## IV. SUGGESTIONS CONCERNING THE PLACE OF THE HIGHLANDERS IN THE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK

Given the variety of ethnolinguistic groups in Vietnam, the policies of the central government should be aimed at welding all the different groups into a national entity. This is not to suggest that these groups should strive for cultural and linguistic amalgamation; it means only that their differences should be recognized, and allowed to become a source of cultural enrichment rather than of intergroup conflict. Specific recommendations are listed and discussed below.

1. An official policy based on the Highlanders' right to preserve their cultural identity by retaining their traditional ways and languages. In their response to the Diem regime's policy of assimilation and in the repeated expressions of their hopes and needs, highland leaders have left little doubt as to the Highlanders' basic desire to preserve their cultural identity. This is not incompatible with their seeking certain socioeconomic gains that would improve their standard of living, as well as greater participation in the political life of Vietnam, that is to say, in the administration of the highlands and in the councils of the central government.

In the course of normal social change, highland societies will inevitably be considerably influenced by the Vietnamese, who in recent times have been their major source of contact with the society beyond the mountains and with the modern world in general. Anyone familiar with highland societies of ten years ago is likely to be struck by the increase in Vietnamese influence that is apparent today.

More and more Highlanders speak Vietnamese, those with radios listen to Vietnamese programs as well as to programs in the indigenous language, and many young people sing Vietnamese songs. Guests are apt to be served food in the Vietnamese manner, with chopsticks and rice bowls, and Vietnamese fish sauce is a widely-used condiment.

As the Highlanders' standard of living rises and their economy develops, they are likely to borrow even more from Vietnamese culture. Already, as will be shown below, there are Highlanders who practice wet-rice agriculture and have adopted the Vietnamese technique of transplanting their seedlings; others can be observed imitating the Vietnamese methods of petty commerce in shopkeeping.

At the same time, however, they are likely to remain Highlanders: They will be literate in Vietnamese but also in their mother tongue. Their education will include information on Vietnamese history and Vietnamese cultural institutions, but they will pass their own traditions on from generation to generation as in the past. They will continue to construct most of their houses on piling, play their traditional music, and observe their own ceremonies.

As they develop socially and economically, the Highlanders will become a more integral part of the national framework. They will produce an increasing number of cash crops and enter into the marketing process, thus contributing to the national economy. With more and better education, they will assume greater control of the highland administration. But they will take their place in that larger framework as members of the Vietnamese nation who culturally are still Highlanders.

2. Programs aimed at raising the Lowlanders' appreciation and understanding of highland cultures. One of several reasons for the growth of Vietnamese cultural influence among the Highlanders has been their opportunity for contact with the Vietnamese in the highlands that has made them increasingly familiar with Vietnamese customs. By the same token, it is important to give the Vietnamese a better understanding and appreciation of the Highlanders' ways. Any program aimed at achieving this could begin by concentrating on those aspects of highland cultures which can be presented without need for extensive research. They would include forms of folk art -- poetry, music, and tales -- and of material culture as expressed in indigenous artifacts. Two possible courses are suggested:

1. Radio programs and literature about the Highlanders' music, poetry, and folk tales would be one means of making these aspects of highland cultures better known. Radio Ban Me Thuot already has programs featuring highland music, and this music, accompanied by explanations and discussions, could be broadcast also in Saigon and other Vietnamese cities.[1] Eventually, such programs might include material on other aspects of highland cultures. In addition, the government could make available inexpensive literature on these topics. It may be well to look at the example of North Vietnam, where quite an extensive literature on the ethnic minorities of Vietnam (including those in the South) has been developed in the course of

[1]Radio Hanoi was broadcasting in four highland dialects as early as 1957.

government-sponsored programs designed to give people an appreciation of the minority peoples.[2]

2. An ethnological museum might be established in Saigon exhibiting highland art and artifacts as well as displays illustrating the Highlanders' daily activities. Plastic art and handicrafts thrive among most highland groups, and it would be relatively easy to acquire a collection worth exhibiting. This could be housed in a building incorporating some features of characteristic highland house construction, and it could be located in a convenient place, such as the Saigon Botanical Gardens. A similar institution in Kuching, the capital of Sarawak state in Malaysia, has become one of the major tourist attractions of that city.

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[2]An impressive start on such a program was made in South Vietnam with the appearance, in May 1966, of a magazine, now published monthly by the Special Commission for Highland Affairs, which features a wide variety of articles and poetry about the highlands.

# V. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROGRAMS FOR THE HIGHLANDERS

It will require a wide range of related social and economic programs to satisfy the Highlanders' needs and desires and give them a well-defined role in the national framework. Moreover, each program of this kind, though focused on a specific achievement, should be planned in conjunction with all other programs designed for the highlands, and in full recognition of the fact that some may require as much as fifty years. For the sake of organization, the social and economic programs recommended in this study will be discussed under separate headings, but it must be remembered that they are intrinsic parts of the simple process of socioeconomic development.

## SOCIAL PROGRAMS

### A. Education

In a variety of ways, educational programs affect all aspects of socioeconomic development and are essential to its success. This goes beyond the establishment and expansion of primary, secondary, and university education; it includes that wide range of educational projects designed to convey knowledge and skills that will enable people to deal with social and economic innovations.

1. Primary-school education: It is recommended that primary-school education be widely and continually expanded, and that, particularly, schools be established in areas where none exists at present.

In many respects, primary education will be the spearhead of social and economic development throughout the highlands, for literacy (both in Vietnamese and in the indigenous language)[1] is a virtual prerequisite for the implementation of socioeconomic programs.

Table 2 gives an overview of present-day primary education for the several minorities in South Vietnam, showing the number, location, staff, and student body of Highlander, Cham, and Khmer schools by province. (Highlander schools have been grouped and subtotaled by the three main regions in which they are to be found.) The markedly high number of primary schools in Darlac, Kontum, Lam Dong, and Pleiku provinces as compared to the other highland provinces reflects, to a great extent, the pattern of educational development in the highlands. The pioneer efforts were made by the Société de la Mission Etrangère de Paris, the French Catholic mission that was established in the Kontum area in the middle of the nineteenth century. In the 1920's, two able French administrators, Sabatier and Antomarchi, founded the school system in Darlac Province. Eventually, this was extended to Pleiku, Kontum, and Haute Donnai (now Lam Dong). The Protestant mission, too, played an important role in spreading education in the southern part of the highlands. Scripts were devised for the languages spoken in these areas: Bahnar, Rengao, Jarai, Rhadé, and the Koho-speaking groups (Sre, Ma, Tring, Cil, Nop, and Lat).

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[1] As already indicated, the GVN, in response to requests of highland leaders at the Pleiku conference of October 1964, agreed to permit instruction in the reading and writing of highland languages in the primary schools.

Table 2

EDUCATION OF MINORITY GROUPS AT THE PRIMARY LEVEL

| Province | Schools | Teachers | Students | Boarding Schools | Boarders |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Highlander Schools | | | | | |
| Tuyen Duc | 5 | 20 | 794 | 3 | 400 |
| Darlac | 51 | 141 | 4,168 | 6 | 1,151 |
| Kontum | 16 | 64 | 2,029 | 5 | 550 |
| Lam Dong | 11 | 22 | 617 | 2 | 370 |
| Phu Bon | 4 | 29 | 1,350 | 2 | 370 |
| Pleiku | 10 | 33 | 1,696 | 6 | 900 |
| Quang Duc | 9 | 34 | 814 | 3 | 300 |
| Total: | 106 | 343 | 11,468 | 27 | 4,041 |
| Binh Thuan | 3 | 5 | 216 | | |
| Khanh Hoa | 5 | 14 | 490 | 1 | 380 |
| Ninh Thuan | 5 | 6 | 208 | | |
| Phu Yen | 4 | 6 | 195 | | |
| Quang Ngai | 5 | 15 | 670 | | |
| Quang Tri | 2 | 3 | 52 | | |
| Total: | 24 | 49 | 1,831 | 1 | 380 |
| Binh Long | 1 | 6 | 293 | 1 | 250 |
| Binh Tuy | 1 | 2 | 74 | | |
| Long Khanh | 7 | 15 | 555 | | |
| Phuoc Long | 4 | 10 | 273 | 4 | 350 |
| Total: | 13 | 33 | 1,195 | 5 | 600 |
| Total of all Highlander Schools: | 143 | 425 | 14,494 | 33 | 5,021 |
| Cham Schools | | | | | |
| Binh Thuan | 6 | 27 | 1,069 | | |
| Ninh Thuan | 16 | 47 | 2,224 | | |
| Total: | 22 | 74 | 3,293 | | |
| Khmer Schools (Pali Pagoda) | | | | | |
| An Giang | 3 | 7 | 509 | | |
| Ba Xuyen | 20 | 21 | 437 | | |
| Chau Doc | 9 | 17 | 1,384 | | |
| Phong Dinh | 1 | 1 | 65 | | |
| Vinh Binh | 26 | 39 | 2,268 | | |
| Total: | 59 | 85 | 4,663 | | |

Both the Indochina War and the present conflict not only have hampered the expansion of education in the highlands but have undone some of the earlier gains, particularly in areas where lack of security or the actual conduct of military operations has forced teachers to leave villages for the safety of provincial capitals. As pacification moves ahead, it may be possible to restore primary education in such areas, and plans should be made also to extend it to all pacified areas (for example, Binh Dinh Province) where previously it did not exist. Another way of spreading literacy would be through a popular culture program, such as that organized in 1955. It would involve simple courses in reading and writing, without the buildings and trained staff needed for a program of formal primary education.

Any effort of bringing literacy to remote areas will be aided by the extensive research in structural linguistics that the SIL staff has conducted on the languages of the Brou, Pacoh, Katu, Cua, Jeh, Halang, Sedang, Bahnar, Mnong Rlam, Northern Roglai, Stieng, and Chrau, as well as of the Cham and some northern highland groups (the Tho, White Tai, and Muong). As a result of this work, alphabets are being devised and primers printed for the first time. With financial assistance from USAID, primers already have been prepared in the Bahnar, Brou, Chrau, Pacoh, Northern Roglai, Sedang, and Stieng languages, as well as in Cham, White Tai, and Tho. Table 3 shows the continuing progress of this work by the SIL.

A serious obstacle to the rapid growth of education in the highlands is the lack of teachers. One of the inter-war achievements of the GVN was the founding of the Highland

## Table 3

## PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION OF FIFTY PRIMERS PREPARED BY THE SUMMER INSTITUTE OF LINGUISTICS FOR THE MINORITY LANGUAGES OF VIETNAM

| LANGUAGE | PROVINCE | PRIMERS (in series) | PRINTED '62-'63 | DISTRIBUTED '62-'63 | PRINTED '64 | DISTRIBUTED '64 | PRINTED '65 | DISTRIBUTED '65 | PRINTED '66-Feb '67 | DISTRIBUTED '66-Feb '67 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bahnar | Kontum | 1 | | | 200 | 200 | 400 | 300 | 5,000 | 5,000 |
| | | 2 | | | 200 | 200 | 400 | 300 | 5,000 | 5,000 |
| | | 3 | | | 200 | 200 | 400 | 300 | 5,000 | 5,000 |
| | | 4 | | | 200 | 200 | 400 | 300 | 5,000 | 5,000 |
| | | 5 | | | | | | | 5,000 | 5,000 |
| | | 6 | | | | | | | 5,000 | 5,000 |
| Brou | Quang Tri | Preprimer | | | 600 | 500 | | | | |
| | | 1 | | | 600 | 500 | | | | |
| | | 2 | | | 600 | 500 | | | | |
| | | 3 | | | 600 | 500 | | | | |
| | | 4 | | | 600 | 500 | | | | |
| | | 5 | | | 600 | 500 | | | | |
| | | 6 | | | 600 | 500 | | | | |
| | | 7 | | | 600 | 500 | | | | |
| | | 8 | | | 600 | 500 | | | | |
| | | 9 | | | 600 | 500 | | | | |
| | | 10 | | | 600 | 500 | | | | |
| | | 11 | | | 600 | 500 | | | | |
| | | 12 | | | 600 | 500 | | | | |
| | | 13 | | | 600 | 500 | | | | |
| | | 14 | | | 600 | 500 | | | | |
| | | 15 | | | 600 | 500 | | | | |
| | | 16 | | | 600 | 500 | | | | |
| Cham | Ninh Thuan | 1 | 2,700 | 50 | | | | | | |
| | | 2 | 2,700 | 50 | | | | | | |
| Chrau | Long Khanh | Preprimer | | | | | | | 200 | 200 |
| | | 1 | | | 2,500 | 500 | | | | |
| | | 2 | | | 200 | 200 | 1,500 | 500 | | |
| | | 3 | | | 600 | 600 | | | | |
| | | 4 | | | 200 | 200 | | | | |
| Pacoh | Thua Thien | 1 | 2,000 | 50 | | | | | | |
| | | 2 | | | 1,500 | 50 | | | | |
| | | 3 | | | | | 200 | 50 | | |
| | | 4 | | | | | 200 | 50 | | |
| | | 5 | | | | | | | | |
| | | 6 | | | | | | | 200 | 200 |
| | | 7 | | | | | | | 200 | 200 |
| | | 8 | | | | | | | 200 | 200 |
| | | 9 | | | | | | | 200 | 200 |
| R. Roglai | Khanh Hoa | 1 | | | | | 150 | 100 | | |
| | | 2 | | | | | 150 | 100 | | |
| | | 3 | | | | | 150 | 100 | | |
| Sedang | Kontum | 1 | | | | | | | 1,000 | 1,000 |
| | | 2 | | | | | | | 1,000 | 1,000 |
| | | 3 | | | | | | | 1,000 | 1,000 |
| | | 4 | | | | | | | 1,000 | 1,000 |
| | | 5 | | | | | | | 1,000 | 1,000 |
| | | 6 | | | | | | | 1,000 | 1,000 |
| | | 7 | | | | | | | 1,000 | 1,000 |
| | | 8 | | | | | | | 1,000 | 1,000 |
| Stieng | Phuoc Long | 1 | 2,700 | 2,000 | | | | | | |
| | | 2 | 2,700 | 2,000 | | | | | | |
| | | 3 | 2,700 | 2,000 | | | | | | |
| | | 4 | 2,700 | 1,000 | | | | | | |
| | | 5 | | | 2,500 | 500 | | | | |
| T. Tai | Tuyen Duc | 1 | 2,700 | 50 | | | | | | |
| | | 2 | 2,700 | 50 | | | | | | |
| Tho | Tuyen Duc | 1 | 100 | | | | | | | |
| TOTAL | | | 23,700 | 7,250 | 18,500 | 11,350 | 3,950 | 2,100 | 39,000 | 39,000 |

Total number printed, 1962 - February, 1967 85,150
Total number distributed, 1962 - February, 1967 59,700

Normal School at Ban Me Thuot in 1957. It advanced the development of education, but it did so in areas of the high plateaus where education already was fairly well established. Table 4, showing the ethnic origins of applicants and students at the Highland Normal School, was prepared from records of the school itself; if one discounts the Cham and the refugees from North Vietnam, it indicates that those who benefit most from this institution are the Rhadé, Jarai, and Koho-speaking groups, who live relatively close to the school. (This conclusion is borne out also by Table 2.)

Table 4

ETHNIC DATA ON CANDIDATES AND STUDENTS AT THE HIGHLAND NORMAL SCHOOL (BAN ME THUOT, DARLAC PROVINCE) IN 1965

A. Ethnic Distribution of Candidates for Admission

| Ethnic Group | Number Who Took Entrance Examination | Number Who Pass Entrance Examinat |
|---|---|---|
| Rhadé | 54 | 21 |
| Jarai | 19 | 8 |
| Sedang | 6 | 0 |
| Mnong | 2 | 1 |
| Koho-speaking | 7 | 3 |
| Cham | 44 | 10 |
| North Vietnamese Highlanders | 21 | 5 |
| Total: | 153 | 48 |

B. Ethnic Composition of Second-Year Class

| Ethnic Group | Number Enrolled |
|---|---|
| Rhadé | 25 |
| Jarai | 6 |
| Koho-speaking | 6 |
| Chru | 1 |
| White Tai | 2 |
| Cham | 10 |
| Total: | 50 |

Additional normal schools are needed in the highlands to serve areas that are far removed from Ban Me Thuot. As security improves, a normal school might be established in Son Ha District, Quang Ngai Province, for example, to train primary-school teachers for the northern part of the South Vietnamese highlands. Another could be set up at Lac Duong (Dran) District, Tuyen Duc Province, to serve the southern portion of the highlands.

2. Secondary-level education: The program for secondary education should be geared to the wide range of skills needed in the implementation of social and economic development programs.

An important function of any secondary school is to train those who will move on to higher education and eventually assume positions of leadership. (This will be discussed more fully in the section dealing with higher education.) Although most of today's highland leaders have had some secondary schooling, it is significant that only two are reputed to have their second baccalaureate, the diploma that completes the final phase of the French secondary-school curriculum. In meeting the Highlanders' request for special consideration in secondary-school and university admissions, which their leaders presented at the October 1964 Pleiku conference, the GVN decreed that Highlanders would receive a bonus of ten extra points per hundred in secondary-school entrance examinations, and a 20 per cent bonus on their first and second baccalaureate examinations. Also, the Ministry of Education has organized special "seventh-level" classes emphasizing mathematics and the Vietnamese language in an effort to help Highlanders to enter secondary school. Furthermore, the GVN is

providing 300 "national government scholarships" (double the previous number), most of which are to enable southern and northern (refugee) Highlander and Cham students to attend secondary school. The Asia Foundation has raised the number of similar scholarships from 100 to 150.

Along with the need for an educated elite of Highlanders able to guide social and economic development through planning and implementation, there will be a concomitant demand for a large nonfarming group, new to highland societies, with a wide range of technical skills and training in numerous crafts and professions. Programs for secondary-level training should be planned to meet this need. As Table 5 indicates, Highlanders are being trained as health technicians and nurses in Saigon and Hue, and in various other technical fields in Saigon, Hue, Danang, and Ban Me Thuot. In Hue, fourteen Highlanders are studying forestry. This constitutes a good beginning, but the need for local training courses of varying duration and in a wide range of additional skills is growing. At the present time, for example, the demand is for more Highlanders with clerical training. The Commission for Highland Affairs, for lack of qualified Highlanders, is having to use a clerical staff that is almost exclusively Vietnamese, and this situation obtains throughout the administrative structure of the highlands. Several kinds of courses might be devised to remedy it. Typing and shorthand could be taught in existing secondary schools, and in special clerical schools set up for those with only a primary education. Other clerical skills could be imparted through in-service training. As part of such a program, for example, Highlanders might be sent to work in the Saigon office of the Commission for Highland Affairs.

## SPECIALIZED TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR MINORITY-GROUP STUDENTS, 1964-1966*

| FIELDS | COURSES | NUMBER OF STUDENTS** | | | ETHNIC DISTRIBUTION WITHIN TOTAL NUMBER | | | DUE TO ENTER |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Attending | Graduated | Total | Southern Highlanders | Northern Highlanders | Cham | |
| ADMINISTRATION | Administrators 1st class (three-year program) | 13 | 1 | 14 | 1 | 6 | 6 | |
| | Administrators 2nd class (one-year course) | 10 | 10 | 20 | 14 | 3 | 3 | |
| | Law School | | | | | | | 1 |
| UNIVERSITY | Medical School | 2 | | 2 | 1 | 1 | | 2 |
| | School of Pharmacy | 1 | | 1 | | 1 | | |
| HEALTH | Health Technicians | 7 | 1 | 8 | 4 | 2 | 2 | |
| | Nurses' Assistants | 6 | | 6 | 1 | 3 | 2 | |
| | Nurses (Saigon and Hue) | 20 | 10 | 30 | 9 | 5 | 6 | |
| | Registered Midwives | 1 | | 1 | | | 1 | |
| PEDAGOGY | Long An Community Development Teachers School | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | 1 | 7 |
| | Qui Nhon Pedagogy School | | | | | | | 2 |
| | Ban Me Thuot Highlands Pedagogy School | | | | | | | 2 |
| TECHNOLOGY | Electrical Engineering Schools | | | | | | | |
| | Technicians | | | | | | | 2 |
| | Engineers | | | | | | | 2 |
| | Civil Engineering Schools | | | | | | | |
| | Technicians | 7 | | 7 | 4 | | 3 | 5 |
| | Engineers | | | | | | | 3 |
| TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING | Phu Tho Secondary Technical School | 3 | [illegible] | 5 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 8 |
| | Hue Technical School | 9 | | 9 | 9 | | | |
| | Danang Technical School | 3 | | 3 | 3 | | | |
| | Ban Me Thuot Y Ut Technical School | 146 | | 146 | 42 | 11 | 49 | 58 |
| | Regina Pacis Technical School for Girls (Saigon) | 10 | | 10 | 8 | 2 | | 2 |
| | Home Decoration School | 8 | | 8 | 4 | | 4 | |
| | National School of Commerce | | | | | | | 5 |
| AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY, AND ANIMAL HUSBANDRY | School of Agriculture, Forestry, & Animal Husbandry | | | | | | | |
| | Hue: 3rd and 5th Ses. | 14 | | 14 | 14 | | | 6 |
| | Bao Loc: 3rd and 5th Ses. | 5 | | 5 | | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| | Can Tho. 3rd and 5th Ses. | 4 | | 4 | | | 4 | 7 or 8 |
| | Agric. Inst. | 2 | | 2 | 1 | | 1 | |
| | Forestry Inst. | | 1 | 1 | | | | |
| | Forestry Compt. | | 1 | 1 | | | | |
| | Veterinary Compt. | | 3 | 3 | | | | |
| MILITARY | Thu Duc Officer Training School | | 53 | 53 | 51 | | 2 | |
| | School for NCOs | | 34 | 34 | | | | |
| | Military Preparatory School of Pleiku | 196 | | 196 | 196 | | | |

*From statistics prepared by the Special Commission for Highland Affairs.

**The third column of figures shows the totals of students graduated from and now attending the individual schools. The sum of the ethnic data to the right of that column may be the same or smaller. Students about to enter have not been included in total.

Most existing technical schools already offer relatively sophisticated training in a curriculum that extends over several years. In addition, it may be useful to devise shorter courses that will train Highlanders in specific skills, such as the care and repair of motor vehicles (trucks, automobiles, motor bicycles, and two- and three-wheeled motor scooters), smithery, carpentry, shoemaking and repairing, barbering, and sewing.[2] Such a program should include some scheme by which anyone receiving training could obtain the financial aid necessary to launching him in his trade.

The Asia Foundation, recognizing the need for training of this type, has granted scholarships to eight highland girls for the study of home economics at the Regina Pacis School in Saigon, and to six young men for a six-month course in auto repair and electrical installation at the La San School in Dalat.

Suggestions for training in agricultural skills and petty commerce will be discussed below, under the heading of Economic Programs.

3. Higher education: (a) Any program designed to attract Highlanders to the university level should aim at producing an elite that

[2] Some training in these crafts, as well as instruction in improved agricultural techniques, is being furnished by the Highland Training Centers in Pleiku and Hue (the latter having lost considerably in importance since the opening of the former). A common complaint of trainees is that the instruction is too brief and superficial. Also, many have reported that, when they returned to their villages, they lacked the means to carry on the trade they had just learned.

will include professionals in all fields of specialization. (b) It is recommended that the Commission for Highland Affairs form a special board to select candidates for higher education.

(a) Through their spokesmen the Highlanders have expressed the desire to participate more in the national life of Vietnam. As their social and economic development continues and they are integrated in the national framework, there will be great need for a highland elite with a wide range of specialized knowledge. Today, most Highlanders with advanced training have received it at the National Institute of Administration (NIA), which was founded in 1954. Between 1954 and 1958, when President Diem ordered the Highland Section at the NIA abolished, a total of seventy-one students received training in four classes. Thirteen of these were Highlanders (the remaining 58 were refugees from the highlands of North Vietnam and Cham), and many of them have since emerged as highland leaders (see Table 6). Between 1958 and 1964, there were no highland students at the NIA. Following the Pleiku conference of October 1964 and the government's promise that it would provide more higher education for Highlanders, Touneh Han Tho (a Chru, who had been in the fourth and last class of the Highland Section) was admitted to the three-year course which prepared civil servants of high rank. A special one-year course, launched in 1964-1965, included ten Highlanders: eight Jarai and two Rhadé. The 1966-1967 course has four Highlanders: two Jarai and two Rhadé. Only an estimated two Highlanders have passed the second baccalaureate, and there are as yet no Highlanders with

Table 6

HIGHLANDERS TRAINED IN THE NIA BETWEEN 1954-1958
AND THEIR SUBSEQUENT POSITIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| **First Class (1954-1955)** | |
| Touprong Hiu (Chru) | Presiding Judge at Highland Court of Tuyen Duc Province. A well-known leader, active at conferences, and a successful highland farmer. (For further details see the next subsection of this Memorandum, on "Economic Programs.") |
| Ya Ya Sahau (Chru) | Deputy Province Chief for Highland Affairs, Tuyen Duc Province. |
| Y Blu (Rhadé) | Chief of Refugee Affairs, Darlac Province. |
| **Second Class (1955-1956)** | |
| Y Dhuat Nie Kdam (Rhadé) | Deputy Province Chief for Highland Affairs, Darlac Province. |
| Y Chon Mlo Duon Du (Rhadé) | Special Secretary in Commission for Highland Affairs. |
| Rcom Rock (Jarai) | Chief of Economic Section, Pleiku Province. |
| Y Soi | Remains in village because of illness. |
| **Third Class (1956-1957)** | |
| Pierre Yuk (Bahnar) | Deputy Province Chief for Highland Affairs, Kontum Province. |
| Touneh Yoh (Chru) | Deputy District Chief, Don Duong District, Tuyen Duc Province. |
| Touneh Han Dinh (Chru) | Deputy District Chief, Lac Duong District, Tuyen Duc Province (killed in a helicopter crash in September 1966). |
| Rcom Perr (Jarai) | Secretary to Deputy Province Chief for Highland Affairs, Phu Bon Province. |
| **Fourth Class (1957-1958)** | |
| Boui Ngai (Chru) | Deputy District Chief, Di Linh (Djiring) District, Bao Loc Province. |
| Touneh Han Tho (Chru) | Currently the only Highlander in the NIA three-year program for the training of higher civil servants. |

university degrees. Currently, the Asia Foundation is giving scholarship support to a Rhadé in the Medical School of Hue University, and USAID has granted two scholarships to Highlanders (one Mnong Rlam and one Sre) who began a teacher training course at the University of Southern Illinois in the fall of 1966.

For Highlanders to achieve desired representation high in the GVN, more of them will have to take advanced training in fields other than administration. For example, it would be desirable ultimately to have Highlanders trained in Vietnamese law hold legal positions in such government bodies as the Commission for Highland Affairs and the proposed National Assembly. Doctors, educators, economists, sociologists, engineers, agronomists, and other professionals ideally should be qualified to occupy high positions in the appropriate ministries and other government agencies.

Responsible and well-trained Highlanders will constitute the elite that must guide and shape the development of their societies. Those in the central government will be of great value in the organization and implementation of social and economic programs, and in furnishing a channel of communication between the government and the highland people. In addition, there will be a need for trained specialists among the Highlanders, who can be entrusted with the research and experimentation that are essential to economic development. (For details on their likely role see the discussion under "Economic Programs.")

Until the economic development of the highlands has progressed to the point where at least some families can pay for the higher education of their children, a program

of this kind will have to be subsidized by the GVN, with assistance from foreign aid agencies and private foundations. The government also will be responsible for the professional placement of university graduates and other specialists with advanced training.

(b) One of the difficulties in any scholarship program is that of selecting the most promising candidates. The quality of secondary education in the highlands being uneven, the fact that a student has done well in his secondary school does not necessarily mean that he is qualified for the university, nor does it tell enough about his motivation and other important considerations. It is recommended, therefore, that the Commission for Highland Affairs appoint a special board of highland leaders, whose task it would be to review all scholarship applications. Having consulted with the authorities of the candidate's secondary school and with people from his native area, and having interviewed the student himself, they would submit their recommendation to the agencies concerned with the granting of scholarship aid, that is to say, to the Ministry of Education, the USAID Education Division, and perhaps the Asia Foundation.

## B. The Special Commission for Highland Affairs

Both FULRO and non-FULRO highland leaders have repeatedly asked for more representation of Highlanders in the upper ranks of the central government. Under General Nguyen Khanh, a bureau in charge of highland affairs was organized in the Ministry of Defense, and initially was known officially as the Directorate of Highland Social Welfare Activities. By a decree of May 5, 1964, this agency

became the Directorate for Highland Affairs. Just before the Pleiku conference of October 1964, Premier Nguyen Khanh signed a decree that removed the directorate from the Ministry of Defense and placed it under the Premier's office. This change was announced at the conference in response to the request for highland representation near the center of government. Some time after the conference, Colonel Touprong Ya Ba, a respected Highlander who had been the GVN emissary to the rebel Buon Sar Pa camp during the September 1964 uprising, was appointed to head the directorate.

Highland leaders were not fully satisfied, however. They maintained that the directorate served only a liaison function and that Colonel Ya Ba had no authority to formulate or even to implement programs for the Highlanders. At the meeting held in Saigon in March 1965, highland leaders asked that the directorate be raised in status and become the Special Commission for Highland Affairs, and a similar request was included in the GVN-FULRO negotiations that lasted from August to November 1965. On February 21, 1966, following the Honolulu Conference, Premier Nguyen Cao Ky announced the formation of a new war cabinet. One of the newly created positions was that of the Commissioner for Highland Affairs, who was to be head of the Special Commission for Highland Affairs. The man appointed to the post was Paul Nur, a Bahnar, who had been Deputy Province Chief for Highland Affairs in Kontum Province and who, in 1958, had been jailed for his role in the Highlanders' general strike.

The Commission has representatives in the twenty-three provinces with a highland population. Its functions cover a wide range of activities,[3] many of which are designed to satisfy the express desires of the Highlanders.

1. Defining the functions, responsibilities, and prerogatives of the Special Commission for Highland Affairs in relation to government ministries and other agencies. In its prospectus for action,[4] the Special Commission for Highland Affairs divides its activities into three categories: unilateral, coordinated, and motivating activities. These cover a very wide range of projects and programs, from such broad objectives as improving the Highlanders' living conditions to the very specific tasks of conducting a census and providing tools, animals, and seed to bolster the economy, all of them integral to giving the Highlanders a well-defined place in the national framework and a greater share in their own socioeconomic development. It is not clear, however, how much of the responsibility for implementing the various programs will fall on the Commission. Certainly, many of the activities listed are properly the concern of the ministries of Education, Agriculture, and Social Welfare and of other government agencies. In some of these projects, the technical capability lies with the pertinent ministry, and the role of the Commission is likely to be that of consultant. Conducting a census, for example, should be the responsibility of the Bureau of Statistics; but at the organizing stage the Commission

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[3] See Appendix D.

[4] Ibid.

ought to be consulted on how to adapt the questionnaire to the kinship situations of the Highlanders. (For example, the composition of the large matrilineal household group of the Rhadé will have to be treated differently from that of the Vietnamese household.) In taking account of these cultural peculiarities, the Commission would benefit by the ethnic diversity of its staff. The same would be true for agricultural projects, which would have to be adapted to the varying customs of the highlands.[5]

There will also be a coordinating function for the Commission to perform, an extension of what it is currently doing in working with USAID and the Ministry of Education in the Boarding School Program. This will enhance its role in the socioeconomic development of highland societies, to which coordination among the ministries and agencies, both GVN and foreign, will be essential.

Finally, the Commission will assume primary responsibility for a number of programs and projects that heretofore have been the concern of other governmental agencies. It will be suggested below that a Center for Highland Research, under the administrative control of the Special Commission for Highland Affairs, be established in the highlands which would coordinate ethnographic, agricultural, silvacultural, and soil research and would also serve as a documentation center and a place for agricultural experimentation and training. Although this center would require some technical advice from the Ministry of Agriculture and other ministries, its planning and operation would be the responsibility of the Commission.

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[5]See Appendix F for a survey of the different agricultural systems of highland groups.

The several programs we have suggested for familiarizing the Vietnamese with the Highlanders' way of life also would be entrusted to the Commission, with expert counsel from other agencies. Thus, the Ministry of Education might provide technical advice on an ethnological museum and in the collecting of highland poetry and folk tales; the music faculty of the University and Radio Saigon could help organize programs on highland music.

2. A program of specialized training for Commission members. As was pointed out earlier, Highlanders with advanced degrees will have to assume leading roles in the ministries and in agencies such as the Special Commission and the National Assembly, in which they will be able to guide the socioeconomic development of the highlands. Secondary-level education also would have to be greatly expanded to supply the wide range of technical skills needed. To plan and carry out its program, the Commission will require not only clerical workers but Highlanders with a variety of other skills. Qualified representatives in each province with a highland population will contribute vitally to the successful functioning of the Commission, as consultants on programs and projects in their respective provinces, as coordinators, and as a channel for keeping Commission headquarters in Saigon informed on local situations and wants. If, as suggested previously, the Commission assumes responsibility for selecting the students who are to be given a higher education, province representatives will also be responsible for collecting and transmitting to Saigon the background material and character testimonies obtained from local people.

The headquarters staff will be called on for a growing variety of skills as the Commission assumes greater control over its own projects and programs. For the suggested ethnological museum, for example, staff members will need special training if such an institution is to be well run, with uncluttered, attractive displays. To this end, one person should be given formal training in museology.[6]

C. Highland Law Courts

Prior to the arrival of the French, laws among the Highlanders were unwritten; they took the form of taboos and sanctions that had been passed down through the generations and were known and respected by all. In every society, the law was a well-defined moral order, with clearly specified punishments for its offenders, and it was the responsibility of the village leaders to maintain it. Interpersonal disputes that violated this moral order were primarily the affair of the family or families involved, and secondarily that of the village. Jural authority did not go beyond the village.

The French allowed the Highlanders to resolve difficulties among themselves according to their own customs. Decrees of September 17, 1929, and August 20, 1938, provided for Highland Law Courts in Darlac and Kontum provinces. In 1940, the able French résident of Darlac Province published a codified set of laws for the Rhadé based on their

[6]The Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago, in conjunction with the Department of Anthropology of the University of Chicago, offers courses that emphasize museum display methods.

customs, and this became the basis for adjudication in the Ban Me Thuot court.[7] Decree No. 221-2673 (August 9, 1947) outlined an organizational scheme for similar courts to be set up throughout the highlands at the province, district, and village levels. Two more law codes followed, both written by administrators: Gerber prepared the set for the Stieng, and Guilleminet produced a coutumier covering the Bahnar, Jarai, and Sedang of Kontum Province.[8] The French ethnologist Lafont subsequently published a comprehensive volume on the legal customs of the Jarai.[9]

The cases brought before the highland courts were those that could not be resolved at the village level. Court procedures were relatively simple. At Ban Me Thuot, for example, the judge was a respected elderly man, Y Keo Knoul, who held his sessions during the first five days of every month. He would sit behind a simple desk in the middle of a small room, while the plaintiff and his party sat on one side of the room, and the defendant and his group on the other. After each side had presented its case and witnesses had been heard, the judge would refer to the pertinent law, and the matter usually would be resolved through discussion.

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[7] L. Sabatier, Recueil des coutumes Rhadées du Darlac, Imprimerie d'Extrême-Orient, Hanoi, 1940.

[8] T. Gerber, "Coutumier Stieng," Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient, Vol. 45, 1951, pp. 228-269. Paul P. Guilleminet, Coutumier de la tribu Bahnar des Sedang et des Jarai (de la province de Kontum), Publications of the Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient, Vol. 32, Paris, 1952.

[9] Pierre-Bernard Lafont, Toloi Djuat: Coutumier de la tribu Jarai, Publications of the Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient, Paris, 1963.

Under the Diem regime, in line with the policy of assimilating the Highlanders in the Vietnamese cultural sphere, the Highland Law Courts were relegated to insignificance as Vietnamese legal codes were introduced for the first time. The Highlanders, who considered Vietnamese law ill-suited to their societies, greatly resented this change, and one of their requests at the Pleiku conference in 1964, and again in Saigon in March 1965, was that Highland Law Courts be reinstated. The GVN acceded to the demand, and, on July 22, 1965, promulgated a decree aimed at "reorganizing Highland Common Law Courts."[10] Under the new arrangement, these courts will have jurisdiction over civil cases, "highland affairs," and the penal offenses in which both parties are Highlanders. Criminal and other offenses committed by highland servicemen, crimes against the nation, and those involving Vietnamese will be brought before the National Courts.

The new law provides for courts at the village, district, and province levels. The Village Highland Law Court will be presided over by the Village Administrative Committee chief, assisted by two highland assessors. Early in December of every year, the chairman of the village administrative committee together with residents of the village must prepare a list of twelve notables elected by the populace. The district chief, who is also the justice of the peace, then selects from each list two regular assessors and two deputy assessors to serve on the Village Law Court. When there are cases to be heard, at least one

[10]See Appendix E for the complete text.

weekly session must be held. Once a case is resolved, the decision is recorded and signed by the contesting parties, and this forecloses the right to appeal to a higher court. Appeal is possible when the case remains unreconciled.

At the district level, the president of the court will be the district chief, assisted by two highland assessors and aided also by a clerk-interpreter. The assessors are to be selected from lists of highland notables elected by the district residents. The court will sit at least twice a month at the district headquarters. Its jurisdiction will extend to cases appealed from the village courts, lawsuits on civil and commercial matters involving more than 500 VN$ (but less than 1500 VN$), "all kinds of minor offenses," and "cases traditionally considered serious ones, such as offenses against religions and creeds, viz. desecration of graves, insults uttered during a ritual ceremony, disturbance of an oathtaking ceremony, and offenses against deities."

At the province level, a Highland Affairs Section is to be organized in the National Court. The presiding judge, a Highlander, will be assisted by two highland assessors to be drawn from lists of elected notables, a national clerk who will keep the records, and an interpreter. The Highland Affairs Court will sit once or twice a month, depending on demand. It will be competent to pass judgment on appeals from the Highland District Courts and on actions which go beyond the jurisdiction of village or district courts.

At the time that the above decree was promulgated, in July 1965, the only Highland Law Court technically still in existence was the one at Ban Me Thuot, with Y Keo Knoul

as judge, and it was functioning to some degree. In April 1966, selections of personnel for village, district, and province courts in Tuyen Duc Province were made, in keeping with the announcement contained in an official document (Decision No. 001-TD/TP/QD) dated March 18, 1966, and signed by the province chief. Upon selection, the names, together with character statements, were submitted by the province chief to the Attorney General, Director of South Vietnam Judicial Affairs, Saigon.

On August 22, 1966, in a document (425/BTP/KT/01) marked "urgent," the Director of Cabinet of the Ministry of Justice asked the Director General of Budget and Foreign Aid for funds, totaling 5,598,000 VN$, with which to establish Highland Law Courts at the village, district, and province levels in Tuyen Duc, Darlac, Pleiku, and Kontum provinces. The document showed an itemized list of projected expenditures and included this statement:

> The establishment of the Highland Law Courts in accordance with government policy is essential to winning the sympathy of the Highlanders and strengthening their faith in the government. It also is in accordance with the observation contained in official letter 1159/HP/DUTV/1 of the Special Commission for Highland Affairs that these courts "will aid substantially in convincing the FULRO to return and support the central government."

On September 7, 1966, the Ministry of Justice issued a directive (No. 9593-BTP/HOV) to the public prosecutors in the Courts of Appeal in Saigon and Hue calling on them to implement the decree of July 22, 1965, in the provinces

of Darlac, Quang Duc, Tuyen Duc, Lam Dong, Pleiku, Kontum, and Phu Bon.[11]

After outlining the structure of the court system, the directive called for meetings that would make it possible to have village and district court personnel designated by September 25, 1966, with final lists to be compiled by October 2. These were to be forwarded to the province chiefs' offices by October 8, 1966, along with all particulars about the candidates and the district chiefs' evaluation of their "proficiency, moral character, reputation, and nationalistic spirit." The public prosecutors of Saigon and Hue and the province chiefs would then make the final selections and submit them to the Ministry of Justice by October 15, 1966. Tuyen Duc Province was included because, the directive noted, the selection of the court personnel there "had not been in close compliance with the law."

1. <u>For the time being, it is advisable to avoid creating an excessively complex structure for the Highland Law Courts</u>. Given the lack of administrative talent in highland areas, the structure of the Highland Law Courts envisaged in the law probably cannot be established in

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[11]Article 12 of the July 1965 legislation (see Appendix E) called for a Highland Affairs Section in every National Court of first instance. This would have required such sections to be set up at Dalat, Pleiku, and Ban Me Thuot, rather than in the province capitals as specified in the September 1966 directive. It is not clear at the present time how this discrepancy will affect the implementation of the earlier decree.

most provinces. Of the seven provinces designated in the directive of September 7, 1966, only five -- Darlac, Tuyen Duc, Pleiku, Kontum, and Lam Dong -- have among their inhabitants Highlanders who gained experience in the courts established by the French, and can draw on a pool of educated local people for their court personnel. And even with these advantages, they are likely to have difficulty in finding qualified personnel for all of the district-level courts.

Inevitably, therefore, the extent to which courts throughout the highlands can manage to conform to the written law will vary from place to place. Generally speaking, it would be advisable to begin by establishing courts at the top level, and work downward as more qualified personnel becomes available. In the five provinces noted above, for example, there should be no problem in finding Highlanders to fill needed positions at all province courts and most district courts. (The lack of qualified personnel undoubtedly will be felt in such places as Dak Sut and Tou Morong Districts in Kontum Province, Phuoc An District in Darlac Province, and Phu Nhon District in Pleiku Province.) In Quang Duc and Phu Bon, the province courts should take priority over district courts because of the paucity of administratively talented Highlanders at the district level.

Plans also should be made to establish Highland Law Courts in the other sixteen provinces with highland populations. This will pose several problems. The first of these is once again the lack of qualified personnel, but the social and economic development of those areas should eventually produce the necessary reservoir of educated

people. The second problem in most of the sixteen provinces is that the capital is relatively far removed from the highland population. The capitals of Quang Tri, Thua Thien, Quang Nam, Quang Tin. Quang Ngai, Binh Dinh, Phu Yen, Khanh Hoa, Ninh Thuan, Binh Thuan. Binh Tuy, and Phuoc Tuy (twelve of the twenty-three provinces that have Highlanders among their population) are all on or near the coast and thus a considerable distance from the uplands where the highland people live. (In Phuoc Tuy, some Chrau live in the vicinity of Phuoc Le, Baria, but most are scattered in more remote areas.) In these coastal provinces it would be advisable, therefore, to begin by establishing Highland Law Courts at the district level, as, for example, in Huong Hoa District (Quang Tri Province). which is a center for the Brou people; in Tra Bong District, where many Cua villages surround the capital town; in Son Ha District, a traditional Hre center, from which a Hre member was elected to the Constitutional Assembly; and in Ba To District. another Hre area.

There is no need at the present time to formalize the legal process at the village level. Highland villagers, like Vietnamese villagers, prefer to settle their difficulties within the framework of family or village without recourse to outside authority.

2. Training legal personnel for Highland Courts. An educational program of this kind should be geared not only to the needs of courts that are being established for the first time, but also to the exigencies of the projected social and economic development of the highlands. At present, as already indicated, only those areas with a residual group of people who gained experience in the

courts established by the French, and provinces that can draw on a reservoir of the better-educated, have the manpower resources with which to implement the new law to any extent. There is immediate need for a training program that will produce legal personnel for the provinces in which courts previously have not existed and where general education still is at a rudimentary stage of development. This will involve far more than acquiring basic clerical skills; if all the stipulations of the new law are to be met, it will be the responsibility of judges and court clerks to record decisions and also to compile codes of indigenous laws similar to the coutumiers prepared by the French.

Finally, it is inevitable that the changes brought about by the socioeconomic development of highland societies will raise the number of legal problems that come before the higher courts, and will add to their complexity. To function efficiently, therefore, the Highland Courts will need increasingly well-trained and sophisticated staffs.

## ECONOMIC PROGRAMS

All programs for the Highlanders' economic development should aim primarily at elevating their societies from the tribal economic level, where they grow chiefly subsistence crops, to a peasant level at which, in addition to raising enough for their own consumption, they will ultimately produce cash crops for the market.

A number of programs might serve to achieve this goal. The suggestions outlined below are concerned, first, with the vital question of land tenure. From there the discussion will proceed to the matter of agricultural development

and to related programs having to do with marketing and petty commerce.

## A. Land Tenure

The resolution of land claims has been foremost among the express desires of the Highlanders, who point to the fact that they were the first occupiers of the soil with traditional land-tenure systems. By and large, the French were tolerant of these claims, but under their administration the need to cope with them was confined to areas where plantations were being established. Under the Ngo Dinh Diem government, the policy was that, with the exception of land already deeded either by the French regime or by the newly-established republic, all land in the highlands was public land. This policy was manifest in the 1957 Land Development Program, wherein lowland Vietnamese were settled in the highlands and given land, some of which the Highlanders claimed as rightfully theirs.[12] No formal provision was made to compensate the claimants.[13] In 1958 the Diem government's Highlander Resettlement Program called for Highlanders to be moved from land they were occupying into

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[12] These claims, and recommendations for ways of satisfying them, were contained in a report by the author, Preliminary Report on the P.M.S., Michigan State University Vietnam Advisory Group, Saigon, 1957. (P.M.S. stands for Pays Montagnards du Sud, or "Southern Highland Country," as the highlands were officially designated at the time.)

[13] Unofficially, General Le Van Kim, then Director of the Land Development Program, paid those farming on the site of the Buon Kroa Land Development Project (one of the first under the program) a total of some 30,000 VN$, a gesture which caused him to be removed from that position.

"reservations" where they would be "civilized." The only legal expressions of this policy were a decree of 1958 and an official letter of 1959, both of which stated, in effect, that Highlanders had a right only to the produce of the land they were farming, not to the land itself.

As a result of the Pleiku conference of October 1964, these decrees of the Diem era were rescinded. But the policy of treating undeeded highland land as public land has remained, as is manifest in legislation ordering a survey of public lands with the aim of granting title to those illegally occupying them. Title granted to Highlanders in conformity with such legislation is concessionary, with marked restrictions on the right to sell, and the stipulation that the GVN may appropriate the land, whenever it wishes, in return for adequate compensation.

1. Traditional Land-Tenure Systems

Every one of the twenty-one highland groups that are part of this study has its traditional definitions of land ownership and usufruct, unwritten rules that are known and respected by all highland societies.[14]

Land-tenure systems vary from group to group. Each group also has its inheritance rules for passing land on to succeeding generations and follows prescribed procedures for transferring right of ownership. Among the Chru, for example, the buyer of land sponsors a buffalo sacrifice to which all villagers are invited, particularly the children,

[14] See Appendix F for additional information on land tenure.

since it is they who, in future years, will be the surviving witnesses to the transaction. On this occasion, the price of the land is paid in front of the guests, and a stone smeared with blood from the sacrificial animals is placed on a dike to mark the event.

Where swidden agriculture is practiced, the rule followed by all the highland groups studied is that the swiddens, whether they are lying fallow or are being farmed, are the property of whoever first cleared and cultivated them. Everyone in the village society knows who lays claim to which swiddens, and everyone respects these rights. Among the Ma and Sre, the village Tom Bri, or "Forest Chief," is in charge of regulating all land use within the village territory, and villagers wishing to initiate a swidden must obtain his permission. Other highland groups have similar institutions. The Bahnar, for example, have toring, a territory comprising several villages with corporate ownership of the land and shared hunting rights as well. Non-toring people, called tomoi, are treated as outsiders whether or not they are Bahnar. In order to farm, hunt, or fish in the territory, they must obtain the permission of toring leaders.[15] In similar conventions, the Jeh have the sal ja, a village-owned territory; the Sedang have the cheam beng; and the Pacoh village exercises farming rights over a territory called a cruang. The Rhadé are unique in their po-lan ("proprietor of the

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[15] P. Guilleminet, Coutumier de la tribu Bahnar des Sedang et des Jarai (de la province de Kontum), Publications of the Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient, Vol. 32, Paris, 1952, p. 18.

land") system, wherein given territories belong to subclans, and the guardianship of each prescriptively is in the hands of the eldest female of the senior line, whose permission is requisite to farming or woodcutting within the territory.

Where Highlanders have permanent cultivation, the right of ownership is vested in individuals or kin groups. Many of the Lat, Hre, Cua, Chru, Mnong Rlam, Sre, Bahnar, and Jarai practice wet-rice cultivation, and their paddy fields are privately owned, as they are among the Vietnamese. This is also the case with permanent dry-rice fields farmed by the Rengao and Bahnar in the vicinity of Kontum. Near Ban Me Thuot, some small coffee estates are the property of individual Rhadé. Finally, Highlanders of all groups claim ownership of their house sites and kitchen-garden plots.

## 2. Land-Tenure Policy under the French

In 1925, the French administration had to face the question of land tenure in the highlands when the growing reputation of Darlac as an area of rich and fertile soil caused a land rush. Within a period of several months, over one hundred bids for land, totaling 92,000 hectares, were filed with the colonial administration in Saigon. The bidders were either individuals interested in establishing plantations, or else representatives of large French corporations wishing to extend their investments to tea, coffee, or rubber estates in Vietnam. To meet the demands of this new situation, the French administration undertook a study of the land question in the highlands. As a result, in 1927, Sabatier issued two comprehensive reports, the first concerned largely with the land-tenure question, and the second with recommendations for ways of

coping with the problems involved in developing the area.[16]

The first report pointed out that, while some land was unclaimed, there were large areas carefully apportioned by individuals, families, clans, or villages. It emphasized also that land-tenure systems varied from one ethnic group to another, and cited specific information on the Rhadé system.

The second report contained extensive suggestions for land settlement procedures. The essence of the recommendations was that unclaimed land (res nullius) be made immediately available for colonization, and that, with the approval of the colonial administration, a colonizer be granted title to the land. In the case of land claimed by Highlanders, however, a colonist would be entitled only to a bail emphythéotique, or 99-year lease. Also, the bidder for a given piece of land would need not only the approval of the colonial administration but also that of the Highlander (or group of Highlanders) who claimed title to the land. For example, in parts of the Rhadé country it would be essential to have the accord of the po-lan and headmen of the village within the territory concerned. To exemplify the legal procedure, the report included models of existing leases. One of these concerned a M. Maillot of the Paris suburb Neuilly-sur-Seine, who was negotiating for a plot of 25,000 hectares that a French corporation, which he represented, planned to develop with coffee and

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[16]"Documents de colonisation française en territoires non soumis à la jurisdiction et à l'administration annamites," Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1927 (manuscript in two parts).

rubber estates. The agreement specified a rental of 97.50 VN$ (pre-World War II piastres), of which the po-lan Y Nin was to receive 58.50 VN$, and po-lan Y Blum the remaining 39.00 VN$. Additional rentals went to several village headmen.

On July 30, 1932, the French administration issued a decree that allowed Highlanders to transfer land, provided the sale did not involve more than thirty hectares and was approved by either the local district chief or the governor of Annam. By implication, this constituted a recognition of the Highlanders' right to own land.

### 3. The GVN's Land-Tenure Policies

Under the Diem government, as already pointed out, land for which title had not yet been granted was regarded as public land. This policy was first articulated in the Land Development Program (1957) and then in the Highlander Resettlement Program (1958). Its legal basis was established by Decree No. 513-a/DT/CCDD (December 12, 1958) and Memorandum No. 981/BTC/DC (May 28, 1959), both of which said, in essence, that Highlanders had the right to enjoy only the produce of the land they cultivated, implying thereby that they did not have the right of ownership.

The stated aim of the Land Development Program, which was formulated in 1956 and launched in 1957, was to relieve overpopulation in cities and the central coastal plain, and to develop parts of the highlands. Also, although this was never explicitly stated, the program aimed at improving security in the highlands by establishing centers of controlled population in which many of the new inhabitants would be anticommunist northern refugees. Some of these

settlers were lured to the highlands with promises of land and ideal agricultural conditions; some were forcibly relocated, including more than one political undesirable. The program was administered by the Special General Commission for Land Development. Between 1957 and 1963, this Commission established 225 Land Development Centers, with a population of 52,182 families, a total of 274,945 persons. Some 112,443 hectares were brought under cultivation; of these, 3,000 were planted in kenaf and 26,750 in rubber.

After the coup d'état which toppled the Diem government on November 1, 1963, the new government discontinued the program that was so closely associated with President Diem. The Special General Commission for Land Development was abolished, the centers came under the administrative mantle of the provinces in which they were located, and the Agricultural Extension Directorate of the Ministry of Rural Affairs assumed responsibility for technical programs within the centers. As the previous rules against leaving the centers disappeared, their population began to diminish, with a concomitant decline in cultivation.

An ad hoc Committee on Land Development Centers reported in April 1965 that an estimated 7,047 families, comprising more than 35,000 people, had abandoned the centers, and between 3,000 and 4,000 families had moved from one center to another. According to the report, security in the centers had crumbled since 1963, and 25 to 30 per cent of the radios which had been presented to the centers to keep them in contact with province and district headquarters were no longer working. The lack of available young men made it difficult to provide a local defense force. Because of steadily increasing pressure from the

Viet Cong, 22 of the 225 centers had been completely abandoned for lack of security. Crop yields were greatly diminished, and a survey indicated that the rubber estates were in very bad condition.

In August 1965, an authoritative government document reported that the GVN then completely controlled less than 20 per cent of the Land Development Centers in operation. It gave the following breakdown:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Pleiku | 23 centers | 5 under GVN control |
| Phu Bon | 7 centers | 6 relative security* |
| Darlac | 30 centers | 7 under GVN control |
| Quang Duc | 9 centers | 4 under GVN control |
| Phuoc Long | 26 centers | 4 relative security* |
| Binh Long | 7 centers | 0 under GVN control |
| Binh Duong | 4 centers | 2 relative security* |
| Phuoc Thanh | 8 centers | 3 under GVN control |
| Phuoc Tuy | 3 centers | 0 under GVN control |
| Binh Tuy | 20 centers | 2 under GVN control |
| Kontum | 4 centers | 4 relative security* |

*Presumably, the term "relative security" meant that the GVN had control only part of the time.

At the same time, the province chief of Darlac pointed out that most of the Vietnamese refugees in that province were North Vietnamese who had fled from their land development centers. For several years, he added, the centers occupied by Vietnamese from the central coastal plain had been controlled by, and served as centers of operation for, the Viet Cong, who had enjoyed the cooperation of the local people.

With the dwindling of population and the breakdown of security, crop yields dropped. At the end of 1963, rice cultivation accounted for 54,500 hectares and secondary crop cultivation was 22,000 hectares. By the end of 1964,

these figures had fallen to 43,000 and 20,000 hectares, respectively. It was estimated that, in 1965, these 1964 figures would go down by another 40 per cent. Industrial crop yields (mainly rubber and kenaf) also declined. Cultivated areas dropped from 26,749 hectares in 1963 to 15,882 in 1965, and of these, only 10,000 hectares were reported to be tended. Although no figures are available for 1966, there are numerous indications that both the population in the centers and the areas under cultivation have continued to decline: Large military operations have taken place near some of the centers in Pleiku Province, the number of refugees from the centers has increased, and USAID province representatives report that more centers are being abandoned.

The Highlander Resettlement Program launched in 1958 was part of the Diem government's policy of total assimilation. Whole highland villages were to be resettled and grouped together in valleys and other areas where their inhabitants would have ready contact with Vietnamese. This, it was thought, would end the isolation of their previous existence in the hills and would prompt them to follow Vietnamese customs. President Diem was particularly eager to have them abandon the traditional swidden agriculture in favor of permanent field cultivation.[17]

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[17] A prevalent fear at the time was that the Highlanders would burn off all the forest cover in the highlands and thereby cause a change in the weather pattern. For other misconceptions concerning swidden agriculture, see the section on agricultural development, especially pp. 94-95.

As planned under the Resettlement Program, there would be a total of 80 centers with 88,000 Highlanders (the GVN believed this number to represent 12 per cent of the total highland population), who would be settled on 30,000 hectares of land. By February 1959, there were 33 centers with a reported population of 38,000 and encompassing 13,000 hectares. Highlanders were forced to move to these centers, and many complained of poor administration and lack of material assistance. In the An My center in Pleiku Province and the "reservation" at Son Ha, Quang Ngai Province, residents received little more than a third of a hectare per family (as compared to the Vietnamese settlers in the Land Development Centers, who received one hectare per family). By 1960, the program had begun to flounder. A new reservation near Cheo Reo was reported to have been opened, but upon investigation it was found to be only in the planning stage. The same was true of the reservation at Nam Dong, in Thua Thien Province. In Quang Ngai Province the program was given up because of "lack of good land," and in Quang Nam Province officials admitted it to be a failure. By 1961, the Resettlement Program was ended, and, as far as can be determined, none of the reservations has survived.

The Pleiku conference of October 1964 publicly rescinded the two decrees of the Diem era that recognized the Highlanders' right to the produce of their land but not to the land itself. It did not, however, abolish the notion that undeeded land was public land. This concept was contained in GVN land legislation issued both before and after the conference. In Decree No. 26-DD/DB/KS/TT (May 19, 1964), all heads of the Provincial Land Survey Service were directed

to begin surveys of "public lands illegally occupied and cultivated," a total area of an estimated 390,000 hectares. The decree stated that the government would soon provide farmers who had theretofore occupied those lands with "concessions on a temporary or definitive basis."

After the Pleiku conference, Circular No. 16,601b-BCTNT/HC/TC 3 (November 24, 1964), concerning "adjustment of illegal appropriation of public lands for private use and for farming," was issued by the Ministry of Rural Affairs and directed to all province chiefs. It instructed the province chiefs "to advise the population of the adjustment of their illegal use of public lands for farming by means of providing them concessionary ownership within the provincial abilities." These concessionary titles would be limited to ten hectares unless approval for additional land was obtained from the Rural Affairs Ministry and payment made. The decree carefully stipulated "cultivated land," and it warned the province chiefs to be alert to any attempts to enlarge areas now being farmed. Where the illegal occupation was within the limits of "reserved forests," the land first had to be reclassified before any adjustment could be made.[18]

In the Saigon Land Registration Seminar of December 1964, the fourteen participating highland leaders brought complaints based on the Highlanders' indisputable ownership of certain lands. Their statements spoke of "privately-owned lands expropriated by local authorities to set up Land Development Centers," adding that "in some areas, when

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[18]See Appendix G for the complete text of this decree.

carrying out large-scale deforestation for purpose of cultivation, local authorities have promised compensation by giving a proportionate plot of land to Highlanders farming within the area. . . ." There was also a reference to "Highlanders' private lands sequestered by local authorities for public works." The same tone pervaded the recommendations of the seminar, as, for example, in the assertion of the principle that "Lowlanders and Highlanders alike are entitled to the ownership of the land on which they live and cultivate and are also bound to the obligations imposed by the law." In suggesting ways of carrying out land registration, they differentiated among three categories of land: (a) private ricefields and lands belonging to individuals; (b) public ricefields and lands belonging to the village; and (c) state-owned lands.

As a result of several cadastral surveys carried out in accordance with the aforementioned legislation, some villagers in Tuyen Duc and Darlac provinces were given title to land. On September 18, 1965, there was a symbolic distribution of Tuyen Duc land titles in a ceremony at Dalat presided over by Premier Nguyen Cao Ky and II Corps Commander General Vinh Loc; the actual title award did not take place until the end of November 1965. The recipients were residents of Don Duong District, and most of them were Vietnamese. Of the thirty-eight titles granted to Highlanders, the amount of land involved was as follows:

| Amount of Land | No. of Title Recipients Who Were Highlanders | |
|---|---|---|
| Less than one hectare | 14 | (37 %) |
| One to two hectares | 11 | (29 %) |
| Two to three hectares | 8 | (21 %) |
| Four to six hectares | 2 | ( 5 %) |
| Seven hectares | 2 | ( 5 %) |
| Eight hectares | 1 | ( 2.6%) |
| Total | 38 | (99.6%) |

Residents of the Rhadé villages of Buon Kosier and Buon Pan Lam, Darlac Province, received a total of fifty titles, for small holdings such as farmstead sites and garden plots. All these are concessionary titles that cannot be "ceded" (the titles do not say "sell") for a given period -- six years in the case of the Tuyen Duc titles and six months for the Darlac titles. They also stipulate that the GVN may appropriate the land for the public welfare at any time, against just compensation to the owner.

The Commission for Highland Affairs has concerned itself with the matter of land tenure. Major Nguyen Van Nghiem, a staff member, prepared a paper which traced some of the policies of the French administration and the Diem government. In it, he described the Highlanders' concept of land ownership as expressed in their traditional land-tenure systems, and included also a detailed scheme for land registration. On the basis of this report, the Commission for Highland Affairs has drawn up recommendations for new legislation which, essentially, would recognize the Highlanders' claim to land they have been cultivating

and to any land they are holding under traditional tenure systems, and would provide for land registration committees to be organized along the lines suggested.

The government must adopt a policy on the land claims of the Highlanders, for the resolution of this question is essential not only to the Highlanders' attaining a well-defined place in the national framework but also to the economic growth of the highlands. As citizens, Highlanders must enjoy the right to own the land that they have been occupying and farming. Clear title, to be equitable, should also apply to whatever land the claimant has cultivated in the past that is now lying fallow -- a characteristic of the swidden technique -- and it should include mineral rights.

A central government agency is needed which will concern itself primarily with the settlement of the Highlanders' land claims. The agency here suggested, which might be designated the Land Tenure Commission, could be something on the order of the Inter-Ministerial Land Registry Committee proposed by the Special Commission for Highland Affairs. It would then be composed as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| Minister of Agriculture: | Chairman |
| Commissioner for Highland Affairs: | Vice Chairman |
| Minister of Rural Reconstruction | Committee Members |
| Minister of Information and Psywar | |
| Minister of the Interior | |
| Minister of Finance | |
| Minister of Justice | |
| Minister of Economy | |
| Director General of the Land Office: | Secretary General |

Such an agency would be responsible for formulating a land-tenure policy that would be acceptable to the Highlanders and for overseeing its implementation.

Two difficulties likely to be encountered in the attempt to formulate such a policy are the variations in the traditional land-tenure systems of different highland groups, and the practice of swidden agriculture with its many fallow fields whose ownership may be difficult to define. To cope with these problems, the government will need to know the local situation and ascertain the sentiment of the local people if it is to develop a policy that will satisfy them. To this end, there would have to be land-tenure committees at province, district, and village levels, which could be organized along the lines suggested by the Saigon seminar of December 1964 and advocated also in the report of the Special Commission for Highland Affairs. Such committees would have to be composed of local Vietnamese officials and highland leaders at the level in question, and would pass data and opinions on to the central committee in Saigon. They would also serve as channels through which the committee could present its viewpoint and disseminate information to the local populace.

On the basis of information gathered in the course of this author's ethnographic survey, it is possible to formulate the following general recommendations for a land-tenure policy.

i. The GVN can legitimize the present land holdings of individual Highlanders or kin groups. This will involve granting title for farmstead sites (the area occupied by the house, subsidiary structures, kitchen garden, and corral), gardens and groves not attached to the farmstead,

fields cultivated permanently or with very brief fallow periods (paddy fields and terraces, dry-rice fields, maize fields, cash-crop fields, and some swiddens), and estates.

ii. Where swidden agriculture is practiced, villages might be granted corporate title to a given territory. This would mean corporate ownership by the residents of the village, with title held by the village authorities, and it would embody all land not privately owned according to the above provision. The village, acting as a corporate entity, would regulate the use of the land. This village-owned territory would be similar to the cong tho and cong dien communal lands of Vietnamese villages. As already indicated, a number of highland groups traditionally have village territories, which might serve as models for the granting of title. The amount of land deeded to a given village, however, could be worked out jointly by the Land Registry Committee and the local Land Tenure Committees on the basis of present and projected population.

iii. Of the groups included in the author's ethnographic survey, only the Rhadé have a relatively complex land-tenure arrangement, which is related to their matrilineal kinship system. The French administration, as mentioned previously, recognized the claims of the Rhadé whenever prospective planters bid for land in their area. Whether or not the GVN was to retain the traditional Rhadé system would have to be decided by the Land Registry Committee in conjunction with the Land Tenure Committees of the Rhadé area.

iv. The population shifts due to the war give rise to the question whether Highlanders should be given title

to their former or their present place of habitation. This problem calls for special consideration, both by the local committees and the committee in Saigon. Inevitably, some highland refugees will have been settled in the new areas long enough to be content with them. On the other hand, there will be advantages in returning them to their natal area. It might be considered part of the program of pacification, for, having received aid from the GVN, they may be expected to go home favorably disposed toward the government. Also, returning the refugees will relieve overcrowding in areas such as Dak To in Kontum Province.

4. Cadastral Surveys

One of the obstacles to carrying out any government program for the granting of land title to Highlanders is the lack of cadastral surveys. Those undertaken during the French administration were largely restricted to the plantation areas. A few cadastral surveys have been made in recent times, in areas where titles were awarded. But the problem persists, and it could be overcome in several ways.

(a) The GVN could organize more training programs for cadastral survey personnel. This type of work only requires a three-month training course, for which no more than a very basic elementary-school education is needed. Many qualified Highlanders are available for such training, and their addition to the profession would contribute to the social and economic development of the highland population.

(b) Cadastral surveys might be accelerated by the use of a new technique involving aerial photographs, a

stereo-planograph machine, and a computer. There exists a 1959 series of aerial photographs of 1/40,000 scale for all of South Vietnam, as well as a more recent (1965-66) series of 1/50,000 scale. With controlled photography, it is possible to ascertain the exact scale of a photograph by first enlarging it and putting it into a stereo-planograph. Points marking the limits of a given parcel are then computerized, and the computer determines the exact length and azmuth. These are automatically recorded on a punch card, which not only provides the information necessary for the title but also serves as a record. This method is now being employed for land surveys in An Giang Province, and it may well lend itself to use in the highlands. In addition to permitting such surveys to be done relatively quickly, it may prove a suitable method in insecure areas, which land survey teams cannot enter.

## B. Agricultural Development

For highland societies, economic development will mean largely agricultural development. This does not mean that Highlanders must abandon their present agricultural activities in favor of the large-scale cultivation of fruits, vegetables, and industrial crops destined for the market. It means, rather, the introduction of novel methods and tools designed to raise Highlanders from their tribal economic level, wherein they produce primarily subsistence crops, to a peasant economic level at which, in addition to cultivating crops for home consumption, they will engage in the systematic production of cash crops. This change, in turn, will entail other innovations. New

skills and techniques related to the development of cash crops will include ways of processing the crops (particularly industrial crops), marketing, transport, and petty commerce.

The first need in planning agricultural development programs is considerable knowledge about the existing systems of agriculture and the physical environment in which they are carried out. Not only is such knowledge prerequisite to any evaluation of an area's potential for development, but it is also advisable to organize the programs as far as possible within the existing framework, beginning by improving present techniques with a view to increasing the production of some traditional crops. Similarly, it will require basic research into existing conditions to plan the introduction of new crops, for these must be suited both to the socioeconomic circumstances of the Highlanders and to the physical ecology of the area under consideration. Moreover, they must take account of demand on the local, national, and world markets.

The misconceptions about the Highlanders' living patterns and character traits are many. It is not uncommon to find them described as nomads, who indiscriminately burn the jungle as they practice a form of agriculture that is inherently destructive, or as people lacking in motivation and unwilling to change their rude ways.

Two recent publications reflect such views. A United States Information Service document states that "The Montagnard is not nomadic by nature, but moves his habitation as soon as he has exhausted the natural resources of the land he occupies." It goes on to assert that "Montagnard agriculture is characterized by primitive and destructive

methods. Only the great fertility of the soil permits these people to survive at all." As regards the Highlanders' motivation, it says: "Laziness is omnipotent and pillage easier than regular work."[19]

In a similar vein, a paper prepared by the GVN Directorate for Agricultural Development includes the following passage about the Highlanders:

> Their agricultural methods are so rudimentary that crop failures are frequent, and the soil is becoming more and more exhausted so that no vegetation can grow on it. Those who pass through Pleiku will notice thousands of hectares of bare land around the province capital where cultivation is no longer possible. This is due to repeated burning of forests for cultivation by the Highlanders.[20]

Later, this paper generalizes that "Highlanders are, all in all, lazy, inactive, averse to troubles of any sort and satisfied with their condition as Mountaineers."

None of the highland ethnic groups in this study is nomadic or even seminomadic. Nor are any other highland groups known to this author. Highlanders, like the Vietnamese, prefer to keep their villages in the same location as long as possible. They will move only if forced to do so by misfortune, such as an epidemic, a natural catastrophe, or the events of war. Those who practice swidden agriculture move their fields by a system of rotation, but their villages remain in situ.

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[19]"Montagnards of the South Vietnam Highlands," USIS, MOPIX, Saigon, September 1961, pp. 10-11 (mimeographed).

[20]Rural Affairs Department, Directorate of Agricultural Development, "A Study of How To Guide Highlanders in Their Deforestation for Cultivation in the High Plateau," 1965,

Of the twenty-one groups studied, nine (the Brou, Cil, Halang. Jeh, Katu, Pacoh, Roglai, Sedang, and Stieng) practice swidden agriculture exclusively.[21] One group, the Lat, practice wet-rice cultivation exclusively. Eleven groups have wet-rice cultivation along with swidden farming; they are the Bahnar, Chrau, Chru, Cua. Hre, Jarai, Ma, Mnong, Rengao, Rhadé, and Sre. Of these, the Chru, Bahnar, and Rengao also have permanent dry-rice fields.

The groups studied yielded numerous examples of entrepreneurship, and with some, this tendency seemed to be on the increase. In addition to cash crops, including coffee, cinnamon, and truck-garden vegetables, there were instances of petty commerce in highland villages in the form of small general-goods shops.

1. Swidden Agriculture

Although the swidden technique varies from one highland group to another and even within individual groups, there are common aspects. Selection of the site for a new swidden is never haphazard. To judge the relative fertility of the soil, Highlanders draw upon knowledge of the forest and soils passed down through generations. This is true even of those who also rely on omens, such as the cry of a particular animal or a sign in a dream.

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pp. 1-3. (There is nothing to indicate that the Pleiku area was ever forested. This "bare land" is covered with grass that provides feed for herds of cattle raised by the local Highlanders.)

[21] See Appendix F for the various activities by which Highlanders make a livelihood.

The division of labor is the same among all groups: Men fell the large trees, women and children cut brush and small trees. As much as possible, fires are controlled by the men. It is also the men who make holes in the ground with dibble sticks, while the women follow to plant the seeds. All groups employing the swidden method rotate their fields. After cultivating for a given number of consecutive years, they leave the fields fallow to allow a substantial new growth to mature before recultivating.

Among the chief variations in the swidden method is the length of cultivation, which depends on a group's assessment of the fertility of the soil. The Mnong Gar, for example, normally farm a swidden only one year. The Brou usually cultivate fields for one year also, but if floral manifestations of fertility (such as large trees) are present, they will continue for three consecutive years. Some of the Chrau farm their swiddens for a minimum of three years, and it is not unusual for them to farm certain fields as long as eight years. The Rengao normally work a swidden for three years, but in the vicinity of Dak Kong Peng, rapidly growing bamboo enables them to cultivate their swiddens in alternate years. The Rhadé Kpa, in the Ban Me Thuot area, farm swiddens for anywhere from three to eight years, and it is not uncommon for household groups to work up to five swiddens simultaneously, although not in contemporaneous cycles. The Stieng follow the same pattern of cultivating several fields at the same time, abandoning those that manifest soil exhaustion after the first year.

## 2. Wet-Rice Cultivation

Where they have level or nearly-level land and available water, either from sufficient rainfall or from water sources, the Highlanders usually cultivate wet rice in paddy fields. Some groups have their paddy fields in terraces on hillsides. As mentioned before, the Lat, who live in the vicinity of Dalat, are the only Highlanders to practice wet-rice farming exclusively. Their paddy fields cover the upland valley floor, and terraces extend up the slope of the Lang Bian Mountain. In central Vietnam, most of the Cua and Hre people, who live in the interior valleys of Quang Tin and Quang Ngai provinces, have wet rice as their staple food. They grow it in paddy fields, on the valley bottom and in terraces on either side of the valley. The Chru people in the Valley of Dran, in Tuyen Duc Province, have for centuries farmed wet rice on level land and in terraces, using a particularly sophisticated irrigation system. Recently, some of them have begun transplanting their wet rice.

Many of the Chrau in Long Khanh and Phuoc Tuy provinces cultivate wet rice, using the same techniques as their Vietnamese neighbors. They sell part of their rice to nonfarming Vietnamese and Chrau. West of Pleiku, both the Bahnar and the Jarai have paddy fields, and the Jarai near Plei Mrong farm wet rice along the streams and rivers. In the vicinity of Di Linh (Djiring) in Lam Dong Province, the Sre have extensive wet-rice fields, and some have begun to use the transplanting method. The Mnong Rlam of Lac Thien District, Darlac Province, have long farmed wet rice; but unlike the other wet-rice cultivators, they do

not use a plow. Small paddy fields, found on bottom land near Kontum, are farmed by the Bahnar and Rengao.

### 3. Dry-Rice Cultivation

In addition to the wet rice grown in paddy fields, the Chru cultivate dry rice in fields slightly higher than the paddies, and usually adjacent to them. This kind of rice agriculture is predominant among the Bahnar and Rengao in the vicinity of Kontum. All these groups plow, harrow, and carefully weed the fields during the growing period. According to Bahnar informants, the period of cultivation depends on soil fertility and may be anywhere from five to ten years. When diminishing crops indicate soil exhaustion, the field is left fallow for from two to four years. After wild growth has appeared, the field is enclosed and used for pasturage. Some of the Chru, Bahnar, and Rengao also grow maize in these dry fields.

### 4. Secondary Crops

The Highlanders cultivate a wide range of secondary crops in kitchen gardens, sometimes in the paddy fields, and also in the swiddens. The most common of these is maize. The Cheo Reo Jarai plant maize in the fields, and then sow the dry rice between the rows of young maize plants. Other groups, such as the Rhadé Kpa, devote a section of the swidden to maize. The Lat grow maize in large hillside fields. Another common secondary crop is tobacco, which sometimes is grown in the swiddens but more often in a garden near the house, and is chiefly for family consumption.

## 5. Cash Crops

Although some highland groups have been found to raise cash crops, traditionally or as part of a recent development, cash-cropping cannot be considered a widespread economic activity. There is evidence that, as early as the eleventh century, highland groups inland from the coastal plain traded produce with the Cham, and their trade may have included agricultural crops. Bourotte reports that in the seventeenth century, as the Vietnamese people spread southward into the former Cham territory, they began to purchase cinnamon, elephants, ivory, rhinoceros tusks, wood, wax, rattan, and betel from the Highlanders with whom they came into contact.[22] The Cua, of Quang Ngai Province, continue to be the primary suppliers of cinnamon, most of which is exported because of its high value on the world market. Although some cinnamon is obtained by the method of stripping bark from trees that grow wild in the mountain forests, most of it comes from trees cultivated by the Cua.

In central Vietnam, trade of this type continues, although in some areas the war has halted or diminished it. Among the Brou, Pacoh, and Katu, trade groups composed of able-bodied villagers still amass agricultural produce and forest products, which they carry on their backs to settlements in the Vietnamese lowlands to barter for salt, oil, metal, and cloth. Vietnamese traders, in turn, come into

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[22] Bernard Bourotte, "Essai d'histoire des populations montagnards du Sud-Indochinois jusqu'à 1945," Bulletin de la Société des Etudes Indochinoises, Vol. 30, Saigon, 1955, p. 46.

the remote interior highland valleys by boat to visit villages and buy certain products. In the Song Ma River area of Phu Bon Province, the Jarai have long grown sesame seeds, which they sell to itinerant Vietnamese buyers who annually visit the area after the harvest.

Some of the Rhadé Kpa in the Ban Me Thuot area have coffee estates. One Rhadé planter, having worked on a large French estate, purchased land with his savings and planted robusta coffee seedlings. He also providently planted banana trees and pineapples that would provide income while the coffee trees grew. At the present time, the estate has approximately 5,000 trees, and its owner would like to acquire more land on which to expand his cultivation of coffee, pineapples, and bananas.

Many villagers throughout the highlands sell animals, as well as garden, grove, and forest products in local markets, but they do so only sporadically, usually when they have an exceptional need for cash or for personal and household commodities. They do not, for the most part, plan their agriculture with a view to producing crops for sale. Rice, even though it is a staple food crop everywhere in the highlands, is rarely sold. Among the notable exceptions are the Chrau, many of whom sell paddy to neighboring Vietnamese and to nonfarming Chrau. There are areas, however, where cash-cropping has become more widespread. Some of the Chru in the Valley of Dran (Tuyen Duc Province), for example, have been cultivating more cash crops, and have begun to sell these in Nha Trang and Phan Rang. One farmer recently imported seed potatoes from Holland. In the vicinity of Hau Bon (Cheo Reo), the capital of Phu Bon Province, a number of Jarai villagers

are planting vegetables and fruits for sale in the market. As was pointed out to the author, this was in response to the increased demand for fresh foods that came with the influx of Vietnamese civil servants and military, most of whom brought their families with them.

In the case of at least one group, the pattern has been reversed. The Lat, who live on the slope of the Lang Bian Mountain in the vicinity of Dalat, until recently cultivated a wide range of vegetables intended for sale in the Dalat market. However, as large numbers of Vietnamese moved into the area and greatly increased garden cultivation, the Lat could no longer compete successfully, and most of them abandoned cash-cropping.

## C. Suggestions for the Successful Economic Development of the Highlands

### 1. A Research Center

A center of this kind in the highlands -- it could be called Center for Highlands Research -- would serve the invaluable function of generating the ethnographic, silvacultural, and agricultural knowledge, as well as research on soils and animal husbandry, without which the area's economic development cannot be properly planned and implemented. Such a center would also be the agency for coordinating research, a meeting place for those concerned with highland development, and a repository for books and documents on the highlands, as well as for material on the highlands of neighboring countries. Finally, it would serve as a site for agricultural experimentation and for training the cadres who are to introduce improved techniques and new crops to the villagers.

A center similar to the one here proposed exists in Thailand. It was established in 1965 as a result of the recommendations of a socioeconomic survey published in 1962 by the Department of Public Welfare of the Thai Ministry of Interior. Called the Center for Hill Tribe Research, this organization is affiliated with the University of Chiengmai, and is housed in an attractive modern building in that city. Its stated objectives are:

> (a) To be a center for research projects in the fields of economics, social welfare, education, health, and anthropological studies of the Hill Tribes in northern Thailand. The government will utilize the information from the research projects for hill tribe development and welfare.
>
> (b) To be a center for collecting books, films, journals, and other materials concerned with the cultures of Hill Tribes in Thailand and other countries of Southeast Asia.
>
> (c) To be a center for seminars and international conferences to promote the exchange of knowledge.
>
> (d) To be a center for cooperation with educational and research institutions interested in research on minority problems.
>
> (e) To be a center for the promotion of better understanding between the Hill Tribes and the Thai people. Through this center, the hill people will be informed of the government's policies and projects aimed at improving their welfare, thus ensuring their loyalty in strengthening the natural security.[23]

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[23] The Hill Tribe Research Center, Public Welfare Department, Ministry of Interior, Bangkok, October 1965.

As suggested previously, agricultural development programs should be so organized as to utilize the existing framework to improve the techniques already being used. This would mean, among other things, increasing the production of traditional crops, thereby in some instances producing cash crops. The task of the research effort will be not only to provide the necessary knowledge of existing economic activities but to reexamine some prejudices concerning these activities. It would be wrong to assume, for example, that all forms of swidden agriculture are destructive. Thus, H. C. Conklin, in his excellent monograph on swidden agriculture among the Hanunoo people of Mindoro Island in the Philippines, distinguishes between two general types of swidden agriculture, each of which can be further broken down into subtypes. The partial systems involve relationships which "reflect predominantly only the economic interests of its participants" (as in some kinds of cash crop, resettlement, and squatter agriculture), while the integral systems involve relationships which "stem from a more traditional, year-round, community-wide, largely self-contained, and ritually-sanctioned way of life." Research done in the Philippines, says Conklin, indicates that partial systems may be less productive and more destructive than the integral systems. Yet he warns that, even though some systems of swidden agriculture are destructive, it is useless to generalize about them when it comes to such things as "prohibitive laws."[24]

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[24] H. C. Conklin, Hanunoo Agriculture: A Report on an Integral System of Shifting Cultivation in the Philippines, FAO Forestry Development Paper No. 12, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Rome, 1957, pp. 154-155.

Moormann and his collaborators who conducted research into land use in Thailand came to this conclusion: "There is nothing basically harmful in the present system of shifting cultivation. Any form of agriculture must inevitably result in destruction of forest, but in the area seen, land under cultivation was but a small proportion of the whole area . . . and there were no signs of erosion."[25] Pendleton, who also did his research in Thailand, has pointed out some of the more positive aspects of swidden cultivation:

> In kaingining (the general term for swidden agriculture used in the Philippines and sometime also used by other investigators in Southeast Asia), the forest is slashed and burned in the dry season. Then seeds of food and fiber crops are dibbled into the surface soil without plowing or otherwise stirring it. The ashes of the forest cover contain most of the required plant nutrient material. The cultivator grows one, two, or sometimes three annual crops on one kaingined plot before abandoning it and clearing another piece of land. Abandoned land will often grow into forest again.
>
> Kaingining compensates for the infertility of upland soil by land rotation, with the forest as a long-term cover crop. Forest trees and shrubs often root more deeply than the roots of annual crops, and bring valuable nutrients to the surface. Moreover, forest trees and brush choke out noxious weeds and retain the desirable physical structure of the soil.[26]

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[25] F. R. Moormann, K.R.M. Anthony, and S. Panichapong, Soil Survey Reports of the Land Development Department: No. 20. Note on the Soils and Land Use in the Hills of Tak Province, Ministry of National Development, Soil Survey Division, Report SSR-20-1964, Bangkok, March 1964, p. 10.

[26] R. L. Pendleton, Thailand, New York, 1962, pp. 157-159.

Cash-crop experimentation, which a research center could provide, is essential to economic development. Some experimentation has been conducted at the Bao Loc (Blao) Agricultural College, and some is being done by the Provincial Agricultural Service. Most experiments, however, are conducted in the Agricultural Training Centers that are being run by the International Voluntary Service (IVS) in conjunction with the Ministry of Revolutionary Development and USAID.[27] In these centers, IVS personnel, assisted in some cases by Taiwanese technicians, work at improving gardening techniques, the use of natural and chemical fertilizers,[28] and new crops. One center is trying out new grasses that are essential to any cattle industry. Short courses in gardening techniques -- including use of organic and chemical fertilizers -- are given to groups of highland villagers in all of the centers. There is not much emphasis as yet on either food crops or industrial crops.

The aforementioned study by Moormann et al. contains a useful discussion of various cash crops that the Hill Tribes of Thailand might grow, which has some applicability to the situation in Vietnam. The authors suggest several

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[27] In 1966 there were eight Agricultural Training Centers: in Kontum, Pleiku, Tuyen Duc, Bao Loc, Phu Bon, Ninh Thuan, Quang Duc, and Phuoc Long. One more center is being planned at Quang Ngai and another in Darlac, and, budget permitting, centers will be organized in 1967 in Vinh Long and Long Khanh provinces.

[28] At the present time, it would be well not to place great emphasis on chemical fertilizer, whose high price -- the result of price-juggling on the Saigon market, transportation costs, and other factors -- cannot be supported by the marginal economies of most highland groups.

tree crops, noting that, because of their need for organized care, these might best be grown as communal village crops rather than in individually operated plots. One such crop is tea. Although tea is being cultivated in parts of the highlands, particularly in Lam Dong and Pleiku provinces, it may be worth growing as a cash crop in areas where there is a demand for it in local markets. The Cua, for example, have long been cultivating tea for sale to the Vietnamese.

Coffee is another possible cash crop. As noted earlier, some is being grown by Rhadé villagers in the vicinity of Ban Me Thuot, with one planter having raised 5,000 coffee trees of the robusta variety. Tung oil plants look less promising, because the world market for tung oil is unpredictable. (In the past, Communist China has provided approximately 65 per cent of the needed oil, and the future development of the market depends on the extent to which China will participate in world trade.) Rubber cultivation is suited only to certain areas of the highlands, and the unsuccessful attempts to grow it in some Pleiku Land Development Centers should serve as a warning. (One USAID province representative with experience in rubber culture has pointed out that the area is too dry and the soil poorly suited to rubber, and that the plant requires sophisticated care of a kind that settlers from the central coastal plain apparently cannot give.)

At the high elevations in the vicinity of Dalat it may be possible to cultivate pyrethrum. The oil from the pyrethrum plant is used in pesticides and is in increasing demand on the world market. Chilling is necessary to stimulate the buds. Ginger could be grown widely in the highlands, as could cardamom. As pointed out above, the

Cua gather wild cinnamon bark and also cultivate cinnamon trees. Cultivation might be expanded, but even where conditions are favorable, it would not be possible to predict the quality of the cinnamon. Moormann and his fellow-authors, in their Thailand study, list additional oil-producing plants. Among them is lemon grass, which many Highlanders grow in their kitchen gardens. It is used as a spice, and its cultivation as an industrial cash crop is possible. Finally, the same authors note the possibility of farming drug plants in the highlands of Thailand; without specifying particular plants, they suggest examining the drug plants used in Chinese pharmacology. This might be worth exploring also for the highlands of Vietnam.

Kenaf and ramie, both quite successfully grown as cash crops in some of the Land Development Centers, also could be cultivated by the Highlanders. The expansion of kenaf production in Thailand is described as follows in a U.S. Government report:

> Gains made in the production of kenaf over the past few years have been impressive. From 1950 to 1958 production ranged around 20,000 metric tons, but in 1959 it abruptly began to expand, increasing almost ten-fold by 1961. In 1950 kenaf ranked thirteenth among all crops in acreage planted, but by 1961 it had risen to fourth place. This rapid increase is attributed largely to poor crops in other jute- and kenaf-producing countries, namely India and Pakistan; active government encouragement in the form of minimum price guarantee; free distribution of seeds; and the development of processing and transport facilities.[29]

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[29] U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, Regional Analysis Division, Foreign Agricultural

The report also points out that maize has proved an increasingly successful cash crop in Thailand. Prior to 1950 little was grown, as maize is not a popular grain in Thailand itself. But as the demand for it as an export item rose, so did production. (Eighty per cent of the maize exported goes to Japan, where it is in demand as a feed grain in the rapidly expanding livestock industry.) Another crop, also grown by the Highlanders, which has been increasingly successful as a cash crop in Thailand is manioc. It is processed into tapioca flour and exported to Europe and the United States.

2. Programs for Developing New Techniques and Skills

The change from a tribal to a peasant economy will necessitate a variety of new knowledge and methods other than crop-raising, in which Highlanders should be trained.

(a) Processing of crops. A number of cash crops, particularly industrial crops, will require some processing after harvest. Moormann et al. in their Thai study indicate that oil-producing crops require distillation facilities nearby. They contend that the distilling process is not difficult and could be learned by "local farmers." They also recommend a document entitled "Stills for Essential Oils," prepared by the Tropical Products Institute in Great Britain, for information on the kind of machinery that is available.[30]

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Economic Report No. 8, Agricultural Diversification and Economic Development in Thailand, A Case Study, Washington, March 1963, pp. 8-11.

[30] Pp. 8-9.

(b) Marketing of produce. As they engage in more cash-crop farming, Highlanders will have to learn more sophisticated marketing methods than their present ones, and to develop their own commercial activities, rather than rely on Chinese and Vietnamese entrepreneurs. We have already noted some of the early history of trade between highland groups and the Cham, when the latter ruled what is now central Vietnam. Beginning in the seventeenth century, as the Vietnamese expanded southward along the coastal plain, they, too, traded with the Highlanders, who provided cinnamon, elephants, ivory, rhinoceros tusks, wood, wax, rattan, and betel.[31] At the present time, there are numerous instances of land groups that sell produce. To reiterate some of the examples cited earlier, Vietnamese merchants in Tra Bong District of Quang Ngai Province purchase cinnamon from the Cua people; itinerant Vietnamese merchants buy sesame from Jarai farmers in the Song Ma River area in Phu Bon Province; and the Chrau wet-rice farmers sell paddy to Vietnamese and to fellow-Chrau who do not farm.

The Jarai in the vicinity of Cheo Reo and some of the Chru in the Valley of Dran in Tuyen Duc Province have been increasing their production of fruits and vegetables destined for the market. Here, the most interesting example of entrepreneurship is that of Mr. Touprong Hiu, a Chru farmer, who not only cultivates a very wide range of cash crops but also transports them to markets in Nhatrang and Phan Rang in rented trucks and sells directly to Vietnamese

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[31] Bourotte, p. 46.

and Chinese merchants. Finally, the aforementioned Rhadé who operates a coffee estate of 5,000 trees sells its produce to a merchant in Ban Me Thuot.

These examples of entrepreneurial initiative point to a potential that needs developing. In devising ways of encouraging the Highlanders to vend more of their produce, possibly the best approach would be through the organization of marketing cooperatives. Such a program could be tried in one area and its success carefully observed. Already Mr. Touprong Hiu and a group of Chru farmers in the Valley of Dran have plans for a cooperative that, they claim, has a possible membership of 3,000 Highlanders of various ethnic groups. Some Rhadé farmers in the vicinity of Ban Me Thuot also have expressed interest in forming a cooperative. The Highlanders will learn much from actual experience of this kind, but they will also need some assistance from the GVN. (Had such assistance been available, the Vietnamese competition in the Dalat market might not have forced the Lat to give up growing cash-crop vegetables.)

(c) Transport. Efficient and low-cost transport is essential to economic development in the highlands. It must be extended to the more remote villages to increase their contact with the outside. For the present, this could be accomplished with three-wheel motor vehicles of the kind that now take people and some produce to and from villages near main roads that serve the market centers in province and district capitals. As the cultivation of cash crops develops, these carriers will be essential in getting the produce to the market. Eventually, they will no longer suffice; the lines of communication will have

to be extended and improved, and the three-wheel transport will give way to the truck.

With a successful agricultural development it will become desirable for Highlanders to participate in the mechanics of transport. At the present time, nearly all of them rely on hired transport. But, as they become more fully engaged in a cash economy and their standard of living rises, either individually or through such agencies as marketing cooperatives, they will want to own their means of transport. The GVN could assist them and advance this process through loans (possibly using the National Agricultural Credit Organization for this purpose) and by organizing automotive maintenance and repair training for villagers.

(d) Petty commerce. One by-product of agricultural development in the highlands undoubtedly will be the expansion of petty commerce, as more cash becomes available and the Highlanders' need for manufactured items increases. Although thus far this activity has been left largely to the Vietnamese, Highlanders have increasingly participated in it in the past five years.

One of the effects of the Civilian Indigenous Defense Group program has been to introduce many Highlanders to a cash economy. A large number of the CIDG recruits are young men from villages where barter still dominates economic exchange. For those who have not previously served in the French or Vietnamese armies, it may be the first experience of receiving cash for services. Certainly, it would be safe to say that it is the most cash that any of the CIDG personnel have ever received.

When CIDG camps were established throughout the highlands, Vietnamese merchants began opening small shops -- general stores, tailoring shops, and bar-restaurants -- to cater to the troops. Little by little, however, Highlanders (usually dependents of Strike Force personnel or interpreters) opened similar shops, several of them in the II Corps area. Near the camp (now closed) at Buon Beng, close to Cheo Reo, Highlanders set up several general-goods stores and bar-restaurants. One shop owner, a member of the Strike Force, explained to the author that he had learned his marketing methods from the Vietnamese.

In highland villages, too, shopkeeping has increased in recent years. In the Rhadé village of Buon Ki, a villager who had returned from his military service opened a general-goods shop in 1959, and three fellow-villagers have since followed his example. At Buon Kosier, a Rhadé village near Ban Me Thuot, three villagers opened small shops during the first six months of 1966. One proprietor is a former member of the Special Forces Strike Force; another is a refugee hamlet chief from Buon H'drah. At Diom, a Chru village in the Valley of Dran in Tuyen Duc Province, the son of the village chief left his studies to open a small general-goods shop, the first to be operated by a Chru.

Petty commerce, traditional among the Vietnamese, is a novel enterprise for the Highlanders. Activities such as those mentioned could be encouraged if the GVN were to launch programs through which to instruct Highlanders in basic methods of marketing -- the simple economics of petty commerce -- and undertook to grant small loans at very low interest.