

FAR EAST

SPOTLIGHT

**CONFLICT IN
INDO-CHINA**

INDOCHINA ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS

BOUNDARIES

- International (1940)
- International (1941)
- State
- Provincial

CAPITALS

- ⊙ National (State)
- National (Summer)
- State
- Provincial

Scale	1:100,000	1:200,000	1:500,000	1:1,000,000
0	0	0	0	0
100	100	100	100	100
200	200	200	200	200
300	300	300	300	300
400	400	400	400	400
500	500	500	500	500
600	600	600	600	600
700	700	700	700	700
800	800	800	800	800
900	900	900	900	900
1000	1000	1000	1000	1000



Scale	1:100,000	1:200,000	1:500,000	1:1,000,000
0	0	0	0	0
100	100	100	100	100
200	200	200	200	200
300	300	300	300	300
400	400	400	400	400
500	500	500	500	500
600	600	600	600	600
700	700	700	700	700
800	800	800	800	800
900	900	900	900	900
1000	1000	1000	1000	1000

Scale	1:100,000	1:200,000	1:500,000	1:1,000,000
0	0	0	0	0
100	100	100	100	100
200	200	200	200	200
300	300	300	300	300
400	400	400	400	400
500	500	500	500	500
600	600	600	600	600
700	700	700	700	700
800	800	800	800	800
900	900	900	900	900
1000	1000	1000	1000	1000

Introduction

Since this pamphlet was first published a year ago, Indo-China has continued to be very much in the news, and the American stake in the war there has become considerably enlarged. It has become even more important that Americans understand the issues in that struggle and know to what use American money and equipment are put by their government. The response to the first printing indicated a widespread desire for this information. As a result, this study is now reissued with an introduction describing the developments in the past year.

When the war in Indo-China entered its sixth year in December 1951, the conviction grew in the most reactionary circles in France that a political peace settlement with the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam was the only solution. On December 28, Edouard Daladier, pre-war premier and defense minister, told the French National Assembly that the war had become a stalemate and that France could not afford to carry on. He proposed that France ask the United Nations to seek an armistice and then organize a plebiscite in the Indo-Chinese states. Two hundred and six deputies supported Daladier's motion to return to committee a bill appropriating almost a billion dollars for the war in Indo-China (New York Times, December 29, 1951).

The New York Times of February 26, 1952, reported Jean Letourneau, French Minister for the Indo-China States, as saying that "he did not believe a decisive military victory was possible" and that "peace would have to come eventually through an overall international political settlement with communism."

Such signs of "weakness" were received with undisguised disapproval by American policymakers. Commenting on the debate raging in France over the Indo-China war, the magazine U.S. News & World Report declared on March 21: "Both U.S. aid and U.S. pressure may be needed to keep France in Indo-China." More bluntly, the choleric Senator Tom Connally, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, told William H. Draper, United States Special representative in Europe, "to put the heat on those countries and to make them do their part. They should not expect us to do it all" (New York Times, March 22, 1952.)

Thus Washington has become not only the quartermaster but also the drill sergeant of the European colonial powers.

The effort to support a staggering France necessitated a great step-up in military and economic aid during the last year. On the occasion of the arrival of the 150th shipload of American military supplies in Indo-China, the New York Times of May 29 reported:

"The last six months has seen a marked increase in shipments of United States military aid to Indo-China. Fifty shiploads have arrived since late January, compared with 100 shiploads during the preceding sixteen months.

"In addition to military aid, a program of military supports has been launched by the economic mission of the Mutual Security Agency in Indo-China."

To comprehend the size of a "shipload", the New York Times of October 2, 1951, reported the arrival in Saigon of "A shipload of United States Garand rifles, enough to equip four divisions," and that the same ship "also brought 100 military trucks and ammunition."

Some 130,000 tons of American arms have been shipped directly to Indo-China ports (New York Times, June 8, 1952). In monetary terms, Letourneau told the French Assembly last December that the United States had delivered in 1951 \$174,000,000 worth of material for the Indo-China war, that \$159,500,000 was still to come, and probably an additional \$130,500,000 in 1952 (New York Times, December 30, 1951.) These figures do not reflect the total American support for the war, since they only include shipments made directly to Indo-China. As a matter of fact, a major part of overall American aid to France must be considered as a subsidy for the war. Former Premier Rene Pleven disclosed on May 6, 1952, that France has received so far 360,000 tons of American military equipment. The United States has further promised to make available about \$600,000,000 in aid in dollar receipts; \$270,000,000 in direct economic help; \$30,000,000 of American equipment for Indo-China; \$100,000,000 estimated to be spent by American military in France this year; and \$200,000,000 worth of off-shore purchases in France for delivery to Indo-China. However, even this huge subsidy is apparently insufficient to underwrite an Indo-China war expenditure which is expected to reach \$1,400,000,000 in the next twelve months (New York Times, May 11). Pleven called for nearly half a billion dollars in extra military aid from the United States. This request, according to the New York Herald Tribune of May 7, was "said to have been made necessary by the mounting costs of the war in Indo-China."

Thus for the present a neat division of responsibility has been arrived at. Washington supplies the guns and France the cannon fodder. The United States calls the tune. Apparently lacking assurance that the corrupt French colonial administration will not sell the guns, a United States military advisory group is stationed in Indo-China which "keeps an eye on what happens to the weapons and equipment after they are delivered, following their travel right up to the line of fighting" (Herald Tribune, January 16).

American policymakers argue that this large-scale American intervention on the side of colonialism is necessary to prevent a "red invasion." During the hearings on the Mutual Security program before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Secretary of Defense Robert A. Lovett replied to a question whether a French withdrawal from Indo-China would "lay open the whole area of Southeast Asia to Communist infiltration and aggression": "If you assume that the Communists come from outside the area, yes." (New York Times, March 22, 1952.

To facilitate the passage of funds for France, Lovett and Secretary of State Dean Acheson sought to build up a new "threat" by testifying vaguely that "some Chinese troops" had crossed the Indo-Chinese frontier--a development of which the French government said it had no knowledge. (Herald Tribune, March 22).

In connection with these allegations it must be remembered that American supplies and advisers helped the French long before any Chinese could possibly arrive on the scene. Walter Lippmann declared flatly that.. "The danger in this region...is not primarily or principally external." He pointed out: "The Chinese Communists have not invaded Southeast Asia. There was a bitter and costly civil war in Indo-China...long before the Red Chinese entered Southern China." (Herald Tribune, January 28.) Finally, the New York Times correspondent in Saigon stated on January 13 that "American aid to the Franco-Indo-Chinese far outbalances that which the Vietminh has obtained from China."

The issue in Indo-China is not communism but colonialism, as this pamphlet will show in detail. The Democratic Republic of Viet Nam is based on a movement for national independence having vast popular support. This accounts for its strength and its victories. To have fought the United States and France, who have superiority in manpower and material, to an admitted stalemate must be considered a tremendous achievement. Actually, it is much more than a stalemate.

The Indo-China war is a big war. Latest estimates of the French-led regular forces in Indo-China vary from 206,000 men (New York Times, June 8) to nearly 300,000. In addition, the French side is said to have more than 100,000 local auxiliaries. The forces of the liberation movement in Viet Nam, Laos and Cambodia are estimated at about 400,000. Of this total, only 180,000 are classed as regulars, 116,000 as regional units, and 100,000 as local militia "with very little in the way of arms" (New York Times, May 19).

Viet Nam authorities claim on the basis of incomplete data that the French-led forces lost 37,710 men killed and taken prisoner in 1951 and a total of more than 170,000 killed, wounded and captured since the beginning of the war.

Politically, the last twelve months have been a further consolidation of the liberation movement in the Viet Nam Republic, with the formation of the Party of Labor and the unification of the governing united front. A coordinating committee of the movements in Viet Nam, Laos and Cambodia was also formed, and in the latter states the political activities and armed struggle of the liberation movement increased sharply. Its leaders claim that today the French-led forces exercise no authority in Laos and Cambodia, except in the large towns.

In the economic sphere, a central national bank and unified control over the country's finances have been established. The unification of the agricultural tax system has been effected. Now the peasants pay only one tax in kind, and as a whole taxes do not exceed 20 per cent of the total product of a village. Viet Nameese leaders also report increased production through "labor emulation" campaigns.

These developments in the past year reaffirm the utter futility of the Franco-American attempt to break this movement. The danger, however, exists that as a last resort Washington may seek a solution in a Korea-type "police action," involving American troops. Continuation of U.S. credits, arms shipments and military advisors will only spread the war. Lest this happen, all peace-loving Americans must demand an end to U.S. intervention in Indo-China and join the millions of French people in demanding a halt to colonial war, withdrawal of foreign forces from Indo-China, and a settlement based on the recognition of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam.

July, 1952.

NEW AREA OF U.S. INTERVENTION

Since World War II, United States activities in distant parts of the world have become literally matters of life and death to the American people. Never before has our peace and well-being depended so much on our ability to inform ourselves about and judge correctly the actions of our government.

Among the areas which have assumed such importance is Indo-China. As "French Indo-China", the backward colony of a European power, it was familiar to only the expert before the war. As the "Democratic Republic of Viet Nam," it has become the subject of major American policy pronouncements and has caused the expenditure of millions of dollars.

That Indo-China is a large factor in American Far Eastern policy has become especially clear since President Truman's declaration of June 27, 1950, which sent American troops to Korea and the U. S. Seventh Fleet to Formosa and directed the reinforcement of U.S. bases in the Philippines. In this same statement President Truman said:

"I have similarly directed acceleration in the furnishing of military assistance to the forces of France and the associated states in Indo-China and the dispatch of a military mission to provide close working relations with those forces."

Apart from this military mission, there are so far no American troops involved in the fighting in Indo-China. But there are more and more indications that the growing American intervention in the Viet Nameese war may eventually cost American blood as well as American dollars. U.S. News & World Report of November 3, 1950, for example, estimated the situation as follows:

"What would it take to clean up the whole mess in a hurry?

"The French guess it would take 500,000 troops and about 2 billion dollars a year for a couple of years."

The implication is clear. Only the United States can muster such resources in manpower.

What is the purpose of American intervention in Indo-China? What are our interests there? What are the causes and issues of the war?

To provide some of the answers to these questions this survey has been written, in the belief that these questions are vital to Americans who may be asked to sacrifice not only their money, but their lives, in this war.

TERRITORY, PEOPLE AND PRODUCTS

Indo-China is an area of about 285,000 square miles, a third larger than France, inhabited by an estimated 27 million people. It is comprised of five subdivisions. Running along the South China Sea from north to south are Tonkin, Annam, and Cochin-China, while Laos and Cambodia border on Thailand to the west. Like all Southeast Asian countries Indo-China is composed of several different nationalities. The Annamites, who now call themselves Viet Nameese, are the largest, constituting about 75% of the population, and living in Tonkin, Annam and Cochin-China, which make up together about 45% of the area of Indo-China. As the name Indo-China, given it by Europeans indicates, Indo-China is influenced by both Indian and Chinese civilizations. The Viet Nameese have retained the impress of Chinese culture from several centuries of Chinese domination beginning 2000 years ago. The peoples of Laos and Cambodia bear the marks of Indian tradition.

Indo-China has often been compared to a pole balanced by two baskets of rice. The pole is the Annamite mountain range and the baskets are the delta valleys of the Red River in Tonkin to the north and the Mekong River in Cochin-China in the south, two of the greatest rice producing areas in the world. Rice is the backbone of the country's economy, both as the staple food and the principal source of revenue, accounting for from 40 to 45 percent of the export trade before the war. Rice exports in the postwar period sank to about one-twelfth of prewar volume. Indo-China is, however, still the world's third largest exporter of rice.

Rubber is Indo-China's second most important product and export commodity, although the output ranks far behind that of Malaya and Indonesia. The country's other leading products are maize, coal, tin and iron ore, miscellaneous minerals, and fish.

Indo-China possesses valuable natural resources. Her Coal reserves, chiefly of highgrade anthracite, have been estimated at 20 billion tons, and there are large potential hydro-electric power resources, as well as the mineral deposits and agricultural raw materials necessary for substantial heavy and light industry. The present state of Indo-China's industrialization, however, lags far behind its potential. The great majority of its people are dependent on agriculture and associated handicraft industries for a meagre livelihood. Kate L. Mitchell in her book Industrialization of the Western Pacific (Institute of Pacific Relations, 1942) states:

"In keeping with traditional French colonial policy, Indo-China was developed strictly as an appendage

to the economy of France, and has long been known as one of the most intensively exploited colonial areas in the world. French capital investment in the colony was concerned exclusively with the production of agricultural and mineral raw materials for export, and French policy ruled out the development of any local industries which might in any way compete with the products of French manufacturers."

The French writer C. Robequain in his survey of the Colony's economic development, L'Evolution Economique de l'Indochine Francaise (Paris 1939) declared:

"It has not been given to any colony to develop its industries freely; even the possibility of such a development has always seemed paradoxical, almost inconceivable. Indo-China has not escaped this law."

To the extent that industries such as mining, cement, textiles, and the distillation of alcohol have been developed, it has been only to take advantage of the presence of cheap labor, the proximity of important potential markets for manufactured goods, as a source of excise revenue, to meet the special requirements of resident Europeans, or where the vast distance of Indo-China from the metropolis made production on the spot more profitable, as Jack Shepherd points out in his monograph, Industry in Southeast Asia (I.P.R. 1941).

FRENCH COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION

Indo-China is, from all points of view, the most important, the most developed and the most prosperous of our colonies, wrote Albert Sarraut, former Governor-General of Indo-China and Minister of the Colonies of France. Following earlier penetrations by traders and missionaries, France conquered Indo-China in piecemeal fashion during the third quarter of the last century, only after overcoming considerable resistance. Kate L. Mitchell states that the acquisition of this "balcony on the Pacific" was "inspired partly by the desire to secure a larger share in the trade of southern China, partly by the valuable coal deposits of Tonkin, and throughout by the perennial colonial rivalry with Great Britain who at that time was rapidly extending her control over the rich resources of the Malay peninsula."

After gaining military control, France imposed an extraordinary patchwork of administration. Cochin-China is governed directly as a colony; Annam and Cambodia are pro-

tectorates; "but Tonkin is a monster of public law, which falls into no known legal category," writes Virginia Thompson in French Indo-China (1937). But while native rulers remained in nominal control of most of the country, French colonial power was always the basic reality, the method of indirect rule being used for administrative expediency.

Economically, France established in Indo-China "the most protectionist system in Southeast Asia," according to Erich H. Jacoby's Agrarian Unrest in Southeast Asia (a study published under the auspices of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in 1949). Jacoby states that "both theoretically and practically, it came to depend almost completely on the interests of the mother country."

THE COLONIAL ECONOMY

Helmut G. Callis, in Foreign Capital in Southeast Asia (I.P.R. 1942), gives the following figures for foreign investments in Indo-China. In 1938, a total of \$464,000,000 were invested in Indo-China of which \$80,000,000 was Chinese. Western capital was 95 percent French. Average profits of business were estimated at seven percent. One-third of the French capital was invested in agriculture, the remainder in processing industries, mining, trade and banking. The relatively large share in agriculture was owing to the rapid development of rubber production in recent decades. Before the war, the value of French rubber holdings was estimated at \$45,000,000. In addition, French capital was invested in rice, tea, coffee, sugar and cotton plantations. The French operated government-controlled monopolies on salt, on distillation of alcohol from rice, and on opium. As in India, so also in Indo-China, the people had to pay a tax on salt. Two large French companies virtually monopolized the production of anthracite coal, producing between them 97% of the total output. Another French company largely monopolizes cement production.

Chinese capital monopolized the rice trade and dominated the retail business in Cochin-China and Cambodia. Aside from this, foreign capital is almost absent; "a virtual monopoly has been secured by French protectionism and paternalism, combined with direct discriminating restrictions against foreign economic activity," according to Jacoby, who points out, for instance, that mining companies were obliged to have three-fourths majorities of French nationality on their boards of directors and that foreigners were excluded from land concessions.

The French stake in Indo-China is one of the keys to the

present situation. In the words of U.S. News & World Report of November 3, 1950:

"Why don't the French get out? For one thing Indo-China is a rich country with a lot of French investments in it."

The effects of French colonialism on Indo-China and its peoples have been summed up by Jacoby as follows:

"The still prevailing principle of 'assimilated' economy--a clear formulation of economic dependence--must be considered responsible for the failure of the French administrative policy in the colony. It has kept the native population at a low level of agricultural development and tied to a system of production where human labor competes successfully with animal labor. By neglecting the economic and social progress of the population, the economic effects of the technical advance were crippled. The conditions in the country were determined by land scarcity in the north, landlordism in the south, and the unsolved credit problem generally."

The International Labor Office's report, Labor Conditions in Indo-China, issued in 1938, states "that there is something radically wrong with a system which to an ever greater extent imposes western economic methods and increased requirements on the Indo-Chinese worker, but which at the same time tends to result in a constant reduction of his purchasing power."

PEOPLE UNDER COLONIALISM

Indo-China under French rule represents colonialism at its worst, a picture of a people robbed, cheated, exploited and expropriated by monopolists, tax collectors, landlords and usurers in the service of a western empire. Within the scope of this survey, just a few facts must suffice.

Describing the state of agrarian relations, the basic economic question in any Southeast Asian country, Jacoby writes that under French administration "land concentration increased rapidly. While the average size of the holding decreased with the increase of the population, the French administration favored the establishment of large estates by a generous concession policy and by patronizing and subsidizing plantation owners. Ample credits were at their disposal, while the peasants were obliged to turn to the usurious moneylenders for financial support." As a result between 1890 and 1937, European estates increased in area from 11,000 hectares to more than 800,000.

¹1 hectare = 2.471 acres.

Figures for tonkin, for example, show that about 62 percent of the farming families own less than 0.36 ha, 20 percent even less than 0.13 ha; and 91.5 percent own less than 1.8 ha. This overwhelming majority of the farming population of Tonkin cultivates only 40 percent of the total rice area. The actual situation is even worse than these figures show, because they reflect legal rather than economic ownership, the legal proprietor being often practically a tenant, obligated to make annual payments to the moneylender who has allowed him to remain on the holding, according to Jacoby. In Cochin-China, landlordism has assumed still greater proportions, 45 percent of the rice area being in the hands of large estates of over 50 ha, 37 percent in the hands of medium estates from 5 to 50 ha, and only 15 percent of the area being divided among almost 72 percent of the total number of farmers, who have up to 5 ha each.

Commenting on the situation in Cochin-China, Virginia Thompson declares that in the landlords "the French have created not a bourgeoisie but a plutocracy." On the other end of the scale "a very large rural proletariat has grown up" which has "an exceptionally low standard of living." In the landlord-tenant relationship feudal customs prevail whereby the landlord not only controls the disposal of the tenant's share of the crop, but exacts onerous gifts and services. Moreover, the landlord is the main source of credit to the tenant. The interest rate has been officially estimated at 50 to 70 percent or more for 8 months or one year, but Jacoby reports that "rates up to 120 percent are not unheard of." Both Jacoby and Thompson report that the landlords depend far more on income from interest than from rice production. This explains why large estates prefer



French Indo-China: A laborer is paid 2 francs per day; a buffalo 4 francs.

to divide their lands into small farms and lease them to tenants for primitive cultivation. The level of this cultivation is shown by the fact that agricultural machinery is virtually unknown, and work animals are much less used than in Burma or Siam, Indo-Chinese agriculture depending on the most intensive application of human labor in all Southeast Asia. Jacoby cites the French authority Gourou on the struggle for existence between man and his animal in Tonkin where a laborer is paid 2 francs a day and a buffalo 4 francs.

And in the light of these facts apologists for the French colonial regime have seized on the timeworn excuse of over-population. Deliberately confusing cause and effect, they officially explain "the rural pauperism [as] resulting from over-population."

NATIONALIST MOVEMENT BEFORE 1940

Viet Nameese resistance to French colonialism dates back to the opposition of the Annamite empire to the activities of western missionaries in the two centuries preceding the final outright French conquest. "The Annamite emperors were no religious fanatics," Virginia Thompson writes in French Indo-China, "but they were wise enough to recognize in the missionary a precursor of European political penetration. Commerce and missions with both the French and the Portuguese went hand in hand, in spite of Papal Bulls forbidding missionaries to indulge in trade." Advancing from mere trading, French missionaries soon became king-makers in the country's political life.

With the beginning of the actual French military conquest in the 1850's a period of protracted struggle ensued. For over 30 years the French carried on colonial warfare to establish their rule.

Hardly had the French suppressed this resistance when, in the pre-World War I period, growing economic suffering and the stirring throughout Asia -- the Sino-Japanese War, the Boxer Rebellion, the resistance of the Filipino people to American conquest, the Japanese victory over Tsarist Russia, and the Chinese Revolution -- inspired a wave of popular national unrest in Viet Nam. A number of uprisings occurred. However, Virginia Thompson writes that in the main the Viet Nameese upper class intelligentsia which constituted the leadership of the nationalist movement at that time "contented themselves with citing abuses for the French to reform, but they did not yet think of taking matters into their own hands by demanding political rights... Learning, not revolution, was the byword of the great majority before 1914." But the French, fearing even this reform movement, limited as its demands appear by today's standards, an-

swered with severe repression, deporting several Annamite emperors to Africa, executing hundreds of people and jailing and torturing thousands of all classes.

An instance illustrating both the bestiality of French colonial oppression and the uncowed struggle of the people is the 1917 uprising in Tonkin, one of the causes of which was "the criminal behavior of the French Resident, Darles." Virginia Thompson reports: "The subsequent investigation revealed terrible conditions in his charnel house of a penitentiary, and his sanction of torture of the prisoners who had offended him. Despite the Court of Saigon's recognition of his guilt he was fined just 200 francs and given a lucrative position by the reactionary colonials led by Governor Cognacq." The fact that this prominent French colonial official was convicted at all and forced to withdraw from the administration is an indication of the strength of the popular movement at that time.

During World War I, 100,000 Indo-Chinese soldiers and workers were carried into France. Said to be volunteers, "their participation in the War was nothing more or less than forced labor," according to Virginia Thompson.

As in other countries of Southeast Asia, the social composition and leadership of the nationalist movement changed rapidly after World War I as political consciousness spread to growing sections of the petty bourgeoisie and peasantry, which, together with the arising industrial urban working class, provided a vigorous stimulant to the old and a source of new leadership in the nationalist struggle. The development of organized political expressions in these classes was unquestionably strongly influenced by the Soviet October Revolution and, directly, by the Chinese revolutionary movement in Canton. Previously the nationalist striving of the upper classes had been nourished mainly by the 18th century political theories of Montesquieu, Rousseau and the French Revolution.

Let this fact be interpreted to support the currently fashionable theory that the birth and subsequent rise to leadership of the Left in the Viet Namese liberation movement is the fruit of "Muscovite machinations," it should be remembered that western ideas, either liberal or Marxist, would have found little echo if French colonialism had not prepared the conditions for their reception through the introduction of western economic methods of exploitation and the destruction of the old village commune. Jacoby points out:

"The national idea became a permanent force in South-east Asia at the moment when the peasants were forced to give up subsistence farming for the cultivation of cash crops or when...subsistence farming ceased to yield a subsistence. The introduction of a money economy and the withering away of a village as the

unit of life accompanied this development and finally established the period of economic dependence."

Speaking of the "very large rural proletariat [that] has grown up," Virginia Thompson warned in 1937, "rural poverty is so great that this class not only is a political and a social danger to the state, but a living force in the country that is almost unutilized."

Moreover, the Viet Namese nationalist movement, in common with the national movements in other Asian countries, has the characteristic described by Professor Rupert Emerson in Government and Nationalism in Southeast Asia (I.P.R. 1942):

"Nationalism in Southeast Asia, as elsewhere, is not merely an instinctive movement of resistance to the alien and the foreigner but a conscious assertion of the unity, the distinct and separate identity of the community in question...nationalism puts itself forward as the assertion of a claim as of right on behalf of an historically shaped community of men knowing itself to be radically differentiated from similar communities."

Jacoby, in noting that "it is frequently pointed out that national movements in Southeast Asia are backed by only a few hundred thousands, but that the bulk of the people is still indifferent", refutes this claim by illuminating the very roots of the national movements, including that of Indo-China:

"The fact is ignored that national movements are identical with the claim for land, and that, for this reason, the people are an integral part of it... If we want to apply the famous metaphor that a nation exists only as long as it is confirmed by a daily plebiscite, we can surely say: the people of Southeast Asia confirm their being a nation by a daily plebiscite for solution of the land problem."

As a result of the growth of political consciousness after World War I several new political parties arose, having a more radical approach and representing broader forces than the old constitutionalist parties. In 1925 the Revolutionary Party of Young Annam was founded among the small bourgeoisie in North Annam. The roots of this party went back to a group called the Restoration of Annam formed by prisoners in a penitentiary after the 1908 uprisings. However, it hardly grew beyond the organizing stage before most of its members joined the Communist Party.

The Nationalist Annamite Party (Viet Nam Quoc Dan Dong) was formed in 1927 in Tonkin on the model of the Canton

Kuomintang. It directed its appeals towards the youth and students, workers and the army. Women also found in this party one of the first opportunities for political expression.

The Indo-Chinese Communist Party had its origin in the Association of Revolutionary Annamite Youth founded in Canton by Ho Chi Minh, then using the name of Nguyen Ai Quoc, in 1925. In 1931, at the height of a period of revolutionary upsurge in Viet Nam, it numbered 1,500 members with 1,500 members with 100,000 affiliated peasants, according to Virginia Thompson. Its program at that time consisted of three main points:

1. Complete economic and political independence of Indo-China.
2. The overthrow of the native dynasties, of the Annamite emperor and the kings of Laos and Cambodia.
3. Fraternal union of the nationalities of Indo-China, with self-determination for the peoples of Laos and Cambodia and other national minorities.

The mass movement of 1930-33, which was suppressed by the French with such monstrous cruelty that widespread criticism arose in France, was an important stage in the development of the Viet Nameese liberation movement.

The new leadership of the movement gained experience, and in certain districts the confiscation of landlords' land by the peasants, the shortening of the working day, the abolition of feudal labor taxes, etc., were accomplished during this period. At the same time, due to the growth of the people's revolutionary movement, a top stratum of the Viet Nameese bourgeoisie, despite its opposition to French imperialism, began to withdraw from the liberation struggle regarding the new economic and social demands of the nationalist movement as also a threat to its own vested interests.

Even though less independent than the Indian or Chinese upper class and more subject to the domination of western monopolies, the Indo-Chinese bourgeoisie also feared revolution more than imperialism. It counted on alleviating its dependence on French imperialism by wringing concessions from the colonial overlords, making use of the disputes among the imperialists. The success of demagogic Japanese propaganda, which promised industrial development and deliverance from the "white imperialists", was considerably aided by the fact that this compromising element in the nationalist movement looked to Japanese "help" to weaken the French colonial regime without a mass people's struggle. Such an outlook naturally prevented this group from taking part in the anti-Japanese resistance movement during World War II, even though events showed that its hopes were not justified.

Apart from this pro-Japanese section, the nationalist movement of Viet Nam was essentially anti-fascist already before the second World War. Awakened by the growing menace of Japanese imperialism and influenced by the Popular Front in France, the anti-fascist feeling crystallized after 1936 in the formation of the National Democratic Front, through the initiative of the Communists. The movement sought to awaken the country to the danger of Japanese aggression, at the same time demanding from the French the establishment of democratic liberties which would enable the people to participate wholeheartedly in the defense of their country. After the fall of the Popular Front, this movement had to meet increasing attacks from the French administration, and on the occasion of the outbreak of the war in Europe, its leaders were arrested and received severe sentences. But the underground activities of the movement grew ceaselessly.



HO CHI MINH

WORLD WAR II

DEVELOPMENTS:

FRENCH CAPITULATION

AND RISE OF VIET MINH
(1940-45)

As is known, Indo-China was seized by the Japanese even before the beginning of the war in the Pacific. The collapse of France in June 1940 was quickly followed by the "peaceful" Japanese invasion of Tonkin in September. In May 1941 Indo-China was virtually incorporated in the Yen Bloc by the signing of the Japan-Indo-China Economic Agreement. On July 29, 1941 the Vichy Government signed an agreement with Japan for the "joint defense" of Indo-China, which opened the way for the Japanese military occupation of the southern part of the country, and on August 10 the Japanese press reported that Indo-China's economy was to be subjected to a "drastic reorganization" involving joint Franco-Japanese capital and technical collaboration. The peaceful and bloodless manner in which France surrendered her colony to the Japanese imperialists before the war

stands in obvious contrast to the protracted and sanguinary struggle France has conducted in the postwar period to wrest Indo-China from its rightful owners. However, no contradiction is involved, for to the heads of the French monopolies, who were widely represented in the Vichy clique, the capitulation to the Japanese seemed a means of preserving, albeit in curtailed volume, their share in the spoils of the colony.

Unlike the treacherous policy of the French colonizers is the stand of the Viet Nameese people who from the very first days of the Japanese invasion were ready to fight for their country. In order to repulse the Japanese imperialists, the Viet Nameese patriots even expressed their readiness to fight alongside French colonial forces.

In October 1940 Indo-Chinese partisans attempted to expel the Japanese from Langson in Tonkin. However, the forces of the old and new colonizers united in the struggle against the people's detachments. On October 15 the Japanese invaders accepted the military collaboration of the French against the partisans, and several Japanese garrisons were replaced by the French. Towards the end of December 1940 the movement in this district was crushed and its leaders executed.

The dispatch of a large part of the French forces to aid the Japanese contributed to the success of an armed uprising in Annam and Cochin China, as a result of which, in November 1940, a number of areas were liberated and authority transferred to the hands of people's committees. For the first time the red flag with the gold star, which later became the emblem of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, was hoisted.

Only as the result of prolonged and bloody military operations by the French and Japanese colonizers were these popular uprisings liquidated. Those who escaped the repression united around Ho Chi Minh, the leader of the Indo-Chinese Communists. Upon the initiative of this party there was created at the beginning of 1941 at a congress in south China, a broad national democratic front which was to act in collaboration with the Allies. This new movement was called the Viet Nam Doc Lap Dong Minh, "the Democratic Front in the Struggle for the Independence of Viet Nam," or, for short, Viet Minh. Various parties and organizations, political, religious, cultural and professional, joined in the Viet Minh. It gradually drew into its ranks all nationalist elements, as well as anti-fascist French and Chinese nationals. By 1944, the first partisan detachments which had united around Ho Chi Minh, had grown into the People's Army of Liberation. In that year the people's army took possession of seven provinces of Tonkin. The attacks launched by the Japanese against this liberated area produced no results whatsoever. For the future Democratic Republic of Viet Nam the existence of such liberated re-

gions played a role analagous to the role of the early liberated areas in China. Here was the first opportunity to act as a nation, to elect the people's committees which subsequently formed the basis for the organization of the government of the Viet Nam Republic, and to carry out the first social and economic reforms.

The successes of the Viet Minh compelled the Japanese in March 1945 to liquidate the French colonial apparatus and to set up puppet "national" states with the aid of Indo-Chinese feudal elements, under direct Japanese military control.

Several months prior to the defeat of the Japanese and the proclamation of the Viet Nameese Republic in August 1945, the Viet Minh published its program. This program begins with the following words:

"The Democratic League for the Independence of Viet Nam intends, following the victory over the Japanese, to create a provisional government of the democratic republic of Viet Nam in the spirit of the new democracy."

The program then lists in detail the problems requiring solution including, in the political sphere, the introduction of universal suffrage, the proclamation of all democratic freedoms, denunciation of all treaties signed by France in the name of Viet Nam, establishment of friendly relations with all democratic nations, and a resolute struggle against any threat to the freedom and independence of Viet Nam. In the economic sphere the program provided abolition of feudal vestiges, industrialization for the purpose of creating an independent national economy, broad agrarian reforms, introduction of the 8-hour day and various health and social security measures. The cultural points of the program included introduction of free and compulsory elementary education and aid to the intelligentsia.

In the early part of August 1945 the people's army occupied, one after the other, the big provincial centers of the country, completely overcoming the Japanese, who were paralyzed by the Soviet defeat of the Japanese Kwantung Army.

VIET NAM REPUBLIC AND POST-WAR FRANCE (1945-46)

On August 19, 1945, four days after Japan's surrender, the Viet Minh proclaimed the establishment of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam with its capitol at Hanoi. Simultaneously, people's committees -- regional governments -- were set up in Saigon, capital of Cochin China, and Hue, capital

of Annam. On September 2, 1945 the Declaration of Independence, signed by Ho Chi Minh, President of the Provisional Government, and leaders of the coalition parties, was proclaimed. This Declaration states in part:

"In fact, since the autumn of 1940, our country ceased to be a French colony and became a Japanese possession.

"After the Japanese surrender, our people, as a whole, rose up and proclaimed the sovereignty and founded the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam.

"The truth is that we have wrung back our independence from Japanese hands and not from the French.

"The French fled, the Japanese surrendered. Emperor Bao Dai abdicated, our people smashed the yoke which pressed hard upon us for nearly 100 years, and finally made our Viet Nam an independent country. Our people at the same time overthrew the monarchical regime established tens of centuries ago, and founded the Republic.

"For these reasons, we, the members of the Provisional Government representing the entire people of Viet Nam, declare that we shall from now on have no more connections with imperialist France;...

"Viet Nam has the right to be free and independent and, in fact, has become free and independent. The people of Viet Nam decide to mobilize all their spiritual and material forces and to sacrifice their lives and property in order to safeguard their right of Liberty and Independence."

The Republic's position was strengthened by the fact that the peoples of the two traditionally backward kingdoms of Laos and Cambodia repudiated their status as French protectorates. In Laos the people deposed the puppet king and set up a Free Laotian government.

Thus by V-J Day, the new Republic of Viet Nam was firmly established and the future looked bright. Had the slightest encouragement for the Indo-Chinese been forthcoming from the United States, which in initiating the Atlantic Charter raised the hopes of colonial peoples everywhere, the bloody struggle that ensued might well have been avoided.

On September 13, 1945, the Viet Nameese greeted the arrival in Saigon of Anglo-Indian military units under General Douglas Gracey who had come ostensibly to disarm the Japanese. General Gracey's first act, however, was to depute them to maintain law and order, and for a while transmitted all orders to the population through the Japanese commander, Colonel-General Terauchi. The British Government obviously had no intention of tolerating a colonial liberation movement so close to Malaya and Burma. With the arrival of the French battleship Richelieu and substantial French reinforcements in American Liberty ships, full-scale war ensued, and it became clear that the de Gaulle Govern-

ment was determined to reconquer Indo-China by force of arms. The men in charge of this operation were prominent military figures. General Jacques Le Clerc commanded the military forces and controlled the civilian administration as well. Admiral Georges Thierry d'Argenlieu, an intriguer, who is at one and the same time an admiral and a Catholic priest, was installed as the new High Commissioner. Some notion of the ideas for the future of Viet Nam held by the admiral can be gained from the following statement made by him in 1945:

"As regards the internal status of the country, it will be granted broad autonomy. Undoubtedly this will lead to the replacement of minor French officials by Annamites. Furthermore, the big financial firms will replace their head bookkeepers by Annamite bookkeepers."

After taking office, Admiral d'Argenlieu remarked that he had come "in order to protect the minorities against Annamite imperialism."

Colonel Jean Henri Cedille, who had earned an unsavory reputation as a colonial administrator in French West Africa, was appointed Commissioner of Cochin China.

As the military attack was unexpected, the Anglo-French forces were at first victorious, capturing Saigon, Dalat, and a number of large towns in Cochin China and southern Annam. The republican government organs were ousted and the Viet Minh outlawed. Cambodia was placed under French control by enticing its popular Premier to a conference and then seizing him for shipment to France on charges of collaboration with the Japanese. The success of this "pacification" campaign was, however, more apparent than real, and after the first shock of surprise, armed Viet Nameese resistance in the rural areas stiffened to a degree that, by February 1, 1946, General Le Clerc was appealing to his government for reinforcements. Furthermore, the fact that, by Allied agreement, Chinese forces had occupied Indo-China north of the 16th parallel prevented the French from making an assault on northern Annam and Tonkin. This obstacle was later removed when, in exchange for important concessions on the part of the French, the Kuomintang agreed to evacuate its troops and French troops, which had at one time found asylum on Chinese territory with the assistance of the Viet Nameese partisans, entered the territory of the Republic from the north. The strength of the Viet Nam People's forces and the formation of the Gouin cabinet in France after the resignation of General de Gaulle, caused the French to shift their maneuvers from the battlefields to the council table. On March 6, 1946 they signed an agreement recognizing the Viet Nam Republic as a "free state, having its own government, parliament, army, finances, and

forming part of the Indo-Chinese Federation and the French Union". With respect to the unification of Tonkin, Annam and Cochin China, the French government pledged itself "to ratify the decisions taken by the populations consulted by referendum." The Republic of Viet Nam, on its part, agreed "to receive the French Army in friendly fashion, when, in accordance with international agreement, it relieves the Chinese troops."

It is impossible within the scope of this analysis to dwell at length on the various political and military moves the French undertook between the signing of this agreement on March 6 and the outbreak of full-scale colonial war in December 1946. Today there is no doubt that the French militarists regarded this agreement as a means of facilitating the preparations for an attack on Viet Nam. By obtaining the consent of the Republic to the entry of French troops, the agreement was to provide a cover for the preparation of colonial war.



FRENCH TROOPS



FRENCH TANKS



PRIMITIVE FORTS

As early as February 1946 the French Third Division and the first Foreign Legionnaires, composed largely of former German SS troops, arrived in Saigon. In May 1946 French troops entered Laos and crushed the resistance of the free Laotians. Cochin China was severed from the Republic and set up by Admiral d'Argenlieu as a "free" state with a government headed by the president of a rice syndicate, and French Commissioner Cedille in charge of security and foreign affairs. Despite these constant French violations of the March 6 agreement, the republican government continued to negotiate with the French to establish Indo-China's place in the French Union on the basis of "liberty, equality and fraternity."

After the Conference of Dalat in April and May 1946, at which little progress was made, a meeting took place at Fontainebleau, under the chairmanship of Max André, Director of the Bank of Indo-China. This conference dragged on from July 6 to September 15, 1946, because the French interpretation of a "free" state within the French Union was a sugar-

coated version of the colonial status. Viet Nam was to be given neither diplomatic, economic, nor military independence. The French High Commissioner was to have control over the initiation of legislation on a par with the parliament of the Federation. The French concept of the composition of the Federation was a parliamentary majority of representatives from the puppet kingdoms of Laos and Cambodia and French commercial interests. In an effort to prevent an eventual agreement altogether, Admiral d'Argenlieu convened a rival conference in Dalat on August 1 of hastily appointed delegates from the puppet states, which caused the Viet Nameese representatives at Fontainebleau to walk out of the meeting.

Nevertheless, due to the conciliatory approach of the Viet Nameese, a Franco-Viet Nam modus vivendi was agreed upon on September 14, 1946. Without sacrificing the basic demands of the Republic, the Viet Nameese made concessions to French economic interests; equality of status was guaranteed to French enterprises and nationals in Viet Nam, the Republic agreed to give priority to French nationals in the employment of technicians and experts, all hostile acts by each party against the other were to cease, and negotiations on outstanding questions were to be resumed not later than January 1947 with a view to paving the way to a final general treaty.

On signing this document, Ho Chi Minh made the following statement which clearly reveals his opinion of the agreement and his hopes for peaceful relations with France:

"Regarding two main issues, the Viet Nam Republic's independence within the French Union, and the Cochín-Chinese referendum, no agreement has yet been reached. But we are hoping to take up these questions again and find a satisfactory settlement. We decided to facilitate the revival of French economic interests in Viet Nam in return for a promise that democratic liberties will be applied in Cochín-China...In the Convention signed March 6, 1946, France declared that she would respect the sovereignty and special character of the Viet Nam Republic. At the same time she is extremely interested in maintaining her influence in the world. There could be no better instrument for this peaceful expansion than the French Union which the Viet Nam Republic will be one of the first to join."

Thus, Ho Chi Minh lost no opportunity to prevent the outbreak of colonial war. Every postponement gave the Republic a chance to strengthen its position by the institution of further democratic reforms inside the country and to enlist the support of the anti-colonial, democratic sentiments of the peoples of the world.

However, these efforts for a peaceful settlement were in vain. On November 16, 1946, Ho Chi Minh protested to the French Government that the setting up of a French custom house in the port of Haiphong in Tonkin to control all trade violated the Modus Vivendi. Three days later fighting broke out at Haiphong and Langson, during which, according to the New Statesman and Nation of Dec. 7, 1946, a plan was discovered on the person of a French staff officer showing "that as early as September 1946 a decision had been made to destroy Viet Nam defenses." Possessing this evidence of French intentions, the Viet Namese naturally prepared against the impending attack. At the same time, Ho Chi Minh on December 15, appealed to Premier Blum for conciliation, asking for the return of troops to positions occupied before the November 20 outbreaks and for the withdrawal of French reinforcements landed at Tourance in violation of the March 6 accord. Subsequently, Ho Chi Minh broadcast that French officials at Hanoi served him with an ultimatum demanding the transfer of the Viet Nam police to French control. Upon the rejection of this ultimatum, Ho Chi Minh charged, French troops attacked the presidential palace.

Open warfare between France and the Viet Nam Republic began on December 19, 1946, and has continued with growing intensity to the present day. During this period also, the French, recognizing their inability to smash the Republic by military means alone, have engaged in various political maneuvers to destroy the unity of the people of Viet Nam. To this end, the Annamite emperor Bao Dai was resurrected and placed in charge of an "independent" state of Viet Nam. This phase will be discussed more fully below in the section on American policy, as the establishment of the Bao Dai regime must be regarded as primarily an American creation.

France's conduct in the postwar period has once more affirmed her strict adherence to the two cardinal principles of French colonial policy in Indo-China, which have been described as follows:

"The development of colonial self-government has no place in French policy. The powers of the legislatures in Indo-China are much more limited than in Malaya or Hongkong; and the intention has been that the dependency should be drawn progressively closer to France as an integral part of a closely-knit empire dominated by the mother country."

(Lennox A. Mills, "The Governments of Southeast Asia," Government and Nationalism in Southeast Asia, Part II.)

"The general administrative trend has been toward a divide-and-rule policy as the best means of hampering the growth of Annamite nationalism."

(Virginia Thompson, "Nationalism and Nationalist Movements in Southeast Asia," *ibid.* Part III.)

VIET NAM REPUBLIC AND THE PEOPLE

When the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam was proclaimed in August 1945 it derived its power not only from its military supremacy but also from the overwhelming support of the people. The government itself was a coalition of the three largest nationalist parties: the Viet Minh, the democratic front organized during the resistance movement; the Viet Nam Quoc Dan Dang, an older nationalist party that had participated in the 1930-33 movement; and the Dong Minh Hoi, a party with strong connections in Kuomintang China. The cabinet was led by the President of Viet Nam, Ho Chi Minh, a Communist. Eight of its 16 members had never before belonged to a political party, while the others were from the Democratic, Socialist and Communist Parties, youth and women's organizations, and the Catholic and Buddhist Parties. Thus the Viet Nameese government could rightly claim that it was a truly nationalist government, representing all sections of opinion. The composition of the regional governments revealed an equal measure of national unity. In Saigon, for example, where the new government was greeted by a demonstration of 500,000 people, the People's Committee contained 3 Communists, a Nationalist, a non-party man, a Progressive, and others.

In November 1946 the Communist Party of Viet Nam ceased to exist as a separate political party. Communists, however, became the guiding and leading force of the Viet Minh, which was transformed from a league of several democratic, Nationalist organizations into a political party. The character of this party was declared to express first of all the union of the working class with the peasantry under the leadership of the working class. Subsequent to this change the left wing of the Quoc Dan Dang joined the newly constituted Viet Minh while the right wing remained an independent party under its old name. The members of the new party were encouraged to study Marxism through the formation of the Indo-Chinese Association for the Study of Marxism.

While Anglo-French troops were attempting to re-occupy the country, the Viet Nameese carried out the first and major evaluation of the political support for the Democratic Republic through the election of the National Assembly based on universal suffrage. Popular interest in this election was exceptionally high as evidenced by the numerous nominations and heavy voting. In Hanoi, for example, 77 candidates were put forward in six districts; in Haiphong 22 in three districts. The voting reached 100% in a number of districts and generally was over 80% of the electorate. Ho Chi Minh, who ran in Hanoi, received 162,000 votes out of 172,000. At the first session of the National Assembly in March 1946 Ho Chi Minh was unanimously empowered to form a

national unity cabinet. In the coalition that was formed, a representative of the Dong Minh Hoi party received the post of minister of foreign affairs. To further strengthen the coalition, a High Consultative Council was created, at the head of which was placed Nguyen Vinh Thuy, as the emperor of Annam, Bao Dai, was called after he abdicated in August 1945.

The assertions that the republican government was composed of a handful of left wing "bandits" were refuted by the success of the national elections and the work of the first session of the National Assembly. Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff in their book The Left Wing in Southeast Asia (I.P.R. 1950), in speaking of two subsequent government reshuffles in 1947, state that "both shifts were clearly in a conservative direction." Further testimony to the continued representative character of the Ho Chi Minh government is furnished by the participation of prominent Viet Namese Catholics, such as Bishop Pham Ba Truc, who is Vice Chairman of the National Assembly Standing Committee.

At its second session in November 1946, the National Assembly adopted the first Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam by a vote of 240 to 2. Chapter II, item 10, of the Constitution states:

"Viet Namese citizens enjoy:

- Freedom of speech,
- Freedom of the press,
- Freedom of assembly and meeting,
- Freedom of religion,
- Freedom to reside and travel in the country or go abroad."

Item 11:

"Viet Namese citizens may not be arrested and detained except under the law, and their residence and correspondence are inviolable."

Item 12:

"The rights of property and possession of Viet Namese citizens are guaranteed."

Although operating under war conditions, the republican government has carried out since its existence an extraordinarily wide range of radical social and economic reforms. In the basic sphere of agrarian reform, the measures taken by the Republic are similar to the policies followed by the Chinese liberation movement during the war against Japan. According to information from Viet Nam, a 25 to 50 per cent reduction in rent, the prohibition of usury and the abolition of feudal vestiges such as the poll tax, have been enforced. An extensive system of aid and credit for the peasantry has been organized. In connection with a "grow-more-food campaign," the state took over uncultivated land, and in March 1947 a law was passed offering each Viet Namese

citizen over the age of 18 years 7.5 acres of land from this state fund, on the condition that he undertake to cultivate it. As a result of these measures, the chronic famine conditions that existed under the French have been replaced by relative food self-sufficiency. By special emphasis on the production of sweet potatoes, corn and soy beans the liquidation of the rice monoculture system that was the hallmark of the colonial economy is being carried out.

With the direct aid of the government, there has been a significant increase also in industrial production, particularly of textiles, paper and weapons. The rights of labor in industry were established in the Constitution, which provides, among other clauses, for equality of wages for men and women. A labor law passed by the National Assembly on March 12, 1947, limits the working week to 48 hours (45 hours in mines), lays down minimum wages, guarantees payment during sickness, leave for pregnant women, and restricts the employment of female labor and minors.

The most remarkable progress has been made in the field of education. A literacy campaign was launched almost as soon as the Republic was established, with the publication of three decrees on September 8, 1945, making the learning of quoc-ngu (romanized Annamite) free and compulsory for every Viet Nameese child over 8 years of age, and giving every village and town administration 6 months in which to open at least one elementary school with a minimum capacity of 30 pupils. The rapid increase in the rate of literacy during the five years of the Republic's existence has been aided by the fact that only from three to four months is required to learn how to read and write quoc-ngu, and by the total involvement of the literate population in the teaching of their illiterate compatriots, every literate adult being made responsible for the instruction of five illiterates. As a result of these efforts, no less than 45 per cent of the population is now literate, as against less than 5 per cent before the war, after three-quarters of a century of French rule.

A radio broadcast from Viet Nam on November 27, 1950, which reviewed the proceedings of a meeting of the Viet Nam Council of Ministers held the previous week, reported the following among the measures decided upon in a program of action for 1951:

"To create a board of foreign trade in the Ministry of Economy with the task of stabilizing market prices, supplying raw materials and equipment, consuming and distributing home products so as to push the production movement, and linking industrial and agricultural activities.

"To create an agricultural enterprise service in the Ministry of Agriculture with the task of organizing and developing State-owned agricultural enterprises, paving the way for the future building up of national agriculture.

"To create an industrial service and a small industries service in the Ministry of Economy. The former has the task to lay the foundations of future heavy industry and to run the future State-owned industrial enterprises. The latter will guide and help develop smaller industries and handicrafts.

"To create a Government cultural and social section with the task of proposing cultural and social reforms to the Government and coordinating the work of various cultural and social organizations."

MILITARY SITUATION REFLECTS POLITICS

These claims of social and economic achievements of the Viet Nam Republic are frequently regarded with considerable skepticism in the United States. Or, where they are given some credence, it is asserted that they have been obtained only at the sacrifice of democratic liberties. Neither of these positions conforms to the logic and facts of the situation in Viet Nam. The logistic requirements of a four year long war against a modern European army, not to mention the constant build-up of Viet Nameese fighting capacity during this period, certainly could not have been met without a rationalization of agriculture, the introduction and expansion of industry, and large-scale educational measures. Furthermore, the type of war fought until recently, namely guerrilla warfare employing single, small and highly mobile units, requires more, rather than less, participation, initiative and understanding on the part of the individual, as compared with Western mass armies. Finally, the success of guerrilla war against a superior occupying army depends on particularly close relationship and mutual trust between the partisans and the civilian population. This could not possibly exist without deep understanding of and sympathy for the aims of the struggle on the part of the people as a whole.

Only on the basis of its possession of the wholehearted support of the people can the military successes of the Viet Nam army be explained. In the course of their initial offensive in 1947 the French succeeded in occupying the major

towns and strong points on the coast and along the railroads. However, the occupying forces were not permitted to enjoy the fruits of their attack. Moving from its bases in the countryside, the Viet Nam army by the end of 1948 recaptured all but 20 percent of the land. At the beginning of 1949, Vo Nguyen Giap, Commander in Chief of the People's Army of Liberation, called for the preparation of a general counter-offensive.

Commenting on this appeal, Cuu Quoc, the organ of the Viet Minh, summing up the experiences of two years of "national resistance," declared:

"The forces of Viet Nam include hundreds of thousands of experienced and armed soldiers, equipped with up-to-date weapons, either captured from the enemy or manufactured in our own small armament plants.

"The most desperate attempts of the enemy to extend the boundaries of the occupied territory confined to the big cities have failed, and our forces are implacably moving toward these points, while at the same time partisans daily attack the enemy in the rear. Although the French aggressors unleashed this war with immeasurably superior forces, the struggle has been characterized by the gradual deterioration of the enemy and by the steady increase in the armed resistance of Viet Nam."

The French military position today is such that U.S. News & World Report of November 24, 1950, reported: "The French cabinet has secretly discussed the advisability of withdrawing French troops from the northern half of Indo-China altogether." In the course of its autumn-winter offensive in 1950, the Viet Nam army captured the key forts in the Red River delta and along the Chinese frontier, and advanced the front to within 25 miles of Hanoi. According to the Viet Nam broadcast of November 27, 1950, quoted above, General Vo Nguyen Giap reported to the Council of Ministers that during this offensive in the Caobang-Langson area "the Viet Nam People's Army had wiped out over 10,000 enemy troops, including over 8,000 crack French troops...; captured a considerable quantity of war equipment and liberated five provincial capitals." This success is apparently largely due to the superior strategy of the Viet Nam army, for, as Hanson W. Baldwin reported in The New York Times of September 20, 1950:

"The French have in Indo-China about 140,000 to 150,000 troops..."

"Perhaps one-third of the regular forces are garrisoning Tongking...This total number is believed to be superior to the Communist forces in Tongking, but the French are scattered in relatively small groups at various strong points, and they do not really control the communications between them, except sporadically and intermittently.

"The Communist forces have not had sufficient heavy equipment to storm the stockaded and defended villages, but not with their numbers growing and their equipment improved, they may be able to concentrate successfully against each strong point and overpower it."

As for the situation in southern Viet Nam, Hansom W. Baldwin wrote from Saigon in the New York Times of November 22, 1950:

"Saigon is more or less a French-held 'island' in a Viet Minh 'sea.' One does not drive on roads outside the city or even in the outskirts. At night and even in the daytime vehicles are generally armed or are in convoy."

Recent newspaper dispatches indicate that it is only by pouring in continuous reinforcements that the French manage to retain cities like Hanoi. Commenting on a heavy Viet Nam army attack in that area in early January, Tillman Durdin reported in the New York Times of January 20, 1951:

"Two months ago, many observers believe, an attack such as the Viet Minh has just made would have swept to Hanoi.

"Among the factors responsible for the changed situation are the redeployment of French troops within the shortened perimeter, newly arrived United States equipment and French reinforcements."

A significant military development during 1950 was the increase in activity of the liberation movements of Laos and Cambodia. The liberated areas of Laos have been consolidated and a National Assembly and provisional "Resistance Coalition Government" have recently been elected. One-third of Cambodia has been completely liberated, according to an editorial in Issarak, organ of the Cambodian All-People's Circles Information Bureau, broadcast by the New China News Agency from Peking on December 15, 1950. Earlier, the Cambodian people set up a People's Liberation Committee, which is also the provisional government.

The military situation in Viet Nam today may be summed up by stating that the French forces control imperfectly a few large cities, while the remaining part of the country, including the network of railroads, is effectively under the administrative and military control of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam. Notwithstanding the large claims made regarding French military operations, they are in reality only costly raids into hostile territory which usually end in a return to the points of departure. The strategy and tactics of the Viet Nam army, originally developed in the years of anti-Japanese resistance, based as they are on the conception of the liberation struggle as a protracted war of resistance -- a gradual wearing-down of a superior army and the simultaneous training and growth of the liberation forces, bear close resemblance to the military principles of the Chinese People's Army and have been crowned with similar success. Viet Namese pronouncements describe 1950 as a year of great victories. However, they caution that these victories do not yet denote the beginning of the general counter-offensive, but "only a great success in our preparation for an early general counter-offensive," in the words of a broadcast from Viet Nam on December 31, 1950. A cue to future military developments in Indo-China is furnished by a dispatch in the New York Times of February 1, 1951, stating that the People's Army in Tonkin is now organized in brigades, each brigade being the size of a Western type division with 14,000 to 18,000 men and composed of four regiments, including one battalion with artillery, mortars and heavy automatic weapons. The report comments that "these developments indicate that the Indo-China fighting, at least in Tonkin, has passed out of the guerrilla stage." The cost of the war to France has been heavy. C.L. Sulzberger, chief foreign correspondent of the New York Times, wrote on January 28, 1950:

"Approximately 35 percent of France's military budget is expended in Viet Nam...in a struggle that shows no signs of ending.

"It is estimated that the over-all cost to France of the partisan struggle amounts to \$500,000,000 annually."

And U.S. News & World Report of November 3, 1950, stated that the French

"spent about 2 billion dollars in Indo-China since 1946. That's about what we gave France in aid since the end of World War II. It's exhausting France.

The French have had at least 20,000 killed and many more wounded. War costs for France run about 1.5 million dollars a day."

Furthermore, the French economy in Indo-China has been ruined, from a source of wealth it has become a source of debt. Exports from Indo-China for the first three-quarters of 1949 were only 28 percent of the 1937 volume, while imports into Indo-China rose to 150 percent (Economic Survey of Asia and the Far East, 1949, United Nations).

THE U.S. RECORD ON INDO CHINA



DR. RUFUS JACKSON

In a lecture in 1946 Professor Raymond Kennedy described American policy toward Indo-China as follows

"It would be expected that America, with her firm allegiance to the ideals of her national charter and her conviction that these ideals should be extended all over the world for the good of all, would immediately and without the slightest reservation support any attempt by a dependent people to win freedom...

"What has America actually done in the test cases of Indo-China and Indonesia? In the case of Indo-China the United States has refrained from any action or official statement, merely standing by while British and French troops, using a considerable amount of 'lend-lease' American military equipment, entered the country and engaged in open warfare against the native nationalist forces who were trying to establish a republic. Siding with the 'imperialist bloc' of Britain, France and the Netherlands, American statesmen stood firm against any international investigation of the Indo-Chinese revolution."

(America's Future in the Pacific, 1947)

During the four years since this appraisal the United States has not only emerged as the main and indispensable sustainer of French colonial aggression in Indo-China, but has assumed the position of spearhead and leader in the whole attempt to smash the Viet Nameese liberation movement, advancing from a supporting role to direct, distinctly American, interventions -- and these on all fronts, economic, military, diplomatic, and political. This new aspect is a reflection of the drastic change in relationship between the European colonial powers and the United States, in favor of the latter, as a result of World War II.

Throughout the colonial world, the United States now regards the possessions of the European powers as potentially its own -- and therefore seeks to extend its operations in all of them to the extent of becoming dominant. In Indo-China, this has resulted in a complicated situation.

On the one hand, France's efforts to reconquer her colony have been supported by the United States on a growing scale commensurate with the increasing French inability to suppress the liberation movement which promises to prevent the realization of American ambitions altogether. The defeat of the liberation movement, therefore, is the main aim of American policy.

On the other hand, the United States does not want to aid in the re-establishment of the exclusive French hold on Indo-China of prewar days, which did not permit American intrusion. Taking advantage of United States strength, French weakness, and the upheaval in Indo-China, American policy has sought to effect a solution which would allow free access to American military and economic interests without interference from either France or the people of Viet Nam. While this consideration has become submerged in the face of the victories of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, it has resulted in certain differences between French imperialism and the "new look" imperialism of the United States.

A third dilemma occupying American Policy-makers today is the adverse effect of the continued employment of the best elements of the French army in Indo-China on the ability of France to deliver her quota of forces for the proposed "North Atlantic Army."

American policy in the postwar period with respect to Indo-China can be considered in the following spheres:

- 1) Economic. As has been pointed out above the \$2 billion France has spent in Indo-China since 1946 are matched by about the same amount France has received from the United States since World War II. It is hardly necessary to say that the war-ruined economy of France could not have afforded the expense of colonial aggression without American aid. How close a connection exists between American economic aid and the French military budget for Indo-China is illustrated in a dispatch from Paris in the New York Times of Nov. 21, 1950:

"Jean Letourneau, Minister for the Associated States, who has received full powers to conduct the Indo-Chinese war, now contends that he should receive for Indo-China the 210,000,000,000 francs that had been allocated to it on the assumption of getting 270,000,000,000 francs from the United States."

In addition a United States Aid Mission headed by Robert Allen Griffin was sent to Indo-China in March 1950, and as a result of its recommendations \$23½ million of economic aid were earmarked for the Bao Dai regime.

2) Military. American military aid for French colonial operations in Indo-China dates back to the immediate postwar period when French troops returned to Indo-China equipped with American arms and transported in American ships. American arms aid to France got into full swing after the conclusion of the North Atlantic Treaty in spring 1949 and the subsequent Franco-American military aid agreement of January 27, 1950, which allowed for either the shipment of American arms to France to replace French war materials sent to Indo-China, or the direct use of American equipment itself.

At the present time, not only is the United States government "giving the French and their allies top priority on about 400 million dollars worth of American arms and military supplies," but an American military mission under the command of Brig. Gen. Francis G. Brink has been esconced in Saigon to supervise its distribution to the various units, according to U.S. News & World Report of Nov. 3, 1950.

A dispatch from Paris in the New York Times of November 19, 1950, reported that agreement had been reached between the French Defense Minister and U.S. Secretary of Defense George C. Marshall to transfer two United States B-26 bomber groups, "which will be equipped by the Americans," from the Korean front to the French forces in Indo-China.

A report from Saigon by Hanson W. Baldwin in the New York Times of November 22, 1950 stated:

"[United States] Military materiel is now reaching Indo-China in large quantities. The first three of twenty Consolidated B-24 Privateer patrol bombers... have arrived. In addition, fifty A-26 attack bombers plus forty Navy Hellcat fighters, the first installment of larger numbers still to come, are here or are en route. Landing craft...are also being received and new ground equipment is beginning to arrive."

The crucial role played by American military equipment in the colonial war in Indo-China is attested to in the following report from Saigon in the New York Times of January 24, 1951:



GENERAL DE LATTRE



BAO DAI

"The big part that United States supplies had played in last week's successful French-Viet Nameese defense against the all-out Viet Minh attack in Tonkin was emphasized here today at a press conference by Gen. de Lattre de Tassigny, French Commander in Chief in Indo-China.

"Voicing appreciation for United States aid General de Lattre revealed that artillery shells, used in profusion to pound the Communist-led Viet-Minh battalions, had arrived only a few days before the battle. He said almost all planes employed has been of United States origin and much of the artillery had been United States equipment."

Surprisingly, in the light of current assertions of "Communist aggression," Gen. de Lattre "made no mention of Communism in his conference," according to the report.

In addition to these measures of military aid, the United States in 1950 resorted to old-fashioned gunboat maneuvers in an attempt to intimidate the people's movement of Indo-China. On March 18 and 19 two destroyers of the U.S. Seventh Fleet sailed into the harbor of Saigon while the aircraft carrier Boxer sent its planes over the countryside. The action, which was designed in the words of the New York Times of March 20, 1950, as "a demonstration of support for United States-recognized Bao Dai, chief of the French-sponsored Government of the state of Viet Nam," evoked an outburst of popular indignation, which was only quelled by French-manned armoured cars.

More recently, the New York Times of February 2, 1951, reported that the American aircraft carrier Windham Bay steamed up the Saigon River under a heavy escort of armored French tugs to deliver forty-four Bearcat fighter planes to the French forces.

3) Political. United States political interference in Indo-China centers on its role as the promoter of the Bao Dai regime. The Bao Dai issue was raised by William C. Bullitt in 1947, on his visit to Viet Nam, after the ex-emperor had left the government of the Republic and had gone to Hong Kong to open negotiations with the French. Thereafter Bao Dai became the accepted candidate of American financial interests to head a political front in the shadow of which United States penetration of this strategic and economically important corner of Asia could be carried out. In order to achieve this position and as a personal assignment, the imperial turncoat was given the task of splitting the Viet Namese nationalist movement. In the words of Joseph and Stewart Alsop in the New York Herald Tribune of January 13, 1950, "Bao Dai's primary function was, and is, to draw away the native non-Communist patriots who constitute the rank and file of Ho Chi Minh's movement."

In March 1949, after protracted negotiations, an accord was signed between French President Auriol and Bao Dai establishing a "sovereign and independent Viet Nam within the French Union." Describing this treaty in the New York Times of April 5, 1950, Tillman Durdin wrote: "Under the pact Viet Nam has less independence than the British dominions had in the days of the British Empire before the Statute of Westminster gave them the secession right."

In April 1949, Bao Dai returned to Indo-China from France, reassumed the title of emperor, and appointed himself provisional head of the Viet Nam State. The guiding role of the United States may be seen by the fact that on January 29, 1950, U.S. Roving Ambassador Philip C. Jessup issued the text of a message to Bao Dai from Secretary of State Dean Acheson expressing "the gratification of the United States Government" on the Emperor's "assumption of the powers transferred by the French Republic" and hinting that American recognition of the puppet emperor would soon be forthcoming. This happened four days before final French ratification on the "transfer" on February 2, 1950.

Virginia Thompson, in the Foreign Policy Bulletin of February 3, 1950 commented that "It is not clear how a government whose foreign policy will be directed by France can be recognized." Dr. Thompson also pointed out that since the Emperor's return to Indo-China the previous April "even some of the moderate nationalists who at first supported Bao Dai have refused to serve in his cabinet."

The French were well aware of American attempts to extend their influence in Indo-China under the cover of "anti-

imperialist" slogans. In the New York Times of March 10, 1950 the Paris correspondent Harold Callender reported:

"This 'anti-colonial' attitude of United States officials disquieted the French long before the present crisis in Indo-China, since they regarded it as a threat to their empire or, as it is now called, French Union. The attitude is still so regarded.

"French officials contend that they have given Bao Dai about the maximum of autonomy compatible with keeping Viet Nam in the French Union...

"For these reasons French officials have been disturbed by the apparent disposition of United States officials to deal directly with Viet Nam."

And, New York Times correspondent Tillman Durdin reported from Saigon on March 7, 1950, that during a press interview, Lt.-Gen. Marcel Carpentier, then French commander in chief in Indo-China, had said the following on the question whether the United States should give military aid to Bao Dai directly or through the French:

"I will never agree to equipment being given directly to the Viet Nameese. If this should be done I would resign within twenty-four hours. The Viet Nameese have no generals, no colonels, no military organization that could effectively utilize the equipment. It would be wasted, and in China the United States has had enough of that."

A curious commentary on the "sovereignty and independence" of Bao Dai's Viet Nam. The full sham of this American sponsored regime was exposed in an article in The Nation of November 11, 1950 by Peggy Durdin:

"For the last few months there has been virtually no functioning central government in Viet Nam. Bao Dai spent the summer at Cannes. Tran Van Huu, who is Minister for Foreign Affairs, National Defense, and the Interior, as well as Premier, went to France in June for the purpose, it was said, of wringing further economic concessions from the French and returned only the recent French reverses. During all this period the government has been stalemated; it has not outlined a budget or sent diplomatic representatives abroad."

The United States has committed itself to be the overseer

of this decayed regime. The manners of a colonial plantation lord which characterize American governmental relations with Indo-China are clearly formulated in Time magazine of August 28, 1950:

"The U.S. is going to have to put tactful pressure on Viet Nam and on the French to correct their mistakes...Indo-Chinese intellectuals must be taught that self-rule is not merely something presented with a charter and pink ribbon, but a status to be earned and a responsibility to be accepted."

The above chronological account of the development of American policy toward Indo-China clearly establishes that President Truman's order of June 27, 1950, calling for increased American intervention on the side of France in Viet Nam, was not so much a declaration of future policy as an acknowledgment of a long-existing state of affairs. The implication in President Truman's order that active American participation in the struggle was precipitated by the outbreak of war in Korea, an event which allegedly demanded the intensification of American efforts to safeguard the "free peoples of Asia" from the "Communist menace" (as Washington describes the colonial liberation movements), just does not accord with the historical facts.

American intervention in Indo-China antedates the Korean War, and it existed before the arrival of the Chinese People's Liberation Army at the Viet Nameese frontier. American policy toward Indo-China is part and parcel of American Far Eastern policy as a whole, a policy the main occupation of which since the war has become the suppression of the colonial liberation movements of the Asian peoples. The struggle of the people of Viet Nam is connected with the internal developments in China and Korea insofar as it is part of the area-wide postwar upsurge of the people's movements as a whole. No amount of talk of "Soviet plots" can forever hide the fact that American intervention in Indo-China is the result of a historical development, the expansion of American imperialism. This clashes with another historical development, the development of the Asian liberation movements into an active force in the worldwide struggle for peace and democracy. In Viet Nam this has resulted in the emergence of a people's movement capable of waging successfully a protracted war of independence.

U.S. POLICY VS. PEOPLE'S STRUGGLE

As far as the people of Indo-China are concerned, American intervention is not only not "new" in the sense that it

dates back to 1945-46, but also in that it represents an attempt to continue, albeit under new conditions and in new guises, many decades of Western domination.

Neither, as we have seen, is the people's independence demand of recent origin. In all Asian countries it has its roots deep in the peasantry and was born out of innumerable agrarian uprisings, to which later were added the strikes of urban workers. These partial struggles against the depredations of foreign-imposed colonial economies merged into the movement for independence when the people saw that imperialist rule was primarily responsible for their poverty and the ineffectiveness of reform within the colonial system. The agrarian movement for land to the tiller, as well as the struggles of the people in the cities, are inextricably linked with the independence movement. Today the working class, however small, gives leadership to the peasantry in the fight for national independence.

The peoples of Southeast Asia know that the struggle for independence, to free themselves from foreign political domination and the dominance of foreign capital and personnel, is fundamental to the transition from a colonial economy to a national one that will furnish a decent livelihood.

The distinguishing feature of the Indo-Chinese liberation movement today, as of all Southeast Asian liberation movements, is its reliance on resolute and protracted armed struggle -- a natural result of the fact that armed forces was always employed against it. The peoples of Southeast Asia regard armed struggle as the only way in which their colonial or semi-colonial countries can achieve freedom. Their experiences have led them to the conviction that the imperialists do not withdraw from the colonies unless defeated on the battlefield; that the colonial powers' talk of peace and negotiations is but a smokescreen hiding their preparations for military and political attacks, for new aggression.

The wartime development of anti-Japanese resistance movements created in Southeast Asia what had previously existed only in China -- an armed peasantry and people. It also brought the opportunity to acquire military experience and organizational knowledge. Such resistance movements have provided the core and developed the methods of operation of the postwar People's Liberation Armies of the Philippines, Burma, Malaya, Viet Nam and Indonesia. Getting their equipment at the battlefield from the Japanese, they put an end to the situation in which only the colonial administrations and the landlords had arms -- and the people did not.

CHINA, VIET NAM AND U.S.

What is the role of China in the present situation?

As long ago as November 14, 1948, Professor Nathaniel Peffer of Columbia, a frequent consultant of the State Department, wrote an article in the New York Times Magazine significantly entitled "The China Crisis is a Crisis for Us." The article described the effect of the then largely uncompleted liberation of the Chinese people from the American-sponsored Chiang Kai-shek regime as follows:

"More is involved...than victory and defeat in a Far Eastern civil war. The world's political balance has tipped and, moreover, tipped in a direction opposite to that which America had hoped for."

Implicit in this statement is the twofold effect of the Chinese people's victory. Its effect on American policy in Asia was to produce crisis without recovery. As a result of the people's victory in China, key country, of Asia, the Washington policy makers accelerated and intensified their interventions in Indo-China and other Southeast Asian countries. But in their efforts to isolate the "liberation-infested" area they were confronted by the fact that (1) the people of the countries of Southeast Asia, the components of the planned cordon sanitaire, were themselves already participants in liberation struggles of such unprecedented scope and maturity that successful use of their countries for "containment" purposes was ruled out from the start; and (2) these peoples were eager to grasp the opportunities and lessons offered by the Chinese victory, which shifted the balance of forces in Asia from the side of the Western colonial powers to the side of the people's liberation movements. Since the establishment of the Chinese People's Republic there has naturally grown up a close relationship with the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam. The emergence of a new form of society in both countries has eliminated the grounds of old fears and frictions and has provided instead the basis for a relationship of equality and mutual benefit.

The victory of the people of Viet Nam in the "successful defense of their Republic has its own international significance, distinct from that of China. Viet Nam shows that a victorious struggle such as has been waged by China's 450 millions is also possible today in a country with a population of little more than 20 millions. And this has been achieved in the face of what are, perhaps, proportionately even greater odds.

The outcome of the struggle is certain. Only a glance

at the developments during the year 1950 serves to show this. For Viet Nam the year began with the achievement of a great diplomatic victory, the recognition of the Republic by the Soviet Union, China and the People's Democracies of Eastern Europe, and ended with a brilliant military offensive liberating the major part of the delta of Tonkin and opening land communications with China. During the year 1951 the people of Viet Nam expect to achieve greater and even more decisive victories in all fields. For the United States, 1950 began with the recognition of the rathole that is the Bao Dai regime, and as the year progressed increasing shipments of American resources paid for by the American people were sent to this destination. The year 1951 offers the prospect of intensified American intervention which may well lead to the expenditure of American lives. The history of American policy in China and of the four years of colonial war in Viet Nam shows that such efforts can only hinder but cannot destroy or prevent the final victory of the Indo-Chinese liberation movement.

THE STAKE OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

But not only because of its futility must the American people oppose our government's policy of intervention and colonial expansion. To permit the United States to occupy a position obstructing the historical path of the colonial peoples, today imperils the very lives and well-being of the American people themselves. It means the overthrow of American traditions. In an article in the New York Times Magazine of November 26, 1950, aptly entitled "The Challenge to the American Character," Professor Henry Steele Commager discussed the effects of the cold war on American democratic institutions and thinking. He mentioned the power of the militarists in the government, the appearance of "preventive" war theories, and the growing constraints on civil liberties. Recalling the deep-seated American tradition of "hostility to imperialism" which came to the fore during the election campaign of 1900, he stated: "Now imperialism seems to have lost its frightening aspect...We appear ready to determine the kind of governments other peoples are to have. Where China, for example, is concerned, we seem to forget the principle of self-determination."

In reversing this trend, the American people will not only resurrect our friendship with the peoples of Asia, but will also put themselves on the side of the French people, who have learned the meaning of colonial war and who through frequent demonstrations of mothers whose sons were killed in Viet Nam and through the strikes of railroad and

dock workers called upon to transport war materials, voice their opposition to the "dirty war."

The peace of the American people can be preserved only through a struggle for an American policy of friendship with and recognition of the Asian peoples' liberation movements. Mindful of their own revolutionary traditions, Americans can well understand the words of a proclamation sent by the people of Cochin-China to the French conquerors in 1862:

"The conflict will be long, but we are acting in accordance with the laws of Heaven, and our cause must triumph."