. About 10 days after I left the village, my wife asked for permission to go to the market and fled here to bring me my ID Card. As for my daughter-in-law, she told the cadres that since her husband was gone, she would like to go and live with her own parents, then she fled from the village. My wife and children could only leave the village four months later. My wife had to stay behind to sell our belongings to make contributions to the VC before she succeeded in leaving the village. She took a big risk in fleeing from the village. She had to do it at night and this was very dangerous.

139. When you left the village, how long did you think you would have to stay away?

I didn't know how long I would have to live away from my village. I just made up my mind to go away until peace is restored to return to the village.

140. After you left, did other people in your hamlet also leave the village?

Gradually, all the people in my hamlet fled from the village. After a few men fled from the village, their wives told the cadres that they would go looking for them and bring them back, and then their wives fled from the village also. Other people took advantage of GVN operations to leave the village in the company of the troops. At present, there's no one left in my hamlet.

141. When did the people leave the village in large numbers?

The people left the village in large numbers in 1966.

142. Did many people from the other hamlets leave the village?

There are only a small number of people left in the other hamlets. They are old people who take the risk of staying behind. Almost all the people have left the village.

143. Have any of the people who left the village to take refuge returned to the village?

No, no one has returned to the village.

144. Will you return to the village if you're allowed?

I wouldn't dare return to the village. If I did, the VC would kill me right away. This would be a useless death.

145. What kind of help have you received from the GVN since you moved here?

When I first came here to take refuge, the Government helped me a lot. But, later on, I had to be self-sufficient.

146. Do the people in your family still have their old ID Cards?

Yes, they still have their old ID Cards.

147. The VC didn't seize the people's ID Cards when they took over the village?

They tried to, but the people hid their ID Cards away -- only a few people had their ID Cards seized.

148. Where have the refugees from your village moved?

The refugees from my village moved to many areas -- such as Qui Nhon, Binh Dinh, An Khe and Kontum. Most of the people from my hamlet have moved to Binh Dinh. My family is the only family from my hamlet here in this center.

149. Are there many refugees in this center? Have all of them found jobs?

There are many refugees in the center, but I don't know the exact figure. Almost all of them have found jobs, only a few of them don't have enough to eat.

150. Do you feel secure in this center?

This center is very secure. But I'm still afraid that the VC might sneak in, because I've heard that they sneak back to the other side of the river very often.

151. Are the members of the administrative council of the center appointed by the Government?

No. All the members of the administrative council of this center are refugees, and they are elected by the refugees themselves.

152. How are the members of the Administrative Council?

Most of them work zealously and enthusiastically, and help the people in the center. But there are some who profit from their positions, to get more foreign aid items for their own families, for example.

153. Do foreigners come here often?

Foreigners come here very rarely. Once in a while, a foreigner comes to visit the center. [redacted] came here once on a visit, and gave the center 50,000 piasters.

154. Are there schools in the center for the children of the refugees?

There have never been any schools here, but now the government is getting ready to build a school. The Americans brought some construction materials here for us. There are many children in this center, but they have to go without any education.

155. Are you planning to leave the center in the near future?

No. I am determined to stay here until peace is restored to return to the village.

156. What are you doing for a living?

I'm old now, and can no longer do anything. My wife is also old, and she's sick most of the time, so she can't do anything either. My son is now working to support the whole family. He draws plans for an American firm, and gets over 40 piasters an hour. My son-in-law is in the GVN army.

157. This is the picture of a ladder with ten rungs. The top one bears the figure I and represents the happiest life that you can imagine. The bottom rung bears the figure 10 and represents the most miserable life that you can imagine. In your opinion, where on the ladder can your life in the village be placed, and where can it be placed now?

When I was still living in the village -- and before the VC took it over -- my life could be placed on the 7th rung, and now it can be placed on the 5th rung. I feel that I'm happier now than when I was in the village. I had to be self-sufficient at the time, and even though the VC hadn't taken over the village, I was always afraid that they might sneak in the village at any time. Now, I don't have to do anything and my son is supporting me, and I don't have to worry about the VC sneaking in. But if peace is restored and I can return to the village, I'll do so at once, even if I have to be self-sufficient again.

158. What kind of life in the village do you think is the happiest one?

Life in the village is most happy when we have peace, when we can earn enough to eat and wear, when there is harmony in the family, when there is no social oppression, and when everyone at every level treats us with fairness and when there are no cliques.

159. In your opinion, what kind of life in the village is most miserable?

Life is most miserable when we don't have enough to eat and wear, when, on top of this, we still have to live under the VC and when we are oppressed and bothered in every way.

160. What kind of life would you like your son to have?

I only want him to have a permanent job, and to have enough to eat and wear. At present, there are many people who don't have enough to eat and wear, and who are maltreated by the VC and made miserable by them. There are also many people who get killed in bombings and shellings. If my son can live in peace, and if he can have enough to eat and wear, then everything will be fine.

161. If the government agreed to give you three things, what would you ask for?

I would like to ask the government to repair the center because the houses which were built long ago are falling into disrepair. After the government repairs the houses, it should give ownership rights to those who are living in them. The second thing I would like the government to do is to continue keeping the VC away from the center. The third thing that I would like to ask is that the government bring peace to my village so that I can go home to rebuild my house and to take care of the tombs of my ancestors.

162. Do you think that the present government can grant you these three things?

I am sure that the present government can do these three things.

163. Who do you think is winning the war, the GVN or the VC?

The GVN is winning the war, because I've noticed that it is getting stronger and stronger.

164. Do you think that the war will last a long time?

I don't know.

165. Who do you think will win in the end, the GVN or the VC?

The GVN will surely win the war. The VC are very cruel, and so how can they win? Heaven will not protect them.

166. In your opinion, which side do the people support?

The people support the GVN more. Only the families that are dissatisfied and the families of the regroupees support the VC. The people themselves don't support the VC.

167. In your opinion, what more should the GVN do to win more support?

The Government is rebuilding the countryside. The Government has organized the elections of the village and hamlet council members. If it continues in the same way, all the people will support it.

168. What will become of the life of the people if the VC win the war?

If, by ill luck, the VC win the war, the people will be very unhappy. The VC are cruel and inhuman. I don't know about the other people, but I myself will take poison to kill myself. I can't live with the VC for a day.

168. What will become of the life of the people if the GVN wins the war?

The people will be very happy. With the help of the allies, the people's life will be very civilized. Our people have never been guided by anyone before. Before, we were constantly oppressed by the French. Now, the Americans have come here to guide and help us, everyone has jobs and so the life of everyone will improve and become more civilized.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

The subject was on old man. He was not intelligent, but he was unaffected and honest. He was open and never hesitated over his replies. He showed good will and cooperation during the interview.

No. AGR 107

[illegible] II

For Refugees

1. Name of Interviewer: [redacted] 5

2. Name of Subject : [redacted]

3. Time and Date of Interview:

From 9:15 a.m. to 11:20 a.m. on June [redacted] 1967

From _____ to _____ on _____ 1966

From _____ to _____ on _____ 1966

From _____ to _____ on _____ 1966

Total time: 2 h 5

Interview based on: tape (X) hand written notes ( )

4. Place of Interview:

QUI NHON

5. Sex of subject: Male (X) Female ( )

6. Age of subject: 69

7. Ethnic background: [illegible]

8. Place of birth:

hamlet [redacted]

village [redacted]

district An Nhon

province Binh Dinh

9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee:

hamlet [redacted]

village [redacted]

district An Nhon

province Binh Dinh

10. (a) Length of residence in last location: since childhood

(b) Who controlled the place of residence:

GVN ( ) VC (X) Contested ( )

(c) Since when controlled or contested? 1964

No. AGR 107

QUESTIONNAIRE II

For Refugees

1. Name of Interviewer: [redacted] 5

2. Name of Subject : [redacted]

3. Time and Date of Interview:

From 9:15 a.m. to 11:20 a.m. on June [redacted] 1967

From _____ to _____ on _____ 1966

From _____ to _____ on _____ 1966

From _____ to _____ on _____ 1966

Total time: 2 h 5

Interview based on: tape (X) hand written notes ( )

4. Place of Interview:

QUI NHON

5. Sex of subject: Male (X) Female ( )

6. Age of subject: 69

7. Ethnic background: [redacted]

8. Place of birth:

hamlet [redacted]

village [redacted]

district An Nhon

province Binh Dinh

9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee:

hamlet [redacted]

village [redacted]

district An Nhon

province Binh Dinh

10. (a) Length of residence in last location: since childhood

(b) Who controlled the place of residence:

GVN ( ) VC (X) Contested ( )

(c) Since when controlled or contested? 1964

11. Number of brothers (1) Number of sisters (1)

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age: 1

13. Marital status: Married

14. Number of children: 2

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age: 1

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject (X) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject (X) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion: Buddhism

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge: Farmer

19. Economic status:
(a) VC designation Middle Farmer
(b) Landowner? (X) How much land 5 acres

20. Education:
Illiterate ( )
Literate (X)
Schooling completed: Chinese characters

21. Any relatives in VC: No

22. Any relatives in GVN: 1 cousin and 1 son in GVN Army

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by:
(a) French No
(b) GVN No
(c) VC No

24. When became a refugee: 1964

25. Where took refuge first:

26. Present residence: [redacted] Hamlet, Qui Nhon Village,
Binh Dinh Province

AGR

INTERVIEW

108

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THE RAND CORPORATION

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INTERVIEWS CONCERNING THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT OF SOUTH VIETNAM

(A)

FILE NO. AGR-108

Date of Interview : [redacted] June 1967

Subject's Category : Refugee, 1964, Farmer

Area of Residence : [redacted] Hamlet, [redacted] Village, Tuy Phuoc District, Binh Dinh Province

This interview is for the information of US and Vietnamese official agencies and personnel on a need-to-know basis. Permission to distribute or show this interview to non-official persons requires the prior approval of The RAND Corpration and the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs.

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1. How long had you and your family lived in your village before you became a refugee?

I was born in my village and lived there ever since. We lived there generation after generation.

2. How big was your village? What was its population?

My village comprised [redacted] hamlets. The population was over 5,000.

3. How did you earn your living there?

I farmed the land to make a living.

4. Did you own any land? Did you farm it all?

I owned 5 mau, but I farmed only 3 mau, the rest was rented to people.

5. Did you have more than enough?

I was not well-off, but not poor. I had just enough to eat. However, I was classified as a Rich Farmer. That was why I had to pay a very high rice tax , 5 tons.

6. You mean you paid the high rice tax to the Viet Minh?

Yes.

7. How much did you get from the land rented to people?

All the tenant farmers who rented my land were relatives of mine. They did not bargain with me about reducing the land rent. They paid me fifty-fifty.

8. How did most of the villagers earn their living?

They were farmers like myself.

9. Did most of the villagers have enough to eat? How many crops did they harvest a year?

Most of the villagers had enough to eat. We harvested two crops a year, one crop in the third month of the lunar calendar (about April) and another in the eighth month (September). Besides the

main crops, we also worked on supplementary crops such as peanuts and sugar cane.

10. How many members are there in your family?

At present, there are three, my wife, my child and myself. My mother died recently. I also fostered my brother-in-law. He has been living with us since he was 7. Now, he is working for a refugee office and living with his own family.

11. What is your religion?

I am a Buddhist.

12. What religions did other villagers practice?

The majority were Buddhists, some were Cao Dai's, and a few were Catholics. There was a Buddhist Pagoda in my village.

13. Were there ever conflicts between members of different religions?

Under Diem's regime, there were often conflicts between the Buddhists and the Catholics. Actually, these conflicts took place in other villages, not mine. The Catholic population in my village was small.

14. Were there Montagnards living in your village?

No, there were not.

15. What education have you had?

I finished the primary school.

16. Were there any villagers in your village who had higher education?

Members of the [redacted] family in my hamlet had very good educations. Some had the Master Degree, one is attending the National Administrative Institute, and another one is studying medicine.

17. Were there schools in your village?

There was a primary school in my village. When the Nationalist government received the village from the Viet Minh in 1954, I

was appointed as Village Chief. I did my best to build a school, a dispensary, and the roads in the village. Incidentally, after the ill-fated coup-d'etat in 1960, I was suspected of being an anti-Diem element. The Catholics in my village reported me to the higher echolon, and I was dismissed from the village office.

18. Did you have any good friends in your hamlet? Could you talk freely to them about everything?

I had two good fiends. I could talk to them about everything. They had been in jail with me at the time the movement of the "Patriotic Committee" (Moi Dong Cuu Quoc) was active.

19. Which people in your village were the most important, the most respected?

There was none of this category. Only a few people were liked and trusted to a certain extent by the villagers. One of these people was recently elected to the Village Administrative Committee (GVN).

20. You mean the GVN has taken over your village from the VC?

Yes, the GVN has taken over my village, and there have been elections to the Village Administrative Committee.

21. How was life in your village before 1954, during the Viet Minh period?

When the French still ruled the country, I was a village chief. The people were poor, but not so poor as under the Viet Minh. In 1945, the Viet Minh took over the village, the people experienced hardships and paid high taxes. Misfortune came to me, my child died, and I become poor.

22. How did you become poor?

The Viet Minh ranked me as a Rich Farmer, and I had to pay a high agricultural tax. I had to sell all my possessions, even the altar, in order to be able to pay taxes. Besides, I had to contribute my labor in digging trenches and setting road blocks. I had two sons, the eldest was 16 at that time. He got sick, but I did not have money to buy medicine for him. He died. Do you know how heartbroken I was?

23. Were there many villagers who worked for the Viet Minh at that time?

Yes, plenty of them.

24. What happened to these people in 1954?

In 1954, the people who actively participated in the Viet Minh all regrouped to the North. There were about 300 regroupees in my village.

25. After 1954, what happened to the people who worked for the Viet Minh and did not regroup to the North?

After 1954, I was appointed village chief. No matter what directives I received from high above, I treated these people fairly well. I did not arrest them or maltreat them, as had happened in other villages. I thought that we should make them side with the GVN, rather than punish them. I, myself, was denounced by them, but I did not seek revenge. I executed the orders keeping them in the village and not letting them travel freely.

26. Did life in your village improve after 1954?

When the Nationalist government got the village, the people felt happy, as they had thrown away the heavy burden. Life was easier, we harvested good crops, and did not have to pay high taxes. But we enjoyed the good life for the first few years only. When Mr. Diem forced the people to move, to new resettlements forced the people to convert to Catholicism, life became hard again, and the people did not feel happy anymore.

27. When did life become hard again?

Life has been hard again since 1959. In the years of 1959, 1960, 1961, 1962, the people lived a difficult life. The atmosphere was uneasy.

28. How did the local officials behave?

They behaved badly. They were hard with the villagers. They tried to make money by retaining the papers of whomever needed them. The villagers were very disappointed, but did not dare to complain. Whoever spoke out to criticize the officials might be accused of being a Communist, might be arrested. So, the villagers had to keep their mouths shut and try to live with it. What a pity!

29. Would you say all the local officials were bad?

I did not say all. There were some officials who treated the people well and did help the people. But the good officials were rare.

30. Were local officials elected or appointed?

All the local officials under Mr. Diem's regime were appointed. There was only one time elections were held in my village. That was the recent elections to the Village Administrative Committee.

31. You mean there were no other elections in your village?

Well, there were elections for the President and elections to the Assembly.

32. Were these elections free elections?

You have been living in the South long enough. You, yourself, voted for the President and Assemblymen during Mr. Diem's time. I am sure you know whether these elections were free or not. Certainly, the people were not free to vote. The propaganda, the coercion, terrorism and arrests happened every day. During the second Presidential election, I was arrested and put in jail in [redacted] for 8 days because I went to Qui Nhon to listen to Mr. Nguyen The Truyen's speech. Mr. Truyen was making a campaign for the election in Qui Nhon at that time. The government suspected that I did not want to vote for Mr. Diem, so they arrested me. There were no free elections, and there was no freedom of religion under Mr. Diem's regime.

33. What did you base on to say that there was no freedom of religion?

Under Mr. Diem, they (Diem's followers) tried all means to make the people convert to Catholicism. The forced migration movement was a typical case. Whoever did not want to migrate had to join the Catholics. There were men who were brought to the district headquarters and were ready to be sent to a new resettlement. Their wives at home hurried to the Catholic priest and asked to convert to Catholicism and the husbands were released immediately.

In my opinion, the reason for the Communist existence in the South was the injustice and the inefficiency of the Diem government, which created dissatisfaction among the people. In the North, Ho Chi Minh was forming the Front to liberate the South, trying to get the support from the Communist countries to take over the South. Mr. Diem did not have any plan to reunify the country or at least a plan to resist the Communist take over. Furthermore, the Diem government suppressed the people and created the dissatisfaction. This gave the Communists good opportunities to exploit the situation for their own good. I hold that wherever there are injustice and dissatisfaction, there the Communists are active.

34. What did the villagers say about the fall of the Diem government?

The villagers were very happy to hear the news. When I heard the news that day, I felt as if I were revived. To tell the truth, if Mr. Diem had not been overthrown, I would have either converted to Catholicism or been put into a canvas bag and thrown into the ocean.

35. Had there been any GVN military forces in your village before you became a refugee?

There were no regular soldiers, but only the Popular Forces. Out of thirty PF men, there were at least five or six led by the VC. Worst of all, the village government was very weak and very afraid of the VC. When the village officials heard of the VC they fled for safety right away. That was why the VC took over the village easily. This is what happened. The VC came in, the PF men and the village officials fled away, the VC grouped the villagers in a meeting and established the administrative offices in the village and hamlets immediately. There was no resistance. The VC did not spill a drop of blood to fully control the village.

36. Was your hamlet a strategic hamlet?

Yes, it was. It is did not give any help. The hamlet was mainly, fenced, and the VC could enter the hamlet easily.

37. How much labor and money did the villagers have to contribute to building the Strategic Hamlet?

All the villagers had to contribute money and labor. The money was contributed to buy wood, bamboo sticks, and barbed wire. The labor was needed to build the fence around the hamlet. My family contributed 800 or 900 piasters and 7 or 8 days of labor. Both my wife and myself took part in building the Strategic Hamlet. The villagers had a hard time at that time.

38. Did they say anything?

They all complained. A lot of money and labor was spent, and they did not know for sure if the Strategic Hamlet would bring any good.

39. Did you like to live in a Strategic Hamlet?

If a Strategic Hamlet was carefully built and there were guards to watch over it, I think it would be advantageous to live in it. But

in reality, the people fenced the hamlet as if they wanted to keep the cows out (the fence was thin). This was of no use. The VC entered the hamlet very easily.

40. What did you like about the Strategic Hamlet?

I did not like anything about the Strategic Hamlets in my village. If they had been built strongly like the ones in other places, what I would have liked best was to be able to live safely in one of them.

41. What did you dislike about the Strategic Hamlet?

I do not recall well enough to answer your question, but certainly I disliked the thinly built Strategic Hamlet.

42. In those days, before the Front came, how did you feel about your life?

In those days I made my living normally as everybody did. I was not well-off, but I was not poor either. I was free to earn my living, and I lived in peace.

43. What did you think about your opportunities to improve your life?

Like everybody else, I was happy when I harvested a good crop. I had no other ambitions, and I did not plan to be rich.

44. What things dissatisfied you most?

The village officials used to oppress the people, but they did not do anything wrong to me. Nothing dissatisfied me.

45. When did you first hear of the Front?

It was too long ago, I forget when.

46. Before the Front took over the village, were there any villagers who belonged to the Front?

I do not know, but I guess that some villagers had cooperated with the Front. They led the VC in, burned the hamlet and took over the village.

47. Did the VC secretly come to your hamlet and spread their propaganda?

I do not know. Suppose the VC had come, they did it secretly and talked to some individuals only. The GVN still controlled the village at that time.

48. How did the VC take over your village?

I do not know. I had left the village before they came. The VC had burned the hamlet headquarters before they took over the village. I took refuge in the GVN area after this incident.

49. Did you leave your hamlet together with your family?

No, my mother, my wife and my son stayed in the hamlet until the VC took over almost the whole village. Then, my family moved to [redacted] Institution, which was located in a neighboring village. My wife told me that when the VC came to the hamlet, all the PF men and government officials fled away. There were no battles. The VC grouped the villagers in a meeting and appointed the village and hamlet officials right away. The next day the VC asked the villagers to start fencing the hamlet and digging trenches.

50. Do you know how the Front cadres behaved?

I heard that they behaved nicely, did not shout at or beat anybody. And all the villagers obeyed them. Seeing that all the GVN officials and PF men had fled away, the villagers were afraid of the VC.

51. How did the villagers feel about them?

The villagers were afraid of the cadres. Nobody opposed the VC. The villagers did whatever the cadres told them to do.

52. Do you think the villagers liked the VC cadres or not?

I think only a few poor farmers who believed in Communism liked the cadres. The majority of the people who stayed in the VC area in order to farm their land did not like the VC. In a meeting held by the VC, many times the villagers applauded the cadre speaker. This did not mean that the villagers sincerely liked the VC. They (villagers) cheered because they had to. Besides the poor farmers, I might count some young villagers as VC sympathizers too. These young men had the VC weapons and grenades and showed off to the villagers. After a short period of time, they rallied to the GVN. When they left the Chieu Hoi Centers for the village, they joined the GVN Combat Youth Group. Again, they had with them the weapons and grenades, and again, they were trouble makers. This is one of the weak points of the government policies. The government gave

these bad elements the guns, they oppressed the people, and nobody knew when they would join the VC again. This is the reason why the village has been recontrolled by the GVN, and there are still a number of villagers -- myself, for example -- who do not dare to return.

53. What did you know about the aims of the Front?

Ho Chi Minh created the Front and said that the South Vietnamese revolted against the GVN. It is obvious that the Front's aims are to take over South Vietnam and annex it to the North.

54. What are the names of the leaders of the Front?

Nguyen Huu Tho is said to be the chairman of the NLF.

55. Do you think the Front is peace-loving?

They said they love peace, but the Front is a tool set up by the North in order to take over the South. How can they love peace and, at the same time, want to swallow up the South? I do not believe the Front is peace-loving.

56. Do you think the Front is patriotic?

The patriotic people must safeguard the country and must have a nationalist mind. How can the patriotic people be subjected to foreign powers. The Front is an organization of the North. Its aim is to take over the South and make this country a Communist one. The Front is not patriotic.

57. Do you think the VC love the people?

They said they love the people, but what they did didn't indicate that they loved the people. They are Communist, they are led by foreign powers, they are uprooted. Surely they do not care for the people.

58. Did the Front ever take any villagers away for re-education?

All the villagers had to study the VC policies. The ones whom the VC suspected of being pro-GVN or of opposing them were sent for re-education in the mountainside. These suspects were said to have had a very hard time. There were 15 people suspected by the VC in my village.

59. What happened to these 15 villagers?

I heard that the VC kept these villagers for a while and finally released them all.

60. Were there any villagers killed by the VC?

Nobody in my village was killed.

61. Did the VC recruit the young men for military service?

All the young villagers were forced to join guerrilla units. Nobody joined the Regular Force. Most of these young men later on rallied to the GVN and then returned to the village. They joined the GVN Combat Youth Group and the Popular Force. A few joined the ARVN.

62. Did those who joined the guerrilla units do so of their own free will?

I heard that nobody volunteered to join the VC. They were forced to join the guerrilla units.

63. Were there any villagers who had been in the ARVN before the Front came?

There were plenty of them. I do not know the exact number.

64. How did the Front treat the families with sons in the ARVN or working for the GVN?

The cadres asked these families to call their sons back. They did not maltreat these families. I think because the VC did not control the village long enough, they did not use brutal methods yet. My village was under the VC control for six months only.

65. During this six-month period, did the VC carry out the land redistribution yet.

The cadres took the government land and distributed it to the poor.

66. Did the VC confiscate the refugees' land and distribute it to the poor?

Yes. My case was an example. After my family left the village, the cadres took my land and distributed it to other villagers. However, when the GVN regained the village, these villagers gave it back to me.

67. Did the land receivers feel happy when the cadres distributed the land to them?

I don't know. I guess they would feel happy when they had more land to farm. Incidentally, there was plenty of land left uncultivated because a large number of refugees had left the village.

68. Did the VC cadres collect taxes?

Not yet.

69. Were the villagers free to travel?

The villagers might leave the hamlet and go to the market as usual.

70. Were the villagers free to go to markets in the GVN area?

The villagers were free to go to markets in the GVN area. The VC cadres needed salted fish and medicine sold in the GVN markets.

71. Did the cadres buy rice from the people?

The cadres never bought, they took the rice from the people. They did not levy taxes, but they asked the villagers to contribute the rice to feed the soldiers. Everybody had to contribute some. I did not know much about the details.

72. Did the Front set up any organizations in your hamlet?

I heard that the Front set up the Autonomous Committe in my hamlet. This committee ran the hamlet business.

73. Were the cadres local people or strangers?

Members of the Autonomous Committee were local people. I also heard of a regroupee, a native of my hamlet with the rank of District Committee Member, who worked in my village.

74. Did the villagers' attitude toward the cadres change while the VC controlled the village?

Everybody was afraid of the cadres. Little by little, all the villagers left their hmalet. My hamlet was finally left empty. The villagers' attitude did not change.

75. Did the Front ever ask the villagers in your hamlet to perform work without pay?

The Front did not have enough time to organize the villagers to serve as porters for them.

76. Was your hamlet a Combat hamlet?

No.

77. Were there any VC cadres in your hamlet who came from the North?

According to what I heard from the villagers, there were no N[redacted] cadres in my village, only two regroupees, named [redacted]

78. Did the Front ever set up a school in your village?

When the VC first came, they burned the hamlet headquarters and all the schools of the village and the hamlets. The children went to school no more.

79. Had there been a dispensary in your village before the VC came?

Yes, there had been one dispensary. It was built while I was Village Chief.

80. How was this dispensary after the VC came to the village?

The VC did not burn the dispensary, but it was closed. The man in charge of the dispensary left the village, and no medicine was available. At present, the dispensary is being used as the headquarters of the Combat Youth Group.

81. Did the VC say anything about the GVN?

The villagers told me that the VC slandered the GVN a lot. The VC said the GVN were the Americans' followers, Americans' servants, and so on.

82. In your opinion, is the GVN strong or weak?

Militarily, the GVN is strong. It has big Armed Forces and plenty of weapons. In my opinion, in order to be really strong the government must be able to win the people's sympathy. Without the sympathy and trust from the people the government can never be strong. I hold that fighting the Communists with weapons only is like covering grass with stones. The heavy stones might bend the

grass, but the grass roots are still alive. When the stones are taken away the grass will grow up again. To destroy the grass, one should destroy the grass roots. To destroy the Communists, the government must win the people's sympathy and must be trusted by the people. Secondly, the Communists have their Marxist-Leninist theory. We in the South, as well as other free countries, must have a theory that beats the Communists' theory.

If we persuade the Communists to rally, give them good food and good positions and expect them be non-Communist, we are too simple and so naive. I am a Buddhist, I admire the Buddhist teaching, so I am a Buddhist follower. Now, if someone wants me to quit Buddhism, he must show me something better than the Buddhist teaching. Otherwise, no matter how much money is given to me, I shall go on being a Buddhist. So are the Communists.

In short, I think the GVN is militarily strong, but it does not have the people's sympathy and does not have a theory that beats the Communist theory, so the GVN cannot destroy the Communists yet.

83. What do you think the government should do to win the people's sympathy?

The government has recently organized the elections of village and hamlet officials. This is a good democratic step to win the people's sympathy. The importance is whether the GVN cadres have a democratic mind or not, whether they love the people and correctly carry out the GVN policies or not. Both the Viet Minh and Ngo Dinh Diem had good policies but bad cadres. The good policies were mistakenly carried out, badly affected the people and resulted in losing the people's sympathy. In other words, the most important thing is the problem of cadres. We must train them, change a cadre from bad to good, and must have a plan to guide the cadres to carry out the government policies.

84. Do you think the GVN loves the people?

Yes. The GVN must love the people. The government has helped the people. The government has held the elections of village and hamlet officials because the government loves the people.

85. Do you think the GVN is just?

The GVN is always just when it makes the policies. The people who carry out the policies are not just.

86. Do you think the GVN officials are just?

It is not right to say all the GVN officials are bad. Saying that

they all are good is not right either. Part of them are good and part of them are bad. If all the officials were good, the government would win the people's sympathy. If the government won the people's sympathy, the Communists would have no chance to exist.

87. Would you say the officials did not serve the people wholeheartedly?

Some did, some did not.

88. Did you hear about the Chieu Hoi program?

Yes. This is a road opened to mislead people to rally to the GVN.

89. Do you think Chieu Hoi is right?

Yes.

90. You have said that the ralliers will not be against the Communists no matter how well they are treated.

The Chieu Hoi program opens a road for the Communists to rally to the GVN. This is a good policy, but the government lacks a good plan when it releases the ralliers from the Chieu Hoi centers. There are insincere ralliers. The government treats them well at the centers, and after they get out of the centers, they do not give up Communism and work for the Communists again. This shows that the Chieu Hoi people do not have a good plan and do not foresee the cases when they release the ralliers.

91. Do you have any facts saying that a number of ralliers side again with the VC?

A Village Chief in Phu Cat has been shot to death. The villagers said that a former VC, who had been arrested by this official, later on joined the Chieu Hoi and then was released. He became a member of the village Popular Force and shot the village chief. There was no proof, of course, but the people believed the story. In my opinion, we should only trust the ralliers who have had a positive proof, that is, after rallying to the GVN, they must be able to help the government arrest the VC or discover the VC weapons caches. For the ralliers who do not have positive proof, we must keep track of them when we release them. We should not let them be at large and feel free to act.

92. Was your village ever attacked by the ARVN?

While the VC controlled the village, it was attacked by air and artillery.

93. Did the villagers have any casualties?

A number of houses were burned and destroyed. A few villagers were wounded and one was killed.

94. How did these attacks make the villagers feel about the GVN?

I don't know. Other refugees said that, since the villagers did not leave the village, they wanted to stay with the Communists and they should not complain of the harm done. I agreed with this opinion.

95. Before the attacks, was your village given any warning by the GVN?

I don't know.

96. Have you heard about the use of chemicals to destroy the trees?

I have heard of the chemicals being used at Bong Son, Tam Quang and Phu My, to defoliate the trees.

97. What is the use of the defoliation?

To deprive the VC of a place to hide and to detect them easily from the air.

98. Did the chemicals destroy vegetation or crops?

Yes. The chemical powder landed in the neighboring areas. It destroyed the vegetation and crops. The people complained of this but I do not think the government had any intention to destroy the villagers' crops.

99. Did you hear the Front say anything about the Americans?

The VC carried out the propaganda, saying that the Americans are here to occupy Viet Nam.

100. What do you think about this propaganda?

I think that, without the Americans, Qui Nhon City would have been lost to the VC already, and the whole of South Vietnam would be

lost, too. The Americans are here to help our nation.

101. Why do you think the Americans help our nation?

The Americans help our nation to stop the Communist aggression; otherwise, the whole of South East Asia would be lost to the Communists, and the United States may be lost, too.

102. Do you think the Americans are like the French?

They are different. The French were here, even fewer, to rule the country. They had wicked policies, and kept the people in ig- so they could dominate easily. The Americans today help us d- the economy and stop the Communists. There are many other countries that help Viet Nam too.

103. Why do many other countries help Viet Nam, too?

I do not know well. Perhaps, they are our country's allies; we have asked them to help us. Or, the Americans feel that they could not beat the Communists easily and have asked these countries for help. I think this is a military matter, it is difficult to know.

104. Why did these countries agree to help Vietnam?

They are allies of Vietnam and the US. They see that it is right to stop the Communists, so they help.

105. Have you heard about the air bombardment of North Vietnam?

Yes. I heard through the radio and read it in the newspaper.

106. What are the bombing effects on the North Vietnamese people?

In the South, the air bombardment is on a small scale, aimed at the VC only, and the people have suffered a lot. I am sure the air strikes in the North affected the people badly. They must have suffered ten times as much, compared to the people in the South.

107. Do you know why the North was bombed?

The North was bombed because they were stubborn, sending troops to carry out the war in the South.

108. What are the effects on the Front in SVN?

The North is the only source of supply to the Front. If the North suffers, the Front will be exhausted.

109. What were the reasons that made you leave your village and come here?

I left my village because I did not accept the VC regime and the Communist theory. I am anti-Communist. Being a Buddhist, I understand the Buddhist teaching. I cannot accept Communism. Furthermore, the Communist regime forces the people to do hard physical labor. I am not used to doing it, I cannot live with the VC.

110. Had you hesitated before you left the village?

No. As long as I am alive, I can get more property. The property is not important.

111. Have you ever taken refuge before?

No, never. This is my first time. Suppose Qui Nhon, this city, fell to the Communists, I would move again. Suppose there was no place for me to take refuge, I would commit suicide.

112. Did anyone in your village try to stop you from leaving?

No. I sneaked out of the village, nobody knew.

113. What preparations for leaving did you make?

I had only 5,000 piasters with me. I arrived here first and then secretly sent a message to my family to join me.

114. How long did it take your family to join you?

About fifteen days, My family sneaked out, too.

115. Did you expect to leave your hamlet for long?

I expected to leave my hamlet for two or three months at the most. I was sure that the VC could not stand our strong Armed Forces and could not control the village long. I did not think that I would have to stay here long.

116. How long after did the GVN retake your village?

Five or six months later, the government retook my village. However, the village is not [illegible] secure yet. Last year, my wife went back to the hamlet and stayed there to take care of the land. I have not been [illegible] to earn my living here. I am now living on the rent some villagers paid me for my land.

117. Are you living here alone?

I am living here with my [illegible] and a brother of mine.

118. Were there any people who accompanied you here?

I came here by myself. [illegible] fifteen days later, the villagers started to leave.

119. How many families left your village?

I do not know the exact number. Two-thirds of the population of my hamlet left for the GVN area. All the families living in my section (xom) left. A lot of rice fields were uncultivated.

120. Did these refugees come back [illegible] since the GVN took back the village from the VC?

They all came back. [illegible] people in my hamlet all came back.

121. What has been done here [illegible]?

When I first came [illegible] did not get any assistance. When a Buddhist refugee [illegible] set up, I joined the camp and [illegible] helped. The Bud[illegible] gave me some assistance [illegible] Americans gave me [illegible] of rice. The[illegible] camps in this pr[illegible] Qui Nhon there [illegible] Catholic camp [illegible] camp. [illegible] was helped the [illegible] Catholic [illegible] the Charity Ass[illegible] Government [illegible]

122. Did you have your [illegible] hamlet [illegible]

Yes.

123. What about other refu[illegible]

Yes. Everybody had [illegible]

124. Are the refugees being trained here?

No, we have asked for a training course here, but the request was not approved. However, the Labor Office of Qui Nhon established training courses for carpenters, brick layers and tailors. Some 20 young refugees in this camp were sent to attend these courses.

125. Is there a school in this camp for the children?

There is no school. I have heard that there will be a foreign company coming here to dig a well and build a school.

126. Are the camp members employed?

Most of them have jobs to do, the others make their living by trading small items.

127. Do you feel safe living in this camp?

The VC had infiltrated to the other side of the river. We were afraid that they might come here. During the last six months, the other side of the river has been secure. We now feel safe in this camp.

128. How is the leadership of this camp organized?

Members of the camp elect people for the camp management. I was elected to Camp Chief before, today another man is Chief.

129. Are members of the camp management good?

They are refugees, themselves. They wholeheartedly work to help other refugees.

130. Have you seen any foreigners here?

Sometimes, there are parties of Americans and Australians who visit the camp. They come, exchange a few words with the refugees, and go. Once, the Special Commissariat for Refugees visited our camp, we addressed him some requests, and there was no result.

131. You have been a refugee, you have had hardships, whom do you blame for your trouble?

It is because of the Communists that other people and I have to take refuge and have hardships.

132. Here is the picture of a ladder. The bottom rung is numbered ten, and the top rung is numbered one. Now, let's say that the top rung represents the best life you can imagine, and the bottom rung represents the worst life you can imagine. Where on this ladder would you say that your life was before you became a refugee? After you became a refugee?

Before I became a refugee, my life was pretty good. I was at number four. After I became a refugee, I had a hard time. I was at number seven. Today, even I thought stay here, my wife has a small income and I am at number six.

133. How would you describe the worst life you can imagine yourself living back in your village?

A person whose life is constantly beseiged by sickness, unable to earn a living, lacking food to eat, and clothes to wear, who is oppressed, repressed, and restricted in his mental exercises. His is the worst possible life that could be imagined.

134. What about the best life?

The best life is the life in which a person has sufficient food and clothes, he is not threatened and oppressed by anybody, his material life and spiritual life is guaranteed, and he is free to believe in his religon.

135. What kind of life do you hope your son will have?

I want my son to have a good education, I want him to attend the university, or at least he must finish high school. I also want him to be a man of virtue, he will know how to conduct his life properly, and the people will love him.

136. If you could ask the government for three things, what would you ask?

I would ask for only one thing because it is most important to me. I would ask the government help my son and give him a good education. That is all.

137. Do you think the present government can satisfy your request?

I understand that there are many people, and everybody has his own wish. If the government wants to do something, it must take into consideration the majority of the people. However, if the the government carefully examines my case, acknowledges my nationalism, and sees that I am a landowner, but do not have sufficient money to support the child, the government might give me what I ask.

138. What do you think life in Vietnam will be like if the Front wins the war?

If the Front wins the war, the North and the South will be reunited, and the South must be with the Communists. Life will be poor and miserable, materially as well as spiritually. The Communists never let the people be free to work and free to believe.

139. If the GVN wins the war, what do you think life in Vietnam will be like?

If the GVN wins the war, I am sure the true democratic ways will be applied and the people will live a happy life because all the basic human rights will be obeyed.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENT

Interviewee is an intelligent and clever person. He answered the questions quickly, fluently and honestly.

During the interview, he showed that he was relaxed, never hesitated or feared anything. He was cooperative.

QUESTIONNAIRE II No. AGR: 108

For Refugees

MASTER COPY

1. Name of Interviewer: [redacted]
2. Name of Subject: [redacted]
3. Time and Date of Interview:

From 3:40 to 5:45 on [redacted] June 1967

From _____ to _____ on _____ 1967

From _____ to _____ on _____ 1967

From _____ to _____ on _____ 1967

Total time: 2 hours and 5 minutes

Interview based on: tape (X) hand written notes ( )

4. Place of Interview: Qui Nhon
5. Sex of subject: Male (X) Female ( )
6. Age of subject: 55
7. Ethnic background: Vietnamese
8. Place of birth:

hamlet [redacted]

village [redacted]

district Tuy Phuoc

province Binh Dinh

9. Residence prior to becoming a refugee:

hamlet [redacted]

village [redacted]

district Tuy Phuoc

province Binh Dinh

10. (a) Length of residence in last location: Since born

(b) Who controlled the place of residence:

GVN ( ) VC (X) Contested ( )

(c) Since when controlled or contested? 1964

f brothers ( ) and sisters ( )

12. Number of brothers over 15 years of age: N/A

13. Marital status: Married

14. Number of children: 01

15. Number of boys over 15 years of age: _____

16. Parents with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Husband with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Brothers with subject ( ) or not with subject ( )
Wife with subject (X) or not with subject ( )
Children with subject (X) or not with subject ( )

17. Religion: Buddhist

18. Occupation prior to taking refuge: Farmer

19. Economic status:
(a) VC designation Rich Farrer
(b) Landowner X How much land 5 hectares

20. Education:
Illiterate ( )
Literate (X)
Schooling completed: Primary School

21. Any relatives in VC: None

22. Any relatives in GVN: None

23. Any relatives (How many? When?) killed by:
(a) French None
(b) GVN None
(c) VC None

24. When became a refugee: 1964

25. Where took refuge first: N/A

26. Present residence: [redacted] Hmalet, [redacted] Village Binh Dinh Province