

THE ROLE OF NORTH VIETNAMESE CADRES  
IN THE PATHET LAO ADMINISTRATION  
OF XIENG KHOUANG PROVINCE

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INTRODUCTION

The following report is based on interviews with refugees from the Plain of Jars and Xieng Khouang City, and is drawn in part from North Vietnamese documents left behind in those two areas. The biggest problem encountered in gathering information about North Vietnamese advisors was a widespread ignorance on the part of the refugees as to the extent of their activities. While most people were aware of their influence in a vague sort of way, few villagers had any direct contacts with them and as most put it, the cadres "didn't let themselves be seen". The only refugees who were at all knowledgeable about the NVN advisors were those who had held positions in the PL government and had come into contact with the cadres by virtue of their official status. Most of the detailed information in this report is thus drawn from only a score of people, but because of the virtual unanimity expressed by these men in separate interviews over a period of several months, and because of corroborative information provided by the abandoned documents we feel reasonably confident of their reporting.

SUMMARY

The extent of North Vietnamese control over the PL administration of Xieng Khouang Province raises the question of whether we should be talking about NVN advisors to the PL or vice-versa. Virtually all important policy decisions are made by the NVN cadres, but in such a way that the decisions appear to be the work of Lao officials. Similarly, the direction of various governmental technical services, e.g., public health, education, public works, etc., is in the hands of the North Vietnamese although their Lao counterparts are nominally in charge.

But preserving the illusion of Pathet Lao authority is only a minor limitation on North Vietnamese civilian operations. The main constraint that they face is the reluctance of the Lao population to participate in the radical social revolution that they are fostering in Laos. It is no easy job to transform a society from the bottom up, particularly when one is working in an alien culture. Hence, the cadres are charged with two missions: to revolutionize the society, perforce on the North Vietnamese model, but to do so at such a pace and in such a manner that the new life will not be summarily rejected by the Lao because of cultural overkill. They must therefore work through the Pathet Lao not only to conceal from the villagers the extent of their control, but also to temper their policies in accordance with the feedback and the reactions that they receive from the Lao.

The job of the NVN cadres is further complicated by the two long-range goals of their policy. On the one hand, they seek to introduce the messianic spirit of Marxism-Leninism through which the Lao people will undergo a new awakening and will find a common basis for uniting with their Vietnamese brothers. On the other hand, they are driven by the ancient Vietnamese desires to annex Laos and to till its underpopulated land. As an NVA major expressed it in a brief entry in his diary, found on the Plain of Jars, "[We must] help Laos without restriction, but we have to keep Laos with us to realize permanent duty

of [our] volunteer troops, [to] provide land, [to] marry natives, and to be settled in Laos." This diary passage was prefaced with the remark "special relationship", and it is the goal of achieving this special relationship which complicates the jobs of the cadres who are nominally but advisors to the NLHS civil administration.

ORGANIZATION

Several of the documents found near Xieng Khouang City and the Plain of Jars provide a general picture of the NVN civilian cadres' internal organization. At the top of the chart is the Lao Dong (North Vietnamese Workers') party committee for zone 2, which encompasses northeastern Laos; the party committee is subdivided into three cells: 35A, 35B and 39B, and further note is made that 35A has under it four party chapters; 35B, fifteen party chapters; and 39B, one party chapter. Of the three cells, we are concerned only with 35B which is directly involved in the civil administration of Xieng Khouang Province. Cell 35B is further divided into three groups called "959", "economy and culture", and "Nghe An", and within each group the number of cadres is listed according to their function. The following is a list of advisors derived from these documents, but as we shall discuss below, the list should not be taken at face value. The numbers in parentheses give the number of cadres who are members of the "party", presumably the Lao Dong.

	<u>959</u>	<u>Economy-Culture</u>	<u>Nghe An</u>
River Resources *	3(3)	30(20)	15(10)
Agriculture	12(7)		22(14)
Transportation	8(3)		10(9)
Animal Husbandry		9(3)	
Public Health	12(10)		12(8)
Trade *	17(14)		3(3)
Import-Export			3(3)
Forestry	3(2)		
Post Office	1(1)		
Police	7(7)		
Education	2(2)		
Finance	4(4)		
Radio Operators *	34(34)		
Workers *	5(2)		
Blacksmithing		13(6)	
Weaving		10(4)	
Rice Mills		5(4)	
Tailors		9(6)	
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	108(89)	76(43)	65(47)

\* River resources refers to dam and irrigation projects, trade to the co-op stores, radio operators probably refers to the technicians in the NLHS broadcast station south of Khang Khai. Import-export consists of the export of items such as animal bones and old bottles, which are exchanged for salt, sugar, and other goods brought in from North Vietnam. We are unclear as to the role of the workers.

The most glaring omission in the above list is the group of political advisors, whose number is put at 37 in other documents. If not members of cell 35B itself, they fall under the 959 subdivision. The number of education advisors is certainly greater than two; and if transportation refers to the maintenance of roads and bridges, and not merely to the trucking operation, the number of cadres listed would correspond closely to what the refugees called the "public works" advisors.

#### NGHE AN CADRES

One of the most tantalizing aspects of the above list is the "Nghe An" group of cadres. Previous reports (e.g., the RAND Report on NVA military advisors to the Pathet Lao) have mentioned group 959, while the existence of an advisory group called "economy-culture" should come as no surprise. But the presence of a third group of cadres whose job descriptions are duplicated by other groups in every case\* leads us to the following speculation:

Since Nghe An is the name of the North Vietnamese province bordering Xieng Khouang, we may assume that special status has been given to the cadres who are either from Nghe An or somehow responsible to it. Aside from the ancient migrations of Vietnamese onto the Tranninh Plateau\*\* we should bear in mind the more recent history of the area. Prior to World War II the French colonial administration had drawn up a plan to resettle 10,000 Vietnamese in Xieng Khouang Province, and another 10,000 to the southeast in Khammouane Province, as part of an overall agricultural development effort. There is little question that this plan represented Vietnamese rather than original French thinking, as was the case with most of the early French colonial policies toward Laos. While the war interrupted whatever timetable may have been set up for this migration, the Vietnamese nonetheless took advantage of the unsettled conditions which attended the Japanese withdrawal in 1946, and an estimated 12,000 Vietnamese from Nghe An moved into Xieng Khouang Province, settling as far west as the Plain of Jars; they were peacefully evicted after six months, principally because of the man who is now the provincial governor.

More recently, the North Vietnamese have requested permission from the NLHS to move in 20,000 families - dependents of the NVA troops in Laos. Their request was turned down when the Vietnamese insisted that these civilians remain under their administrative control, regardless of the fact that they would be living in Laos.\*\*\* It appears, then, that Vietnamese plans for resettlement in Laos are far from forgotten, and the historical precedents indicate that Xieng Khouang Province holds a special place in the hearts of the people of Nghe An. Hence, we believe this accounts for the peculiar status afforded

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\* The "import-export" cadres are described in another document as being under "trade".

\*\* Vietnamese name for the Plain of Jars.

\*\*\* This dispute has reportedly strained relations at higher NLHS and North Vietnamese levels, with the latter allegedly insisting that the NLHS would consequently have to pay death benefits for the "hundreds of thousands" of NVA who have died in Laos.

the "Nghe An" cadres, as representatives of the particular group of people who would occupy Xieng Khouang should a Vietnamese migration take place.

#### CADRE ASSIGNMENTS

While it is customary for westerners to make distinctions between politicians and civil servants such as irrigation technicians, we must emphasize that the North Vietnamese insist on the primacy of political awareness in everyone from the party chairman down to the veterinary agent. Theoretically, none of the cadres are strictly technical advisors, and all are equally responsible for building the correct political foundation of the revolution, but in practice some are more equal than others. Hence we will consider the political cadres separately, bearing in mind that while we might view their responsibilities as different in kind from those of the technical cadres, the NVN would view them as different only in degree, insofar as the greater political sophistication of certain cadres warrants their assignment to the higher organs of the NLHS administration. We will also see the recurrence of some of the same names in lists of political cadres and in lists of 959 cadres, which would suggest that some of them may be included among the 959 categories.

#### ASSIGNMENTS OF POLITICAL CADRES

NVN political advisors are assigned to the NLHS administrative structure only as far down as the canton (muong) level. Most important are those who advise the provincial committee of the Lao People's Party (Phak Pasason Leo), the Lao counterpart of the Vietnamese Lao Dong. One of the documents gave the names of five cadres assigned to the provincial committee, but further down listed only five members of the committee itself. The advisory input at this level is apparently quite high.

#### ADVISORS TO THE LPP PROVINCIAL COMMITTEE

Dung	Secretary
Thom	Assistant
Thong	Current Affairs
Dao	Inspector
Tuy	Clerk

Next in importance are the political advisors assigned to the provincial government:

Vinh	Secretary
Khanh	Assistant
Hung	
Giao	
Phon	
Ky	
Can	
Phi	
The Son	Military
Dung	Stand in
Hong	Stand in

We are not sure whether or not all these men work at the provincial headquarters, or whether their number includes those assigned to the canton leaders as well; the military advisor is probably a political advisor to the province militia. Finally, we must include in the list of political advisors the men assigned to such NLHS groups as the National Tribal Organization (Samakhom Son Sat) and the Youth Organization. The National Tribal Association cadres apparently spend most of their time out in the villages spreading the gospel to the Meo and Lao Theung populations. The youth group advisors have a man assigned to each canton, as well as a staff of undetermined size at the provincial headquarters.

We should also mention the DRV consulate; while it probably does not have an official role in the advisory system, it undoubtedly has an influence simply because of its location in the province. Furthermore, one of its staff, Tuong, is described as responsible for "education and economy".

The refugees had little information on the political advisors. One man, a Vietnamese (but lifelong resident of Xieng Khouang) knew of two of the top men assigned to the Lao People's Party - Dung and Thom - and knew their Lao aliases - "Thong Dam" and "Bua Hom". But even he thought they were assigned to the provincial government; none of the other refugees interviewed had ever heard of them by either their real or assumed names. Similarly, the refugees could come up with the names or aliases of only a handful of other political cadres:

Vinh	"Boun Chan"	chief prov. govt. advisor
Ong Long		prov. head, National Tribal Org.
	"Kham Ai"	National Tribal Organization
	"Lin Thong"	National Tribal Organization
	"Sing Thong"	National Tribal Organization
	"Buon Ma"	Political advisor for Muong Khoun
	"Kham Houng"	Political advisor for Muong Pak
	"Souk"	Youth advisor for Muong Pak

Their information did not conflict with that revealed by the documents, but at the same time did little to confirm the large numbers of cadres listed in the papers. We believe it attests to the political advisors' preoccupation with hiding their activities from all but the top hierarchy of the NLHS.

#### ASSIGNMENTS OF 959, ECONOMY & CULTURE, AND NGHE AN CADRES

Whereas the political cadres usually confine their work to the canton and higher levels of government, the other advisors often work at the district and occasionally the village level, although none are actually assigned as administrative counterparts below the canton. The following North Vietnamese list indicates the locations of 959 advisors:

(Names of men in charge)

Command cell	Tung, Ky, Vinh
Propaganda/education	Huu, De
Enemy rear	Long
Muong Khem	Manh
Muong Khoun	Bon
Muong Pou	Ngon
Nong Het	Hao
Nam Neun	Thua

The only additional reference in the documents to the economy-culture group gives the names of the men in charge of blacksmithing, weaving, and rice mills. We have a better breakdown, however, on the distribution of the Nghe An cadres:

	Agriculture	Irrigation
Nong Het	5	3
Ban Ban	7	4
Muong Pou	5	4
Nam Neun	5	4

The ten transportation advisors under Nghe An are assigned to the province as a whole; the import and trade cadres also work out of the provincial headquarters. The location of the public health cadres is not specifically mentioned, although it is inferred that they are all assigned to the Nong Het area.

The refugees were more aware of the activities of the men in these groups, although they had never heard of the categories of 959, economy and culture, or Nghe An. They said that the assignment of cadres to the province and canton governments followed similar patterns, but that the concentration of advisors was greatest at the provincial level. The following list represents the staffing pattern for the provincial office with the names that the refugees knew of the various advisors. We have arranged the list following the dual hierarchy of the Patriotic Neutralist/NLHS administrative structure. While they are officially separate but equal, the NLHS group is more powerful and exercises control over different matters than the Patriotic Neutralist administrators; the two groups work separately in different offices.

ADVISORS TO THE PROVINCIAL NLHS ADMINISTRATION,  
COMMONLY CALLED THE FRONT (NEO) GROUP  
(SOURCE: REFUGEES)

Front Governor (Neo Khoueng)	Vinh - "Boun Chan"
Youth Association	names unknown
National Tribal Organization	Ong Long - chief
National Tribal Organization	"Kham Ai"
National Tribal Organization	"Lin Thong"
National Tribal Organization	"Sing Thong"
Agriculture	names unknown
Co-op	names unknown
Irrigation	"Van Thong" - chief
Irrigation	Mien - "Kham Phai"
Irrigation	Cuoc
Irrigation	Dam
Irrigation	"Kham Ouan"
Irrigation	"Vi"
Irrigation	"Sing Khem"
Irrigation	"Boun Thao"
Information	names unknown
Finance	names unknown
Old Age Association	names unknown

ADVISORS TO THE PROVINCIAL PATRIOTIC NEUTRALIST ADMINISTRATION,  
COMMONLY CALLED THE ADMINISTRATIVE (POX KHONG) GROUP

Governor (Chao Khoueng)	Vinh - "Boun Chan"
Court	no advisors
Police	names unknown
Economy	names unknown
Finance	names unknown
Public Works	Dao Vinh - "Buon Mi" - chief
Education	De - chief
Education	Tuon
Post Office	Nguyen Van Thu - chief
Forestry	Ging - chief
Public Health	Lam - chief
Public Health (hospital)	Truong Phong - "Van Thong"
Animal Husbandry	names unknown
Militia	names unknown

The refugees said they know of about twenty cadres in irrigation and about fifteen in public works. They also said that there were five cadres assigned to the Matanyom (middle) schools and five to the Udom (upper middle) school.

The pattern at the canton level was similar; the refugees were familiar with the two cantons of Muong Khoun and Muong Pok, and provided the following picture of cadre assignments; again, we follow the dual hierarchy of the Pathet Lao administration:

ADVISORS AT MUONG KHOUN FRONT GROUP

Canton Chief (Neo Muong)	"Boun Ma"
Economy	names unknown
Co-op	names unknown
Irrigation	names unknown
Agriculture	names unknown
Animal Husbandry	names unknown
Youth Association	names unknown
Old Age Association	no advisor

ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP

Canton Chief (Chao Muong)	"Boun Ma"
Police	names unknown
Education	names unknown
Public Works	names unknown
Militia	"Kham Di"
Public Health	names unknown

The refugees also knew of another cadre at Muong Khoun named "Ngeun", but they were not sure of his function.

ADVISORS AT MUONG PEK FRONT GROUP

Canton Chief (Neo Muong)	"Kham Houng"
Economy	names unknown
Co-op	names unknown
Irrigation	names unknown
Agriculture	"Thao Houng"
Animal Husbandry	names unknown
Youth Association	"Souk"
Old Age Association	no advisor

ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP

Canton Chief (Chao Muong)	"Kham Houng"
Police	names unknown
Education	Dec, Khiem
Militia	"Van Di"
Public Health	names unknown

Finally, we should mention several important exceptions to these patterns of advisory assignments. In several cases the North Vietnamese are openly in charge of the various sections, and make no pretense of being advisors. Nguyen Van Thu is the head of the provincial post office, and "Van Thong", Miem, Cuoc, et. al. are in charge of the irrigation service. There are five Vietnamese for five Lao teachers at the Udom school, and the refugees who had worked in the education system said that the Vietnamese were clearly in command. The most significant example of open Vietnamese control we heard of was that of "Bua Kham", an NVN cadre who was the Neo Muong of Muong Pek from 1967 to 1968, when he was replaced by a Lao. The cadres are apparently not always able to find Lao capable of functioning as counterparts and occasionally succumb to the temptation of direct control.

THE PROCESS OF ADVISING

The primary mechanisms for control of the NLHS government in Xieng Khouang are twofold; the use of Lao intermediaries who serve to transmit the Vietnamese point of view throughout the PL hierarchy, and a reliance on written documents which outline current policies or specific projects. Both procedures enable the cadres to stay out of the limelight without losing their control.

INTERMEDIARIES

The political advisors seem to be the most circumspect of the cadres in dealing with their Lao counterparts and tend to rely heavily on a few trusted individuals to represent them. One of the refugees, who had held an important position in the canton administration of Muong Khoun, described the process as follows: the Vietnamese cadres almost never attended joint meetings of the entire canton "group"; rather, they consulted extensively with two members of the group - the Neo Muong and one of his deputies - who in turn presented their views to the assembled group. These consultations often lasted for several days before a meeting took place, and in the event that the intermediaries were unable to answer the questions raised at the general meeting, they returned to the NVN cadres for further advice. If disputes within the group remained unresolved or there was strong resistance to the policies under discussion, the

cadres referred the problem to higher levels rather than intervene personally. The usual procedure was then for higher ranking NLHS officials to appear before the Muong group until agreement was finally reached. In 1966, for example, Nouhak Phoumsavan, a vice-chairman of the Lao People's Party attended a meeting to clarify the principle of "democratization", i.e., everyone should rat on everyone else and punish former officials and reactionary merchants for exploiting the people, etc. Similarly, the introduction of rice taxation, military conscription, impressed labor requirements and related policies has called for the presence of important NLHS officials at the meetings of the Muong Khoun group to try to soften the impact of such programs and to try to persuade the non-believers.

In the education system the process of advising is similar. Several of the refugees who had been school teachers described the role played by the cadres in regard to their annual in-service training courses. Two teachers who had attended the 30-day sessions in 1966, 1967 and 1968 said that the training was conducted by the canton education chief and another Lao education functionary from the provincial staff, but that throughout the session these two men met constantly with the Vietnamese education advisor for the canton. The teachers said that the cadre worked closely with his Lao counterpart throughout the year, but that his presence was particularly obvious during the annual training course, although he did not do any of the actual teaching. Fifteen days of the sessions were devoted to "politics", and they thought that the Vietnamese advisor was particularly anxious to make sure that nothing was left out of the large body of Marxist-Leninist dogma that was presented as part of the course.

When discussing the important Lao officials of the provincial administration, the refugees often said that so-and-so was "close to the Viets", or that another "often went to see the Viets". These were invariably the most powerful men in the government and were usually in the Neo branch of the administration. Although their rank in the official PL hierarchy was not necessarily at the top of their particular sections, they served as the go-betweens with the cadres and were given particular deference by the other Lao officials.

#### DOCUMENTS

In addition to the use of intermediaries, the cadres rely heavily on the use of policy statements and written plans as a means of guiding the revolution along a consistent course. Much has been said about the study sessions and political meetings that are the overt mechanisms for re-educating the people, but in every case what is being taught is a specific document. No significant policy or program is introduced without its first being detailed in written form and without this position paper being explained at all levels of government. The discussion over the principle of "democratization" referred to earlier centered on a document setting forth the concept of democratization and not simply on a series of oral presentations. Similarly, policy papers have been promulgated on impressed labor, taxation, conscription, agricultural development, etc. as well as on such topics as American imperialism, patriotism, religion, the role of women, and other topics related to the revolution.

The point is that most of these documents first appear in Vietnamese and are then translated into Lao. Some of the most important of the publicly disseminated documents are the "resolutions" of the Neo Lao Hak Sat central committee,

the most recent being numbers 15 and 16. A refugee who had been a Tasseng until 1968 recalled the teaching of resolution #15 to the village chiefs in his Tasseng; we will recount his story in some detail because of the good picture it gives of the NVN cadre at work.

In February 1967 he was visited by the head of the canton youth association, his Vietnamese advisor, the assistant Neo Muong (who was the real power in the canton group) and the Muong militia commander. They set up a meeting of all the village chiefs and Neo chiefs to "learn the document", which was taught in a five-day course held in the woods near his village. On the day the course began he went out to the meeting place several hours early and sat with the visitors as they prepared for the first session.

The assistant Neo Muong and the cadre were making final corrections in the mimeographed Lao version of the resolution, using a printed Vietnamese text as a reference. Certain passages were deleted to make the document more palatable to this particular group of village chiefs, who were deemed not as progressive as other groups in the province. The section on incarcerating people for treason, profiteering, subversion and other political crimes was stricken out. Similarly the passage on universal military conscription for men and alternate service for women was deleted, but the Neo Tasseng was allowed to read the text and was told to tell the village chiefs that greater numbers of young people would henceforth be able to "go to study" in other areas of the country. Other passages were modified and edited to make the document more relevant to this particular group of people.

In every case the alterations were checked with the Vietnamese copy to make sure that the changes did not conflict with the original. Because of the difficulty of translating much of the Communist terminology into idiomatic Lao, the Lao version contained a great deal of the special vocabulary that has been given ideological, almost liturgical, meanings by the Pathet Lao. The Neo Tasseng felt that many of these phrases would not mean much to many of the village chiefs, and accordingly, they were replaced with more conventional language. Here, the assistant Neo Muong, who spoke Vietnamese well, spent a great deal of time making sure that these changes did not alter the sense of the Vietnamese text, and the cadre seemed particularly anxious to make sure that the meanings would not be lost in translation.

We have no firm proof in this case that the Vietnamese text was in fact the original, but other information provided by the refugees leads us to believe that this is generally true. The former public works officials said that all plans for the provincial department were drawn up in Vietnamese, and then translated into Lao; refugees who had worked in the agricultural section said the same thing about their department. Of the documents found in the provincial hospital, only one in twenty was in Lao; indeed, the vast majority of the documents found around the Plain of Jars and Xieng Khouang were in Vietnamese, and we feel confident that a much clearer picture of the Vietnamese involvement in the NLHS administration will emerge as translation of these papers become available.

While the most important policy directives come from above, the cantons still have responsibility for carrying them out, and in the process they frequently draw up plans for their particular area. Here the cadres work through

the intermediaries in preparing the text, in accepting or rejecting changes proposed by the canton group, and in seeing to it that the final document, even though it may not always include everything they wish, does not run counter to the overall program. Similarly, a former school teacher pointed out that the Vietnamese education cadres in his area were forever suggesting small changes here and there in the canton education plan, and that the head of the local school system would consult frequently with the advisors for clarification of various points in the program document.

Reliance on documents as a means of formalizing and de-personalizing their roles is thus one of the key control mechanisms that the cadres use. By establishing a body of general policies and specific plans they are able to maintain their distance without sacrificing their influence. The documents also give everyone something to talk about; they provide the subject matter for the study sessions that serve as the main instrument of the NLHS re-education program. Villagers are not simply lectured to on the need for greater industriousness and greater sacrifices to defeat the enemy, but are guided point by point through a written lesson which includes review questions and answers, e.g., "Why do the U.S. imperialists wage war in Laos", "To subjugate the people in order to provide another foreign market for their excess production and to support their war industries", etc. From the NVN/NLHS point of view, people who do not go along with the new ideas are not necessarily opposed to them, rather, they simply don't understand them and need to be guided through the logic until all becomes clear. Patient counsel rather than direct command is the operational policy for re-education, which leads us to a further point on the NVN cadres.

#### PERSONAL BEHAVIOR

The cadres use the softest of soft-sell approaches in dealing with their Lao counterparts - at least that is the norm that they are supposed to follow. They try to project an image of benign sages helping the Lao along the difficult path toward socialism, patient with their faltering steps and understanding of their occasional lapses into traditionalism.\* To antagonize the Lao is to shatter the spirit of brotherhood that should bond their relationship.

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\* In an interesting passage in his diary, the major who was quoted at the beginning of this paper dwelt at length on the poor reception given his NVA troops by the villagers of Muong Ngan (southeast of Xieng Khouang City) when they were liberated from the right-wing puppet Lao government troops in 1967. He was genuinely surprised and saddened that his men were not received as brothers-in-arms, and that the people were less than overjoyed to see the NVA. Yet nowhere in his reflections did he indicate any feelings of distrust or hostility toward the villagers; rather, in a vein of self-criticism he wrote of the need to redouble the efforts toward re-education so that the people would come to understand the new policies better (and thus appreciate the joys of living under the NLHS). If the major is representative of other cadres, his reflections manifest the principle of patient understanding that the cadres are expected to abide by in their advisory capacities, as well as a deep faith in the efficacy of endless persuasion.

Hence they try to maintain a correct posture at all times and in general keep their relationship with the Lao on quite a formal basis. Purely social contacts seem to be rare, and such activities as personal involvement with local women result in a one-way ticket back to the DRV.\* It is easier to avoid faux pas if one avoids people, and the cadres live apart from the Lao in self-imposed isolation, restricting their personal contacts to the few Lao that they trust implicitly. They raise their own livestock, tend to their own gardens, and maintain discipline with their own self-criticism sessions, which were held nightly, according to the refugees who knew anything about their personal lives.

#### EXCEPTIONS TO THE PATTERN

In certain instances the cadres rely less on their preferred methods of operation as described above and use their influence more directly. We have already mentioned the most important case that we know of - the cadre who served as the Neo Muong of Muong Pek. Similarly, the refugees told us that in 1964, when rice taxation was first introduced, the Vietnamese personally supervised the weighing and collecting of the rice in the villages (but that since then their Lao counterparts have done it).

In the technical services of the PL government less attempt is made to disguise the Vietnamese role. One of the refugees who had worked in the provincial public works department said that Vietnamese cadres attended bi-weekly meetings of the department; all the plans were written in Vietnamese and the advisors showed little reservations about running the show, although the Lao were nominally in charge.

On the other hand, the cadres in the irrigation section are openly in direct control of the department. One of the refugees who had been local foreman for an irrigation project provided the following example of their activities: During 1966-67 the Vietnamese personally conducted surveys near his village in the southwestern part of the Plain of Jars for work on a dam and canal system that was begun in 1967. To arrange for laborers to work on the project the cadres went directly to the Tassengs and canton chiefs rather than passing their requirements through the provincial administration. The Vietnamese calculated that the project would require about 10,000 man-days of labor and gave the work requirement to the Tassengs, but as the Lao foreman told us, the actual work input came to 13,800 man-days over a three year period. Most of the work was done the first year, he said. From the initial survey, throughout the construction phase and down to the first experimental plot of dry-season rice, the cadres were in complete control of planning and supervising the project, although they said that the system belonged to the Lao. We should note, however, that the experimental plots were planted entirely with

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\* None of the cadres have their families with them, but they are allowed to return home every twelve to eighteen months. At this point we cannot help quoting again from the major's diary, where he notes that "one comrade commits licentious behavior with Vietnamese immigrant female, one with friendly female...". He does not describe the attitude of the first female.

non-glutinous rice brought in from North Vietnam and not with the glutinous rice traditionally eaten by the Lao.\*

#### NORTH VIETNAMESE INFLUENCE

An adequate summary of how North Vietnamese rule has affected the Lao population would require cataloging the policies and programs of the NLHS administration and is beyond the scope of this discussion. But we need to mention several ways in which their influence is felt other than through the advisory process outlined above. North Vietnamese products are sold in the co-op stores, North Vietnamese salt and sugar are traded for dogs and other livestock, and North Vietnamese garden seeds - beans, lettuce, corn, etc. - have been distributed by the agriculture service. Similarly, rice from the DRV is given to the impressed laborers on the "long" (30-day) portage trips, and to school teachers beyond the third grade. The list of minor influences is long, but one of the most important influences they exert is on the education system.

All texts beyond grade three are direct translations of North Vietnamese school books. Geography, math, health, biology, agriculture, politics - everything. The lessons are prepared in mimeograph form, and poor copies are checked with the Vietnamese originals to insure their accuracy. They have been in use since 1966-67, when they replaced the old Royal Lao Government materials. The Vietnamese interpretation of Marxism-Leninism has also been added to the curriculum, beginning with the theory of class struggle and continuing up through American imperialism. Since 1965 the Vietnamese language has been taught an hour a day, and if the students make it through the seven years of schooling available in the province, they can look forward to further study at the Neo Lao Hak Sat Central Cultural School in Hanoi. The cadres' efforts in the school system are understandably intense, for it is here that they can most easily effect the cultural changes they seek.

#### CONCLUSION

In a rare moment of candor, the political advisor to Muong Khoun once described to an NLHS administrator (who came out as a refugee) some of the changes that would take place after the revolution. There would be factories and heavy agricultural equipment, he said; there would be salt mines and gold mines. After the victory no one would own land, everyone would have equal shares. Old customs will slowly fade away, and religion will be slowly forgotten; in the cadres words, "Communism will be the new religion". And in a final comment that perhaps reflected on his own concept of the advisory role, the cadre said, "We are our own gods. If we do well, the people will accept us as gods".

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\* We cannot help but feel that this and other extensive irrigation projects undertaken by the North Vietnamese were in anticipation of a migration into Xieng Khouang Province. There was simply too much unused paddy land for the size of the Lao population to necessitate any programs of double-cropping.