

A PARTY ACCOUNT OF THE SITUATION IN THE  
NAM BO REGION OF SOUTH  
VIETNAM FROM 1954-1960

(B)

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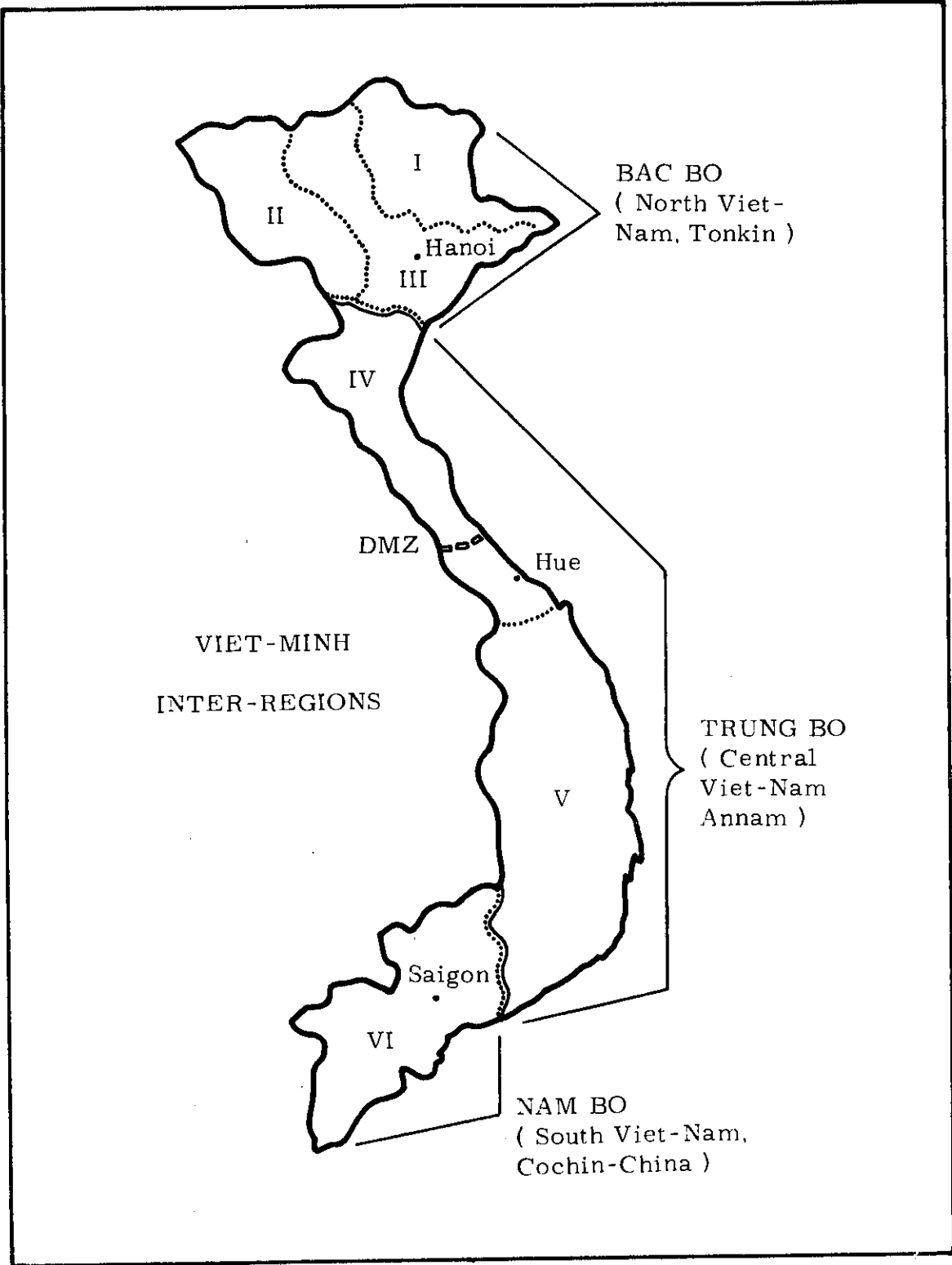
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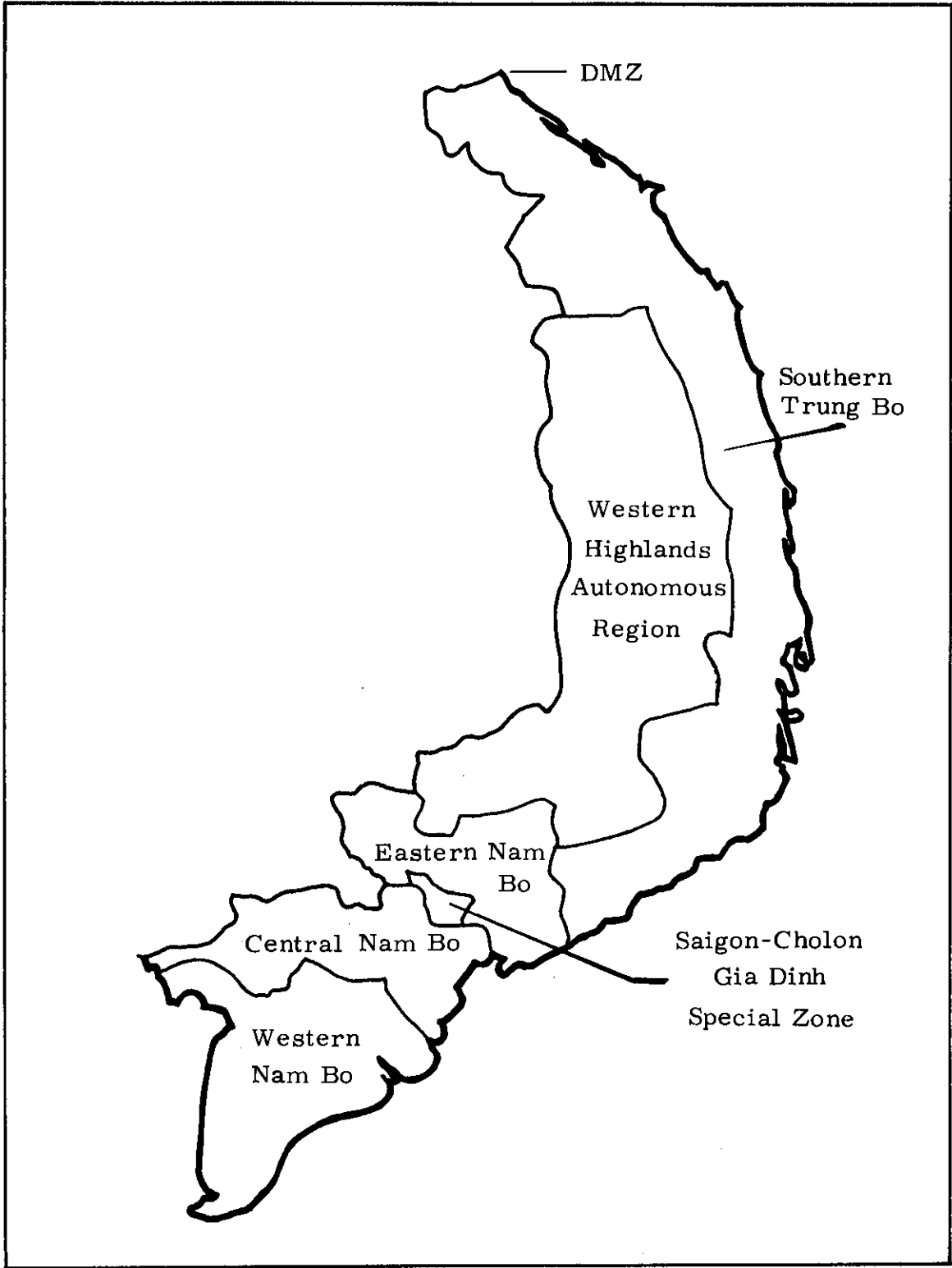
### Terminology Used in the Document

Central	An abbreviated designation for the Central Committee of the Lao Dong Party.
15th Central Conference	The 15th Plenary session of the Lao Dong Party Central Committee met in Hanoi in January 1959.
Regional Committee	The Nam Bo Regional Committee was the highest level Party echelon in the South from 1954 until the early 1960's when the Central Committee re-established its southern area directorate (COSVN) replacing the Regional Committee.
12 Parties Conference	The conference of Communist and workers parties of the socialist countries which was held in Moscow in November 1957.
81 Parties Conference	The conference of Communist and workers parties which was held in Moscow in November 1960.

The document was seized by U. S. forces in Phuoc Long Province, South Vietnam, on 28 April 1969.

NOTE: In view of the document's abrupt ending, it appears that several concluding pages were missing from the original document at the time of its capture.





DMZ

Southern  
Trung Bo

Western  
Highlands  
Autonomous  
Region

Eastern Nam  
Bo

Central Nam Bo

Western  
Nam Bo

Saigon-Cholon  
Gia Dinh  
Special Zone

THE SITUATION IN NAM BO  
SINCE THE  
RESTORATION OF PEACE  
TO DATE

The purpose of this report is to review the developments of the situation in Nam Bo since the restoration of peace to date and to evaluate the leadership of the Regional Party Committee.

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This report consists of two parts:

- I. Situation in Nam Bo since the restoration of peace to mid 1959
- II. Situation in Nam Bo since mid 1959 to date.

In considering the situation in Nam Bo from late 1959 to date, we are dividing this time period into two phases. The first phase, from late 1954 to mid 1959 is when the movement declined in strength. The second phase from mid 1959 to date is when the movement rose up again.

With a population of nine million, Nam Bo consists of three types of areas:

The Eastern jungle area, which takes up one third of Nam Bo's terrain, is sparsely populated, infertile, and most of its population make a living as part-time farmers and workers. In the jungle lie immense rubber plantations. There are as many as 100,000 rubber plantation workers in the Eastern area. Nam Bo's major strategic roads such as Routes 1, 13, 14 and 22 run through the Eastern area. The Eastern area is a connecting hinge between Nam Bo and southern Trung Bo and the highlands and is also a barrier defending access to Saigon. Generally speaking, the terrain in the Eastern area, with its hills and dense vegetation, such as in Binh Long, Phuoc Long, Bien Hoa, etc., or with its oak forests such as in Binh Duong, Tay Ninh, etc., is very favorable to the preservation and development of guerrilla warfare. The rubber plantation workers have a long tradition of struggle. A larger majority of the people in the Eastern jungle areas participated in the Resistance; and the Eastern jungle area was a base of the Revolution during the Resistance. In general,

the minority groups sympathized with the Revolution, but during the Resistance, there were still many minority groups' areas where our influence did not extend.

The Eastern area has a large Cao Dai group community. During the Resistance, the Cao Dai group in Tay Ninh was our biggest obstacle. The Cao Dai armed forces, especially the Alliance forces opposed us from the beginning to the end.

The Delta which takes up many words missing has immense rice fields, a dense population several words missing / ... few forests... [several words missing] but has a different advantage in that there are many streams, canals and swamps, and communication is difficult. Because the rural population in Nam Bo has been fiercely carrying out an agrarian struggle for many years and participated in the Resistance throughout its nine years, they have developed a very strong sense of nationalism and democracy and constitute a strong foundation for the revolutionary movement. However, in the delta of Central and Western Nam Bo, there is the Hoa Hao group, which, like the Cao Dai, is strongly prejudiced against us. During the Resistance, the Hoa Hao armed forces ferociously took their stand against us. In addition to the Hoa Hao, there is a large Khmer community in this area, and during the Resistance, a number of them were misled by the French and opposed the revolution.

Nam Bo has relatively large urban areas such as Saigon-Cholon-Gia Dinh with a population exceeding three million, and the provincial capitals of My Tho, Vinh Long and Can Tho, etc. which also have large populations. Owing to easy communications between the countryside and the city, reciprocal influence between the two areas is very quick, and since the urban population is influenced by the rural movement, their attitude is generally favorable to the Revolution. The urban workers and laborers in Nam Bo have a long revolutionary tradition and have led many movements in the past.

## PART I

### SITUATION IN NAM BO SINCE THE RESTORATION OF PEACE TO MID 1959.

#### ENEMY SITUATION

After completion of the regroupment, South Vietnam was placed under the rule of an imperialistic and feudalistic administration.

What was the enemy situation then?

The French imperialists and former pro-French administrators still controlled a major part of the army, the security and police apparatus and the administrative system at all echelons, and still had much influence over a number of landowners, intellectuals, bourgeois compradores, religious leaders and ethnic minorities including the Khmers. But, as a result of their defeat, their prestige had declined, their morale was shaken and their ranks were disorganized. In spite of their defeat which forced them to sign the Geneva Agreement, both the French imperialists and their lackeys still nurtured the hope of consolidating their position in the South with the aim of re-establishing their domination over Vietnam and Indochina. So, on the one hand they contended with the Americans and their lackeys in trying to cling to the South, and on the other hand, they strove to disrupt the peace and to impede the enforcement of the Geneva Agreement.

Earlier, during our Resistance, the U.S. imperialists had already made efforts to help the French colonialists in opposing the Revolution with the aim of eventually kicking out the French and taking over Indochina. On July 7, 1954 the U.S. forced the French to accept Ngo Dinh Diem as Prime Minister. It was the first step of U.S. infringement upon French authority. When the peace accord was signed, the U.S. imperialists, aside from their hold on Ngo Dinh Diem, had no organization in South Vietnam as yet. Nevertheless, they made efforts to induce landowners, reactionary bourgeois, anti-revolutionary schemers, wicked officers and troops, fanatical and backward Catholic priests and followers, etc. to move from the North to the South, and organized them with the purpose of creating a backing for themselves and for Diem.

Ngo Dinh Diem, the then Prime Minister, still had no control over the army, the government, and the security and police apparatus, not even at the central level. The power of the U. S. imperialists was the only support he had from outside, and inside, he could only rely on a number of refugees, Catholic priests and a few small military units controlled by men he trusted.

The U. S.-Diem clique's ambition was to dominate Vietnam and place our people under a colonialist and feudalistic yoke. Their immediate scheme was to take over South Vietnam, to turn it into a U. S. colony and military base, and eventually to spread the war over all of Vietnam and Indochina.

In short, at the time of the signing of the peace accord, the enemies of the South Vietnamese people were obviously in a weak position, both politically and organizationally.

It was also the time when the long, latent dissension between the U. S. and the French imperialists, and between their respective lackeys, erupted.

Every attempt was then made by the U. S. -Diem to oust the French and their henchmen. Their first aim was to control the army, the police and all central administrative organizations, which would enable them to control Saigon.

Taking advantage of the people's anti-French spirit and their resentment against Francophile lackeys (such as the puppets in the Buu Loc administration, the Binh Xuyen, Cao Dai and Hoa Hao militarists, the secret police etc.) and of France's weakening position [several words missing] . . . combating colonialism and feudalism, relying on the refugees and a number of religious renegades such as Nguyen Thanh Phuong, Trinh Minh The, Van Thanh Cao, and utilizing political speculators such as Nguyen Bao Toan, Ho Han Son, Nhi Lang, etc. (who set up the self-styled People's Revolutionary Council), the U. S. -Diem gradually forced the French out. At first, all trustworthy henchmen of the French in the cabinet and central government agencies were dismissed, punished and humiliated (Nguyen Quoc Dinh, Phan Van Giao, Le Quang Luat, etc). Those considered as neutral, mostly southerners, were also replaced by Diem's relatives and friends, evil doers whose reactionary standpoint was flagrant and who were mostly refugees.

The first clash between the French and the Americans took place early in 1955. General Nguyen Van Hinh rebelled against Diem in Saigon. Because of France's hesitating and apprehensive attitude (although they instigated this rebellion themselves), General Hinh failed and fled abroad. This event proved that between France and the U. S. the contention for influence was in its fiercest phase. Subsequently, General Nguyen Van Vy's appointment by Bao Dai to replace Hinh as Chief of the General Staff was rejected; then the imperial guard in Dalat was disarmed, which indicated that the U. S. -Diem had succeeded in securing control of the upper echelons of the South Vietnamese army.

After defeating Hinh and Vy, Diem started organizing the army in the U. S. way and changed military commanders. U. S. advisers gradually replaced French advisers and held key positions in the South Vietnamese army. Meanwhile, under U. S. pressure, French troops had to move gradually out of Saigon to concentrate at Vung Tau.

The U. S. -Diem directed their next attack against the police by removing all Binh Xuyen cadres from the key positions they were holding, and reorganized the police into an important branch to provide protection for the regime.

With the army and the police under control, the U. S. -Diem turned their attention to the irregular forces who were still under French control and led by warlords in areas adjacent to Saigon, in Tay Ninh and provinces in Central and Western Nam Bo.

So, a clash of army took place again in April and May 1955, first between Diem's troops and the Binh Xuyen, and later involving also the Hoa Hao forces led by Nam Lua and Ba Cut. Diem used regular troops, a Nung division and some Cao Dai forces to fight the Binh Xuyen who were driven to the Rung Sat forests. The Binh Xuyen were finally dismembered except for a small group which has been maintaining liaison with us and has held out to date. This time again, the French showed indifference and let their allies down. Although the opposition forces at first tried to coalesce into a national front, they vied for positions and personal interests and eventually split up. They did not think of relying on the people for support and because of their backgrounds they wouldn't have been able to get the people's support anyway.

This time the U. S. -Diem gave the French a decisive shove. The French had to promise to withdraw all their troops from the South except for some advisers and some units connected with SEATO. (In 1956 the French withdrew all their troops from the South.) The High Commissioner's office gave way to an embassy which is just like the other countries' embassies.

As another step against French authority in the South, Diem organized a referendum in October 1955 which deposed Bao Dai and gave Diem the presidency.

After securing control of the central government and... [several words missing]... the U. S. -Diem turned to the provinces. They made changes in the administrative and military structures at the province and district levels and endeavored to gain control of the areas which had always been controlled by the religious sects. In the East, Diem clashed with the Cao Dai and shortly afterwards, the Cao Dai armed forces surrendered. Tormented by Nguyen Thanh Phuong, Pham Cong Tac left the Holy See to go in exile. In Central and Western Nam Bo, the Hoa Hao put up a longer resistance against Diem. However, after Nam Lua's surrender and especially after Ba Cut's capture and execution, there were no more sizable pro-French forces in the South. Some remnants of the Hoa Hao forces turned into bandits hiding and operating in remote areas along the Cambodia-Vietnam border and are still holding out.

After sweeping the religious sects, Diem started suppressing the forces who previously supported him and whom he did not quite trust. The first victims were Nguyen Bao Toan and Nhi Lang, then Nguyen Thanh Phuong. Many were arrested and imprisoned and many others had to flee abroad.

Thus in mid 1956 the U. S. -Diem had succeeded in eliminating the French and their supporters from the most important domains, i. e., the military and political spheres and the police. In fact, they had secured control of the administrative machinery from the central level down to the provinces and districts.

Groups that were pro-U. S. but anti-Diem, such as those led by Vu Ngoc Cac, Ho Van Vui, Phan Quang Dan, Nghiem Xuan Thien, father Le Van Phien, and father Truc (Director of the Duong Song newspaper) were also more or less active.

After strengthening his position Diem retaliated against these groups. Cac, Phien and Trac were imprisoned; Dan, Thien and Vui were constantly harrassed. Following the Ba Long incident instigated by the Dai Viet, Diem increased his terrorism against the Nguyen Ton Hoan group.

An important point to be noted is that in their successful fight against the French and their henchmen, the U.S. -Diem terrorized and massacred the masses of peasants who supported the Hoa Hao and Cao Dai, and also created discontent among the upper strata people who were more or less pro-French or influenced by French culture. Moreover, Diem's terrorism caused disaffection and dissent even among refugees -- a number of pro-French Catholic priests and followers constantly opposed Diem and showed dissatisfaction with the Americans.

What was the attitude of the French and their henchmen, and the attitude of the U.S. -Diem towards the people and towards our Party at that time?

As we know the U.S. imperialists and their lackeys did not want the Indochina war to end. When the Dien Bien Phu battle was raging, the U.S. was ready to interfere to prolong and extend the war in Indochina. The armistice strongly displeased the Americans. Right in Geneva, the U.S. -Diem declared that they had no responsibility regarding the conference. When the war ended, they started sabotaging the peace to prevent our country's reunification.

Though the immediate and major preoccupation of the U.S. - Diem then was to cope with the French and their lackeys, they did not forget to repress the people's movement. The first incident took place when they opened fire on a crowd of 10,000 people who were demonstrating in Saigon to acclaim peace. Similar incidents occurred in Binh Thanh and Mo Cay. They severely suppressed the Saigion-Cholon peace movement and arrested nearly all its leaders. They... [two words missing] ...the demonstration on May 1, 1955 and repress the... [two words missing] ...movement.

They carried out terrorism against prominent members of the resistance; for instance, they killed teacher Dieu and Pham Van Nga, and imprisoned writer Duong Tu Giang, etc.

In the area of propaganda, they launched an appeal for a "march northwards" and a slogan urging the "denunciation of Communists." Availing themselves of the refugee movement, they slandered the North, the Party and the Resistance. They used violence against members of the DRV military liaison mission with the International Control Commission; and on July 20, 1955, they sacked a building where I. C. C. personnel were housed.

Though preoccupied with their conflict with the U. S. -Diem, the French and their lackeys, and the religious sects' military leaders as well did not forget to terrorize and oppress the people, especially right after the armistice. The French and their henchmen were involved in the terrorist acts mentioned above. Immediately after the armistice, the Cao Dai and Hoa Hao armed forces spread out in many rural areas where they plundered and oppressed the population and terrorized and arrested our cadres. It was not until later when the French and pro-French forces weakened that the U. S. - Diem assumed the monopoly in fighting the Revolution. In 1954-55 the U. S. -Diem were still busy coping with the French and their henchmen and could not yet make an all out effort to fight our Party and our people.

From 1956, after having eliminated the French and their henchmen and secured control of the army, the administration and the police at upper levels, the U. S. -Diem started directing their offensive towards the population.

In preparation for the elections in March 1956, the U. S. - Diem launched several campaigns, making propaganda, urging the people "to combat and denounce Communism," slandering the North and defaming the Geneva Accord, organizing rallies and demonstrations with refugees and troops as core elements, and forcing civil servants and students to participate in these campaigns. They set up counter revolutionary organizations such as the Can Lao Nhan Vi Party, the National Revolutionary Movement, the People's Council for Denunciation of Communism, the Republican Youth and Republican Women Movements, etc. They organized raids to ransack the offices of newspapers that wrote about negotiations and reunification, such as the "Tien Thu," closed many other papers, terrorized journalists and playwrights, and used hand grenades to intimidate the Kim Thoa troupe owing a performance of the play "Lap Song Gianh" / "Fill Up the Gianh River." /

They forced government employees to attend courses on "Denunciation of Communism." In a program allegedly to "depopulate the capital," they expelled people from their dwellings in many workers' neighborhoods, used bulldozers to raze houses and hired hoodlums to burn the people's homes.

From 1956 they energetically carried out terrorism against trade unions, especially the Eastern area rubber plantation workers' union and the bus workers' union, and arrested and murdered their cadres. Other organizations such as the Confederation of Christian Workers, the Workers' Forces (2nd International), etc. took command of the trade union movement and connived with employers and government officials to terrorize activist members of trade unions.

Along with "anti-Communist" activities in urban areas, they launched Operation Truong Tan Buu in the Eastern area, and Operation Thoai Ngoc Hau in Central and Western Nam Bo. These two important operations were aimed at the masses. Main force, National Guard and Nung units were sent to carry out operations deep inside the former base areas of the Resistance. The purpose of these operations was to sap the prestige of the Resistance, demoralize the people, organize the administrative machinery at the township and hamlet levels, develop the militia, and to set up an intelligence network and reactionary political groups. This was a new step in the U.S. - Diem's plan to move into rural areas and down to the grass-roots levels with the aim of imposing an oppressive rule upon the population so as to entirely control South Vietnam, the urban and rural areas as well and at all levels. The U.S. - Diem's major objective then was to control townships because by controlling townships, they would have a hold on the people and weaken the prestige of the Party and the Resistance. So, in order to control the townships, they denounced Communism, carried out terrorism against resisters and Resistance areas, and used military action to threaten the people. Their main targets were the families of resisters, cadres and regroupees; arrest, torture and imprisonment were their most usual practices and executions were rather rare.

Throughout 1956, they endeavored to set up the administrative machinery at the township level; however, owing to the people's intense struggle movement, that machinery could be set up in some areas but not in others, and sometimes it existed in name only without really functioning. Only in places such as Can Giuoc and Can Duoc where the

administrative personnel consisted of defectors was that machinery able to operate. They also assigned tyrants from other areas as police officers or trained them as key cadres in the administrative system or in the militia.

In some areas the enemy organized the population for guard duty. In the beginning the people in certain areas took advantage of that system to stand guard for us, so it developed fairly rapidly. But later on, when... [several words missing]... the system was disrupted.

After the National Assembly elections and after July 20, 1956, the enemy authorities intensified terrorism and denunciation of Communism. They required resistants to report to them and to sleep at the communal houses. In one area they went as far as putting resistants and their families in zinc cages exposed to the sun in the market place and kept them there for days and nights. Arrests of cadres and resistants were carried out in a series and on a larger scale. (Cadres' wives were forced to marry enemy administrative personnel and spies. Murders and rapes occasionally occurred.)

Late in 1957, although the U.S. -Diem had been able to set up an administrative system at the lowest levels such as the hamlet and the inter family group, they still could not force the people to carry out their reactionary policies as they wished. Our Party's organizations, though split up in some areas, were still basically stable. The people's movement, though not as strong as before, maintained various forms of struggle to oppose the enemy's reactionary policies.

In mid 1958 and especially in early 1959, with a number of wicked agents already trained, with an espionage system already established in hamlets and some reactionary organizations set up in rural areas, the enemy started a larger scale and more vigorous offensive in the hamlets with the aim of eradicating our movement and our organizations in rural areas.

Through the 10/59 law and the Special Military Courts, they intensified terrorism and denunciation of Communism, and used intimidation as a means of pressuring the masses and their own civil servants and troops to carry out their fascistic policies. They

were in a position to catalogue the people fairly accurately, and they relentlessly isolated, harrassed or tried to bribe... [ several words missing ]... families of regroupees and cadres, or people suspected of sympathizing with us.

They used reactionary organizations, particularly the People's Self-Defense Corps to oppress the masses, mobilize the population for guard duty and forced them to carry out reactionary policies.

They set up a series of "agrovilles" with the primary purpose of concentrating the population in remote base areas to keep them under tight control and to attack and destroy our organizations.

Terrorism was prevalent in rural areas, especially in former base areas of the resistance. Many people were beheaded, disemboweled, or had their eyes gouged out; and such acts of terrorism were carried out by the enemy to compel the people to participate in forced labor, enlist in the army, move to "agrovilles," or to cooperate with them in arresting or mistreating our agents and Party cadres. In other words, the enemy forced the people to abandon their homes, gardens and rice fields, to leave the Party and the revolution, to surrender and to carry out the enemy's reactionary policies -- failing which they would be outlawed and subjected to punishment under the 10/59 law. For that reason, violent struggle movements took place in Ca Mau, Long My, The Son, Hau My and Thanh Thoi, etc. However, although they were highly conscious of the revolution, the people had no arms to defend themselves and soon had to yield to enemy pressure. Within just a few months, the enemy succeeded in dismembering 80-90 percent of our organizations in many base areas, especially in Ca Mau, Long My and Kien Tuong. Tens of thousands of people and Party members became outlaws and fled to the U Minh forest, to Dong Thap and other jungle areas in the East. The enemy then had real control over the townships and hamlets; only a few reactionaries were enough to scare hundreds and even thousands of people and to compel them to obey the enemy's orders. Meanwhile, the enemy placed the people in such a situation that they had to find a way out for their own survival and for the revolution, and which gave rise to the urgent problem of finding an effective way to struggle against the enemy.

In summary, the U.S. -Diem's rural pacification program progressed very slowly on account of opposition on the part of the peasants. Though its organization started in early 1956, the enemy's administrative and police apparatus really began to function and to control the rural areas only in mid-1958. The seesaw struggle took place for nearly three whole years. We must admit that our own mistakes were the main reason why the U.S. -Diem finally succeeded in controlling the rural areas. We will get back to this matter later.

The U.S. -Diem's policy towards prisoners was extremely severe. With even more savagery than the French colonialists in the past, the U.S. -Diem inflicted horrible physical and mental tortures upon prisoners throughout their detention. Prisoners were forced to attend lectures on denunciation of Communism and to work as informers. Refusal would result in continued torture even for those who had already been indicated. Tens of thousands of the Nam Bo people including comrades of ours have been killed in enemy prisons during the past seven years.

One of the reactionary forces which the U.S. -Diem relied upon to oppress the rural masses is the landowners class. The enemy ordered administrative and military authorities at various levels to help landowners collect, rent and seize property. They issued a series of ordinances (No. 57, No. 2, etc.) to restore ownership to the traitors whose lands had been confiscated by the resistance government. They colluded with the French colonialists and bought lands from French planters in order to deny the peasants future ownership of these lands.

However, the resistance still had enough prestige and the peasants enough strength so that the enemy was unable to seize land in former resistance base areas. To a certain extent, it was also because landowners felt that the circumstances were not favorable enough to allow them to confront the peasants.

In many areas, the people were able to preserve ownership of resistance-alloted lands.

The enemy also seized land from local farmers for distribution to refugees, which caused clashes in many areas; none of them were very serious, however, and thanks to our judicious policy, they were in general eventually settled satisfactorily.

While terrorizing the people, the U. S. -Diem intensified the development of military forces. They forced youths to join the army. Early in 1957, they ordered conscription and at the same time successively opened several officers training schools and created additional military branches. The number of recruits at the Quang Trung training center was 10,000 at all times. Many students and officers were sent to the U. S. and the Philippines for training.

The religious sects' forces were turned into civil guards and the civil guards were upgraded to main forces; and militia units were organized.

A network of military bases and especially of communication routes and airports was urgently set up; for example, the Saigon-Bien Hoa Highway was built and the Tan Son Nhut airport and the Quang Trung training center were enlarged, etc.

They set up forts in former resistance bases, such as Zone D, Dong Thap Muoi, U Minh, etc., and divided these bases into smaller areas with a network of innumerable roads and canals. Starting with small and weak battalions previously under French control, the South Vietnamese administration, from 1954 to 1959 succeeded in building up a military force consisting of many regular divisions and regiments, various branches such as artillery, air, navy and armored forces, all provided with modern equipment, plus many companies of civil guards and special forces and a corps of township and hamlet militia, not to mention the "Thanh Nghiep Youth, a Catholic paramilitary organization, the People's Self-Defense Corps and the Republican Youth which operated even at the hamlet level.

In addition to his military and paramilitary apparatus, the enemy also employed former security agents and spies of the French, enlisted more evil doers, defectors and traitors to set up many networks for police, security, intelligence, civic affairs, secret services, etc. They organized police and espionage networks among the population, in townships, hamlets, city neighborhoods, business enterprises and infiltrated them, made them into reactionary organizations. . . [several words missing] . . . in cultural and welfare organizations, in the army and the administration at all levels. They used agents as a hard core to control their administrative, military and reactionary political organizations. These agents served the U. S. -Diem very effectively and were the main support of the enemy's administration.

The enemy's economic policy between 1954 and 1959 showed some noteworthy characteristics:

When peace was restored, South Vietnam seemed to have a prosperous economy. Thanks to the Resistance government's policy which sought to improve the people's standard of living and to the distribution of land to a large number of peasants, and with peace back, the people in the liberated areas enjoyed very decent living conditions.

With the situation changing from war to peace, the potentials for economic development were good. The refugees were also a stimulus to trade in South Vietnam.

Moreover, the U. S.-Diem eliminated the French monopoly in certain branches of the economy. A number of Vietnamese businessmen, most of them relatives and friends of Diem, replaced the French. Diem, who was freed from the influence of the French franc, placed the South Vietnamese currency within the dollar bloc and did business with this bloc.

In 1955 Saigon had as many as 20,000 import-export firms serving as direct or indirect agents for U. S., Japanese, West German and French firms. Tet in 1955 was the most opulent new year ever celebrated in South Vietnam.

However, that encouraging situation did not last long. In 1956 dark clouds brought about by the U. S. began to overcast the economy of South Vietnam.

First, the Americans, taking the place of the French imperialists, started interference in 1956. Owing to U. S. economic and policy, to... [words missing]... the investment policy of the U. S. and its satellites, and to the U. S. inconspicuous but very tight control on South Vietnam's domestic and foreign trade, the economy of South Vietnam lost its independence and became subordinated to the interests of the U. S. imperialists and satellite countries.

Secondly, Diem's family actively strove to secure an economic monopoly. With henchmen such as Nguyen Ngoc Dan, Nguyen Tan Toi and Ngo Duc Que, they took control of banks, the exchange office, major import and export businesses and secured a monopoly on domestic trade, especially on rice.

Thirdly, Diem implemented a very heavy-handed tax policy which affected business circles and all strata of the urban and rural population.

Fourthly, though imposing limitations upon the French capitalists, the U.S. - Diem still had to make concessions in certain lines of business such as medicine import, rubber export, etc., so the French capitalists still had priority over Vietnamese businessmen. On the other hand, Diem had to ally with the big Chinese capitalists and their control over the economy remained basically unchanged.

Fifthly (and this is the most important factor), the situation in rural areas was getting critical since cultivated surfaces were being considerably reduced owing to lack of security and to the stagnation of agricultural products.

In urban areas, unemployment prevailed, and the workers and lower ranking civil servants experienced difficult living conditions. As a result, the people's purchasing power declined. Then the administration devalued the piaster. In addition, owing to the sudden withdrawal of French troops, demand decreased whereas supply remained the same, and the economy of South Vietnam was obviously off balance. Unrestricted by customs, U.S. goods flooded South Vietnam to saturation and this increasingly critical problem reached its crucial point in 1957.

The number of import and export firms, originally 20,000, decreased to 2,000 and some of them rapidly sold out to evade taxes, while others committed suicide by drowning. Most imported goods either did not correspond to what the people wanted or were over-supplied and hundreds of thousands of tons accumulated in the harbors and warehouses. Locally made commodities, such as fabrics, sugar, etc., could not compete with those imported from other countries, which resulted in a slackening of local industries.

The U.S. - Diem's economic, financial and taxation policies created a deadlock, a crisis, and difficulties and misery for all strata of the population, from businessmen and industrialists to the bourgeoisie, farmers and workers.

Although this situation improved a little bit in 1958, it continued to affect the economy of South Vietnam and the people's living conditions up to now.

The Diem clique's policy was essentially characterized by terrorism; however, it sometimes practiced demagogy to deceive the people. Aside from allowing a few opposition groups to carry out occasional activities (though terrorizing them eventually), Diem discontinued the "march northwards" slogan in 1956, talked about peace and national unity and abolished press censorship (just for the sake of appearances). They did it either in moments of temporary stability, or just to calm the public when their indignation was at its height. The same policy was applied to the bourgeoisie. When their situation became too difficult, the U. S. -Diem would take a few measures to make it easier for them, such as allowing them to defer tax payments, to buy excess goods, to export to Cambodia and Laos, or to organize a "local products week" as a show of administration support for domestic industry and trade.

In the cultural field, the U. S. -Diem policy was aimed at debilitating the nationalist spirit of our youths and masses. However, they occasionally exhorted that good morals be upheld and that prostitution, gambling, and pornographic movies and literature be banned.

Nevertheless, their demagogic policy usually did not last long -- softness would be followed by rigor. The U. S. -Diem's policy fundamentally remained one of terrorism and oppression.

In 1959, the enemy situation in Nam Bo was as follows: Through police, spies, secret agents and tyrants, the enemy controlled the administrative system from the central level down to the townships, hamlets and family groups; and the military apparatus from the main force units down to the militia.

Such an oppressive machinery enabled them to control Nam Bo almost entirely, even the remotest areas. The people's spirit and their struggle movement weakened -- just a few spies were enough to control a whole township, and in some townships spies and administrative personnel numbered as many as 500. Some enemy agents were even able to go deep into townships and make arrests overtly.

Refugee land development centers and the network of communication routes enabled the enemy to control the Eastern jungle, the Dong Thap and U Minh areas.

With oppressive control already established in rural areas, the enemy intensified resettlement by driving the people out of their hamlets and townships and moving them into "agrovilles" which were set up to secure closer control of the rural areas. The enemy carried out this scheme very ardently. It can be said that had we not boosted up the movement late in 1959, all townships in Nam Bo would have been turned into "agrovilles," into peasants' prisons and concentration camps at the end of 1960.

The enemy succeeded in implementing most of his basic policies, such as conscription, forced labor, taxation, etc. and caused our Party and the people heavy losses.

Following are some conclusions derived from the preceding outline of the enemy situation between 1954 and 1959:

The South Vietnamese administration stabilized in mid-1959. From an initially weak and precarious position and with its authority thinly scattered, the South Vietnamese administration in 1959 found itself in a strong and relatively stable position and with centralized power. To attain this result, it went through a long process involving a series of developments. The U. S. dislodged the French; pro-U. S. elements ousted pro-French elements to take over the power in South Vietnam; the U. S. -French conflict sometimes involved bloodshed; the U. S. imperialists interfered further by turning South Vietnam into a new form of colony under the yoke of U. S. imperialism, prolonged the partition of Vietnam and prepared to resume the war; Ngo Dinh Diem carried out a policy of violence and carnage, used dictatorial methods to concentrate authority and privileges in the hands of his family, and eliminated all forces that did not side with him.

If they enabled the U. S. -Diem to seize the power in South Vietnam, it was precisely these methods that caused strong resentment among all strata of the population. Even in the landowning class, the U. S. -Diem could rely only on a minority consisting of the highly reactionary elements and some refugees from North Vietnam, whereas

a large majority were either indifferent or disaffected. On the other hand, it was precisely these methods which alienated Diem from many people who used to support him, and created discord within the pro-U. S. group. Because of his policy of authoritarianism, religious monopoly and family rule, the enemy not only was unable to win over the Cao Dai and Hoa Hao, but also caused violent dissatisfaction and opposition on the part of the these groups. The U. S. - Diem's only policy toward the ethnic minorities, including Cambodians, was one of constant terrorism and extortion; so these people were also against them. Moreover, there were incipient signs of discord between the American masters and their lackey Diem.

We say that in 1959, the South Vietnamese administration was relatively stable due to the fact that it controlled the administrative machinery at all levels, controlled the army and was able to implement its major policies, etc. However, to attain this temporary stability, it was forced to oppress the masses with extreme cruelty, with police and military terrorism as the essential means. So, stability was acquired at a very high price -- that of complete political failure.

The time the South Vietnamese administration was most stable was precisely the period of optimum development of the very factors that were to cause its weakening and its ruin.

Another weakness of the Diem administration was that it lacked the people's support and depended on its military and administrative apparatus for survival; and even in this apparatus, its supporters were just limited to a body of police and spies and a minority of privileged tyrants, military officers and high ranking officials. And it was through these individuals that the U. S. - Diem ran the army and administration.

So it is no wonder that the South Vietnamese administration's infrastructure was unsteady and collapsed rapidly in the face of the strong revival of the revolutionary movement in Nam Bo as of late 1959.

## STATUS OF THE MOVEMENT

After considering the enemy's schemes and activities, let us review the status of the masses and of the movement during the 1954-1959 period.

The Nam Bo people welcomed the armistice as a great encouragement. Though they were rather uneasy about the incomplete liberation of our country and the temporary control of South Vietnam by the enemy, the masses were somewhat relieved and visualized national reunification as a not very remote prospect when they were enlightened about the situation.

When the people's forces pulled out, the only places where the Cao Dai and Hoa Hao moved in for occupation and continued terrorism and oppression were some areas in Thu Dau Mot, Tay Ninh, Long Xuyen, Chau Doc, Rach Gia, Can Tho, Ca Mau, etc. Otherwise, an atmosphere of peace prevailed throughout Nam Bo, in urban and rural areas as well.

Christmas in 1954 and Tet in 1955 were celebrated in the most festive atmosphere ever seen in Nam Bo. In Saigon, My Tho and other cities, the population overtly listened to radio broadcasts from Hanoi.

In rural areas, the way of life remained the same as during the Resistance; but material conditions were a lot better.

Before Ngo Dinh Diem unveiled his treacherous face, the people only had a vague idea about him and his administration. Basically, they realized he was just another puppet and they thought he would be in power only for two years. But they did not know that he was dangerously crafty and different from the previous puppets. Some people in the upper strata and many Catholic refugees mistakenly regarded him as a revolutionary scholar. That is why when the U.S. - Diem versus France-Bao Dai clash took place, the people who resented the French and their lackeys were rather pleased to see them defeated by the U.S. - Diem; and a number of people even supported Diem.

As for the U.S. imperialists, the people did not see their true face until much later.

In July 1955, when Diem refused to talk and to establish normal relations with North Vietnam, and especially when the U.S. - Diem exhorted a "march northwards" and "anti-communist action," Diem's reactionary face was gradually unveiled, and the people started having doubts as to

whether the Geneva Accord could be enforced on schedule or enforced at all. When the U.S. -Diem overtly terrorized the resisters and oppressed the masses through various campaigns, the people realized that peaceful methods in dealing with the U.S. -Diem were of no avail. For the masses, the future started looking dim and they began to question the Party's policies. Our cadres' explanations would somewhat assuage their misgivings, but not for long. Nevertheless, there was still a hopeful consensus that in two years, the country might be reunified somehow or other, for instance through liberation of the South by troops from the North. The people thought to themselves that they would make an effort to put up with the situation for two years and that two years would not really be too long.

However, the people could not sit calmly and wait for the day of reunification; and the enemy's policy forced them to struggle to protect their lives and property and the fruits of the revolution as well.

Right after the peace accord, the Nam Bo people's struggle kept going on without respite, under one form or another, and either peacefully or violently.

From early 1955 on, after the bloody suppression of the demonstrations supporting peace which were held in Saigon, Mo Cay, Binh Thanh, etc., with tens of thousands of participants, the Party led the rural and urban populations to rise up and struggle under various slogans. Their pivotal themes were the demands for meetings to negotiate, for a general election, for normal relations between the North and the South, and the unilateral violations of the Geneva Agreement by South Vietnam. Large and spirited demonstrations and meetings continually took place throughout 1955 and up to mid-1956. People signed thousands of petitions addressed to the South Vietnamese authorities and to the International Control Commission demanding that the Geneva Agreement be seriously carried out. Specifically, the peaceful demonstrations organized before the 20th of July 1955 and 1956 gathered a very large number of urban dwellers as well as villagers. On those days, markets and schools were closed, vehicular traffic was at a standstill and factories shut down for one hour in a general strike as a manifestation of force.

Before the restoration of peace, the Peace Movement in Saigon, which maintained the traditions of the students' movement of 1950-51, was composed of numerous and representative intellectuals and revolutionaries of Nam Bo. When peace was restored, the Saigon-Cholon Peace Movement operated very actively, publishing documents and newsletters, holding press conferences and organizing people's meetings. It created a vigorous political atmosphere.

However, in early 1955 the U.S. - Diem suppressed the movement, apprehended and put under house arrest many of its leaders. This act violently angered public opinion.

When the Peace Movement was quelled, social relief movement arose after the fight between the U.S. - Diem and the Binh Xuyen sect. The movement, which mobilized tens of thousands of people in Saigon and in the surrounding provinces to participate in the relief of the victims of the internal conflict, was at the same time a political campaign with a broad and sound effect. In reality, it was a movement against the U.S. - Diem, who caused the civil war, and a movement to demand democracy, civil rights, and the implementation of the Geneva Agreement. Along with the social relief movement, the free press movement was fairly active also. At that time, the Saigon press reported many news events to unmask the U.S. - Diem clique. On the occasion of the Bandung Conference, it published a number of articles promoting the peaceful coexistence policy. Meanwhile, high school and college students launched a movement demanding that the army return commandeered schools, and that courses be instructed in Vietnamese. Of significance, the movement against the depraved culture for the safeguarding of good morals and traditional customs was expanded to an extent never seen before.

On May 1, 1955, the urban movement reached its apex, especially in Saigon. Tens of thousands of laborers and people then took to the streets to demonstrate. Representatives of the peasants from the provinces, petty bourgeoisie, small businessmen, retailers, bourgeoisie, intellectuals, reporters, writers, artists, high school and college students, etc. also joined the workers and laborers. Besides the usual slogans promoting economic development and democracy, the people also noted in the demonstrators' ranks the slogans which urged meetings to negotiate, a general election, peace and reunification of the country, re-establishment of normal relations between the North and the South, etc. The struggle was more than a celebration of the anniversary of the working class. It became an active front for the workers, the farmers and others to struggle and defend their democratic and civil rights, and to demand peace and the reunification of the country.

Simultaneous with the above movements were the large-scale strikes that took place on the rubber plantations in the Eastern region, to demand pay raises, to fight against workers' termination and, particularly, against the terrorization of labor unions and their members. Some strikes had nearly 60,000 participants. The strikes lasted almost one month. They were the biggest large-scale struggle to date.

In Saigon, the following groups of people struggled by holding separate and fairly large meetings: the laborers at the harbor, the retailers at various market places, male and female students from a number of public and private high schools and colleges in Saigon-Cholon, the employees of the Cho Quan power plant, the BGI and Binh Tay distilleries, the railroad, the bus company, the telecommunication service, etc. Most significant was the struggle of 10,000 employees of various French military establishments who demanded compensation for their sudden dismissal. This struggle lasted a very long time.

The biggest and most violent struggle developed against the expulsion from and the burning of houses during the so-called "clearing" of the workers' slums. These struggles were extremely drastic.

By this time, the South Vietnamese administration forced the Chinese residents to apply for Vietnamese citizenship. This act engendered a tense opposition atmosphere on the part of various Chinese societies and led to the mobbing of Taiwan Embassy in Saigon.

In the face of the above situation, the U.S. - Diem mounted an extensive repression. The movement experienced a long seesaw struggle with the enemy before it quieted down.

In the rural areas the struggle was also intense from the start.

The first movement was the one demanding the fulfillment of the clauses of the Geneva Agreement. Next, in the rural areas of the Western and Central regions, and in some localities of the Eastern region there arose the movement of self-defense for the purpose of resisting brigands. It united large groups of people to protect security and order in the villages, oppose enemy search operations and fight against the plundering actions of the deceitful bands of Hoa Hao and Cao Dai. The tense and seesaw struggles in the rural areas during 1955-56 were peasant struggles aiming to conserve the successes of the resistance. Most remarkable were the struggles against land seizures, the establishment of local puppet administrations and the use of land for other crops, and as well the struggle to maintain the people's professional organizations (illegible word/ the cooperatives, etc.). Another front of intense struggle was the people's resistance against the enemy sweep operations and Diem's establishment of a puppet administrative apparatus. The people greatly slowed down the enemy's plan to install an oppressive system in the hamlets and townships through boycotting the system, by demanding democratic elections, and by opposing the nomination of dishonest persons, defectors or strangers as local puppets. The highlight

of the situation was the movement to protect and rescue cadres. Hundreds of people surrounded the enemy with the intention of retrieving a cadre when the enemy apprehended him. In many cases the people fought the troops to free a cadre as they moved forward to lift up the enemy's rifles when they were firing at a cadre. In some localities in the Western region, the people obstructed the waterways to prevent the enemy from apprehending a cadre. The movement to protect cadres has been carried on to date.

From 1955 to date, the rural population has continually, perseveringly and courageously resisted the U. S. -Diem's scheme of relocating homesteads and appropriating lands to build their military bases. The most outstanding of these struggles was that of the people of the six villages near the Quang Trung training center when they opposed the center's expansion. This struggle continued on intensively for many years during a constant and daily shower of rounds and shells. The people's struggles to oppose the extension of the Tan Son Nhut airport, the building of the Thanh Tuy Ha base and the construction of the Saigon-Bien Hoa Highway were also large-scale struggles.

During 1955-56, the rural and urban populations participated in two large political struggles to oppose the referendum force of October 1955 and the first National Assembly election farce of March 4, 1956. The number of participants, who either boycotted and refused to vote or tore up the ballots and inserted slogans into the boxes, etc., was great.

During this period, the movement in Nam Bo encountered some disadvantages from without. First of all, there were the people who migrated to South Vietnam. They slandered North Vietnam by giving a bad impression of the North among the upper classes. Then, a series of incidents unfavorable to us occurred: The Quynh Lau incident, the case of the Nhan Van magazine group in North Vietnam, the attack on Stalin's personality cult, the 1957 case of the Molotov and Malenkov anti-Party clique in the Soviet Union, the anti-revolutionary incidents in Hungary and in Poland, the purge of the rightist elements in China, etc.

However, because the people's revolutionary spirit was still strong at this time, the bad effect of the above-mentioned incidents was limited only to a certain category of people.

The situation of the struggle movement from 1957 onward was that it focused on the common problems of people's welfare and democracy. The political slogans during the years of 1955-1956 appeared only now and then. This was done because of our own policy (which will be explained later in further detail).

From early 1957 to mid-1958, the principal goal of the struggle movement in the cities were the demands for a solution to unemployment, for pay increases, tax reductions, construction of more schools and classrooms, reduction in tuitions, protection of trade and industry, etc.; and the demands against the collection of taxes at the market places, the firing of employees, and the various types of fines, etc. In the rural areas, the struggle demanded tax and rent reductions, relief activities, ownership of granted lands, etc. and opposed corruption. At this time, people of all walks of life lived through much hardship. Scant starvation occurred in many areas.

The general forms of struggle were written petitions and resolutions or face-to-face confrontations. Some large-scale struggles with district and provincial authorities occurred in an intense and spirited way.

The most remarkable movements of this period were:

1. The movement of the Saigon bourgeoisie, especially the import-exporters and then the producers. Due to the deadlocked situation in their businesses, they united and openly opposed the economic policy of the Diem regime, the monopoly of the Ngo and Tran families, and the invasion of U.S. firms. They demanded that the problem of their unsold goods be solved, that taxes be reduced and home-made goods be protected. This struggle was very intense and lasted for months. The Diem regime was discomfited and had to make specific concessions in order to quiet down this struggle.

2. ~~The anti-draft movement: Early in 1957,~~ Diem ordered the conscription of youths. This ~~decree worried and perturbed~~ the youths as well as their relatives. A strong opposition movement

arose and continual struggles to demand draft exemptions or deferments took place. Progressively, the anti-draft movement developed to a larger scale. With the support of the people and parents, youths united closely in tightly knit brotherhood cells and resolutely defied the draft decree. Many anti-draft meetings and demonstrations were held. In many areas, thousands of people stood before enemy vehicles or moored their boats across a river in order to prevent the enemy from taking youths away. Families having draft age sons were obsessed with the idea that once their sons joined the army, they were likely to be sent to their deaths. A fairly large number of draft age youths resolutely dodged the draft permanently. Some were apprehended, but they soon deserted their units. The most outstanding example of the anti-draft movement was the bloody struggle of thousands of people and youths of Hao Duoc township and the neighboring ones. The event moved the entire province of Tay Ninh.

In addition, the anti-terrorist and the counter-espionage movements separately arose in many areas. However, generally speaking they were weak.

In 1957 there was also the movement of the Cao Dai faithful who rose up and opposed the Binh Than Accord and Diem's meddling in the Church's affairs by replacing Pham Cong Tac with Cao Hoai Sang. On its memorial day about 30,000 believers held a meeting and drafted motions to defend the Church, by demanding order and security, and by praising Pham Cong Tac's policy of "peaceful coexistence."

However, the above movements did not last long because their leaders did not have a determined standpoint. So, once being oppressed, the movements died away.

From mid-1958 to late 1959, the movement in Nam Bo came to a deadlock; ~~The political movement was non-existent. Even struggles for common democratic and civil rights were sparse.~~ Only the movement against the agrovillage program in the Western region was active.

The enemy at this time had completed the establishment of his ruling machinery from top to bottom, being able to build a tight espionage network and to form popular force units in every village. He was able to control each and every family by means of the house-block system. The movement's influence was so low that even the people's low-level struggles, such as the requests for relief or for loans to grow crops were labelled as "Viet Cong activities," and the participants were intimidated and terrorized. At the same time, the enemy kept on systematically building his agrovilles, concentrating people in centers and hamlets away from remote areas and to zones near commercial centers, wide roads and waterways. He carried out a tight system of oppression in the rural areas. Then he enacted the fascist law 10/59 and executed a number of victims to intimidate the masses.

During this period, the people were somewhat perturbed and shaken even though they strongly hated the enemy and believed that the revolution would be victorious in spite of everything. Doubts in our struggle method and old views from the past were now revived and voiced more vigorously. People said that ~~the struggles for "democratic and civil rights only lead to the prisons and to the tombs," and that "such struggles will end with everyone's death."~~ In many localities people requested the Party to take up arms and fight back against the enemy.

In general the people steadily carried out seesaw struggles against their being concentrated in the agrovilles by the enemy and in some areas the struggles lasted one or two years. In other areas the struggles were carried out fiercely. For example, in Long My tens of thousands of persons demonstrated against the concentration policy and went to the provincial headquarters and to the national capital to voice their opposition. They openly used the press to struggle and some bloody fights even took place. There were cases when the angered masses beat to death local puppet authorities and soldiers who were trying to concentrate people, raze homes, bulldoze gardens and destroy crops. The enemy relented when the opposition movement was strong, but later he resumed his actions more brutally. Even though the movement against the agrovillage and concentration programs was very active -- and it was the outstanding movement during 1958-59 -- the enemy still

could concentrate most of the population around the agrovilles into them. What enabled him to do so was the difference in strength prevailing at that time, but the more important factor was our somewhat rightist line. The principal agrovilles built were those in Vi Thanh Ba Chuc, Thanh Thoi and Duc Hue, and some other smaller ones. The enemy forced people from remote areas to gather near the waterways, commercial centers and wide roads so that he could control the people more easily. Sometimes the enemy policy was impeded, but it was not broken.

In this period the mass arrest of Phu Loi took place. The Nam Bo Party organization mobilized everyone on hand to instigate a movement against this massacre. In the Western and Central regions, the movement arose vigorously and a series of protest demonstrations by the masses were held, thus linking this movement with the basic movements against starvation and for land together with the other movement for democratic and civil rights. However, this latest movement did not last long because it was affected by the general deadlock. In the Eastern region the movement was weaker even though the people were greatly discontented and hated the enemy. From the town where the massacre took place, only 80 persons could be motivated to demonstrate in Saigon.

Simultaneously, during this time the enemy carried out many atrocious killings, opening up abdomens, drawing blood and destroying the minority groups' hamlets in the Eastern region by air bombardments, etc. The anti-terrorist movement rose up in many areas; however, our strength was minor so our influence was weak. And in spite of our all-out efforts, our campaign against the second election of the National Assembly could not push the overall movement strongly forward either.

A noticeable characteristic, which was also a big success of the Nam Bo movement, during these years was the promotion of the ethnic minority groups and the religious sects to resist the U. S. -Diem.

The minority groups of the jungle area and the Khmer minority, located in the provinces of Ba Xuyen, Tra Vinh and An Giang, (where we had very few basic organizations or none at all during the resistance) continually struggled against the U. S. -Diem oppression. Even when our overall movement encountered many difficulties in 1959, many struggles by the hundreds, the thousands, and the tens of thousands of the Khmer people and their Buddhist priests took place to protest the oppression of the priests due to the U. S. -Diem's undermining of

the Buddhist clergy organizations, and the U. S. -Diem's forbidding the study of the Cambodian language in Tra Vinh and Soc Trang.

Various religions, especially the Hoa Hao groups in An Giang and the Cao Dai group in Tay Ninh, all of which had manifested much prejudice and antipathy against us in the past, now more clearly saw the tyrannical nature of Diem's religious monopoly. They thus learned revolutionary principles and became either sympathetic to us or neutral toward us. They lost faith in their leaders, especially those who had openly surrendered to, or colluded with Diem. Therefore, a great number of the Cao Dai clergy and laity in Tay Ninh supported the movement of Pham Cong Tac's peaceful coexistence against Diem, and numerous clergy and laymen of the Hoa Hao supported Nguyen Long Chau's anti-Diem group. Thanks to this situation, our cadres were able to deeply penetrate the religious colonies (which had been considered as unpenetrable) and build our structure, propagandize revolutionary doctrine, and lead a union of religious and non-religious forces to struggle together. Presently, the masses of the Hoa Hao and Cao Dai sects have recognized our rightful doctrine and unanimously supported us in a united struggle against the U. S. -Diem and are unwilling to revive their old hostility even though they still have some sectarian feelings and are prejudiced against us.

The above situation was the U. S. -Diem's biggest failure in their dealings with the ethnic groups and the religions. Even the Catholic masses whose minds had been impregnated with "anti-Communist" ideas by Diem were tired of, and hated his harsh and oppressive system which weighed down heavily upon their lives in the rural areas.

We believe that a few additional details concerning the emigration movement -- ~~of the northern compatriots who were forced to move to the South --~~ must be reported. ~~At first, they were particularly well-treated by the Diem regime, so, generally speaking, they supported him. They were Diem's prime support with which he could resist the uprising forces and our movement. He used dishonest people and spies disguised as native and foreign priests to control them. Later, however, Diem progressively mistreated the immigrants, exiling them to arid, remote and cold areas, failing to provide them with implements to earn their living and even failing to give them relief allowances. Additionally, the local, native and foreign priests, and the immigrant priests engaged in a conflict of interests. Thus, discontent against the South Vietnamese~~

administration spread quickly among the immigrants. In 1956 a bloody fight occurred in Cai San, followed by many others in the Eastern region. All were caused mainly by Diem's and the land-owners' exploitation of the immigrants' labor. They were moved to wild areas to reclaim wastelands which, once cultivated, were confiscated by the U. S. -Diem, and they were then hired to work as tenant farmers.

The immigrants' living conditions daily became worse and their opposition grew more and more fiercely. In small groups the immigrants coupled their actions with the local population's in order to struggle against the U. S. -Diem authorities for their rights. In many cases, the native and foreign priests covertly supported their faithful.

As for the majority of the settlers from Quang Nam and Quang Ngai provinces, whose morale and revolutionary traditions have always been good, they either struggled to demand an improvement in their living conditions or joined the general movement with the local population.

Concerning the mass organizations, in 1954 the Regional Committee set forth a new policy. It disbanded all the national salvation organizations formed during the Resistance and strove to use all legal and semi-legal capabilities to attract the rural and urban masses. Adopting this policy, the peasants in the rural areas joined semi-legal organizations such as the organizations of Mutual Work Exchange, the associations for Mutual Assistance, the Relief organizations, the dispensaries, etc. Simultaneously, we were striving to form legal organizations in the cities, such as the Farmers' and Workers' Trade Union, the Vietnamese Women's Association, etc. We had the masses of laborers on the rubber plantations join various trade unions, women join the Vietnamese Women's Association, high school students join student groups, and college students join inter-college Vietnamese student groups. Besides, we strove to win over the social relief organizations, such as, the social committees in the workers' slums in Saigon-Cholon, the Fire Prevention groups, etc.

In the early years, the movement's impetus was strong, and the South Vietnamese administrative apparatus was chaotic. Therefore, a great number of people in many rural areas and in the cities

were able to build numerous organizations, such as the above ones and use them as a means of rallying the people and struggling more effectively.

~~Later, however, on the one hand, the fascist U. S. -Diem administration oppressed and apprehended the effective combatants of these organizations, restricted their sizes, and limited their activities, and, on the other hand, they had their lackeys infiltrate them in order to deviate the people's revolutionary line by insinuating a legal reformist approach. Therefore, in many areas these organizations disintegrated, or, even if they had survived, they lost most of their effectiveness.~~

Operating in these legal organizations, our cadres usually followed two opposite directions: One was their acting overtly which resulted in their being apprehended or purged, and the other was their becoming legally reformist-minded. Both attitudes and other erroneous ones on the part of our cadres spoiled the effectiveness of the legal and semi-legal organizations. In any case, the main problem was that the possibility of operating legal and semi-legal organizations was very restricted under the fascist and authoritarian U. S. -Diem regime. It was particularly clear that, without revolutionary organizations and under the given situation when revolutionary organizations had to go underground, there was no assurance of keeping the movement alive, especially of keeping it alive among the great masses who were accustomed to participating collectively in revolutionary organizations, but who now had to undergo hard struggles under a completely undemocratic regime; and in the rural areas, in particular, the assurance was even less.

The basic structures consisted only of a few people whom Party members used as tools to lead the masses. They could not at all replace the mass revolutionary organizations.

As the conflict between the religious sects and the U. S. - Diem was taking place, the Party planted a number of cadres among the dissident forces and at the same time formed a number of armed units equipped with old weapons recovered from the caches. All of the above forces either dispersed into squads or platoons here and

there in the Central and Western regions or they regrouped in companies in the Eastern region: They lived deep in the jungles and operated according to the guidelines of armed propaganda. They operated among the people and gave warning sentences to tyrants. (Some, but very few, were punished.) The forces of the Eastern region even fought some big battles (in Minh Thanh and in Dau Tieng) for special goals. From 1957 to 1959, generally speaking, our armed forces did not help the movement much. On the contrary, wherever they were operationally active, the enemy fiercely oppressed the people and searched for them. At that time, since the armed forces had adopted non-engagement tactics, they had to hit-and-run in order to preserve themselves. These tactics only gave rise to more doubts among the people about the armed forces' capabilities. Besides, their influence was limited because, as they claimed to be the troops of the religious sects, they did not possess the rightful cause.

Our armed strength then was adequate (18 squads in Long An and 3 companies in the Eastern area, including the Binh Xuyen force). However, the general guideline was not clear and the Regional leadership intentionally held down armed activities (as will be explained later) so that not only could they not play a supporting role for the movement and develop, but they also did not have operational plans. The armed forces risked annihilation. During this period, the Regional Committee set forth the following concepts of action for armed activities: "To restrain the activities of the lower echelons (such as local puppet officials, spies, etc.) without making the higher echelons become vigilant." "More emphasis on political rather than military activities," and "More emphasis on propaganda than combat," etc; these concepts were "the wooden stocks" which strangled the armed forces. Therefore, among the people and the cadres there was the view which held that "without armed forces was better than with armed forces."

From late 1955 to mid-1959, the Nam Bo struggle movement could be chronologically broken down as follows:

1. From 1954 to late 1956: The main activity of this period was the struggle along the lines of the following political slogans: Hold meetings to negotiate; hold a general election; fulfill the Geneva Agreement, etc.

2. From early 1957 to mid-1958: The main activity of the period was the struggle along the line of the slogans demanding democratic and civil rights. The struggle was carried out on a large scale and with a high spirit.

3. From mid-1958 to late 1959: The movement came to a deadlock and ebbed away.

Based on the above periods, we can make the general comments below:

1. After their great and successful armed struggle, the Nam Bo people stepped into peace as victors. On the impetus of this high spirit, they courageously and persistently fought the enemy. During the early days of the peaceful period, the movement was very strong; the urban political movement was particularly more active than during any past revolutionary periods in Vietnam; the coordination between the rural and urban movements was very smooth, and their mutual support was very tight. For many successive years the movement struggled against the enemy and continually broke each and every enemy phase of attack. However, due mainly to leadership (which will be explained later), the movement moved backwards from a position of strength to a position of weakness. By mid-1959 it was visibly ebbing, and in the end, it came to a deadlock. It was suppressed by the enemy who now organized espionage networks everywhere. At the same time, by means of the five house-block system, the Diem regime controlled all the people's activities. It forced everyone to join "the National Revolutionary Movement," "the Republican Youth," and "the People's Self-Defense Group." Nightly, people had to mount guard duty, and when they saw our cadres come to their villages, they would beat on their hollow bamboo stems to ring the alarm. In many villages, which had been in the center of our base areas during the resistance, our cadres, when they appeared, were encircled and hunted by screaming people. This situation caused suspicion and division even among our brothers.

The rural situation during this period was very gloomy. The local puppet officials and soldiers tyrannized freely. In sum, the people's hatred of the enemy was much deeper than before with everyone wishing that they could eat his liver raw. But people did not know how to materialize their hatred. Individual cases of elimination of traitors occurred on the people's own initiative, especially in the provinces of the Western region, in Ben Tre and Gia Dinh. People were so discontented in Tay Ninh that a premature general uprising took place in Trang Co. Due also to leadership, the movement with its revolutionary nature and political mottos was progressively changed into a somewhat revisionist movement with vulgar economic and reformist mottos.

2. In general, the Nam Bo movement was always active, always carried on the fierce struggle of the revolution against the counter-revolution even while it had to undergo many hard trials and a head-on resistance against the most fascist regime of the enemy. Although the struggle was uncoordinated during the period of reverse and deadlock, it kept going in a certain degree by one way or the other.

3. The South Vietnamese people questioned and doubted the Party's policy, feeling that a certain course of action or line at a given time did not conform to the people's aspirations and demands, but they were confident in the final victory of the revolution and fully trusted the Party and they carried out the Party's policies and principles with a high discipline.

4. The period of the people's struggle in Nam Bo from 1954 to 1959 saw the people's increasing awareness and deepening hatred of the enemy whom they had not known well at first. It was a period when they acquired a clear understanding of democracy and a class consciousness above the vague national concept which they held during the resistance. It was a period when the Nam Bo people acquired ideological and political maturity and when they forged their experiences. It was also the period of tightening and consolidating the relationship between the people and the Party vanguard. Since the restoration of peace and, in particular, during the period of reverses, the Nam Bo people have shown an

unlimited love for the Party, more than during the resistance. All followed the Party's advice on small and major problems. All relied on the Party. The people very conscientiously assisted cadres when needed, protected and provided them with security, sometimes at the expense of their own lives. Even though the enemy tried all means to separate the Party and the cadres from the people, the Party and the cadres have always been present among the people.

5. The status of the movement during these years was also affected by the process of regrouping the revolutionary forces and of dividing and isolating the enemy. Starting from the fundamental struggle of the workers and laborers, the movement expanded progressively, and rallied many other classes ranging from the petty bourgeoisie to the students, the intellectuals, and a number of the mildly anti-imperialist-leaning bourgeoisie; and most remarkable was its ability to rally followers of the Cao Dai and Hoa Hao religions, the ethnic groups, the Khmers, a number of immigrants and some specific elements within the enemy's administration and military.

The above was the foundation for the building of a united national front in the future.