Propaganda Directed Abroad

In the early 1960's the foreign propaganda activities of South Vietnam were being conducted on a small scale. Information offices in the Republic's embassies distributed newsletters, brochures and other printed materials to interest individuals and groups. A New York public relations firm was retained to promote support and sympathy for South Vietnam in the United States.

In addition network III of the state-owned radio in 1961 broadcast 6 hours in French, 1¾ hours in Cambodian, 2½ hours in Chinese, and 2¾ hours in Vietnamese.

Propaganda From Abroad

Communist Bloc

Communist propaganda in South Vietnam in the years between 1954 and 1962 was disseminated by three Communist organizations which received direction and material support from North Vietnam—the Viet Cong, the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam and the Vietnam People's Revolutionary Party (see ch. 23, Subversive Potentialities). The country was also the target of radio propaganda from North Vietnam, Communist China and the Soviet Union.

Members of the Viet Cong, trained in the tactics of combined military and political warfare, distribute mimeographed newspapers, songsheets, banners, printed tracts and crudely lettered signs in the villages. Not hesitating to punish resistance or recalcitrance with terror, they also present themselves to the villagers as peasants who, in indignation at the alleged abuses of a corrupt regime, are fighting for a better life for the farmer and true independence for the country. Resentments, whether directed against the conduct of a local official, the pinch of taxes and living costs or the impact of government security measures, are vigorously exploited. The Viet Cong plays upon nationalist feelings by constant repetition that the United States has taken the place of France as overlord of the country. Atrocity themes are also emphasized. "United States interventionists" and President Ngo Dinh Diem are accused of conspiring to commit all manner of crimes against the South Vietnamese people, and members of the military forces and police are charged with robbing, beheading, raping, shooting and disemboweling peasants. The strategic hamlet program is assailed as a plot to force people into concentration camps where they die of hunger.

As among the Vietnamese villages, the Viet Cong has employed both coercion and inducement in its dealings with the montagnards. In an effort to gain their confidence and cooperation, Viet Cong agents have moved in to live montagnard groups, learned their
languages, married local women and promised the highlanders autonomy under North Vietnamese rule.

The National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam is a Communist-front organization formed in December 1960 to serve as a putatively non-Communist, South Vietnamese vehicle for a challenge to the legitimacy of the government of the Republic of Vietnam. The organization had its own Liberation Press Agency and its own clandestine radio station, the Liberation Broadcasting Station, inaugurated on February 1, 1962. No information was given as to its location. The station broadcasts $\frac{1}{2}$ hour daily in Vietnamese and $\frac{1}{4}$ hour daily in each of the following: English, Cambodian, French and Chinese. On Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays the Chinese broadcasts were in Cantonese dialect; on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, in Chaochow dialect.

The Vietnam People's Revolutionary Party, which purported to represent the interests of Marxist-Leninist groups in South Vietnam, was another Communist organization directed and supported from the North. According to a statement reported by the Liberation Press Agency in January 1962, the party was formed in late 1961 and dedicated itself to combating foreign aggression and protecting national independence and territorial integrity (see ch. 20, Political Dynamics; ch. 23, Subversive Potentialities).

North Vietnam, in December 1961, broadcast 98 hours a week to South Vietnam on the international service of the state-owned radio system. Of this time, 38\(\frac{1}{2}\) hours a week were devoted to programs in Vietnamese or one of five montagnard languages.

Communist China in 1961 was devoting 17\(\frac{1}{2}\) hours a week to broadcasts in Vietnamese out of a total of 436 hours and 40 minutes beamed to all Far Eastern countries.

The Soviet Union slightly reduced its broadcasting to the Far East from 119 hours in 1960 to 117 hours a week in 1961. The reduction, however, did not affect Vietnamese-language broadcasts, which continued to be 10\(\frac{1}{2}\) hours weekly.

Non-Communist

The United States, followed by France and Great Britain, leads the non-Communist nations in information activities in South Vietnam. The United States program is carried on chiefly by the United States Information Service (USIS) and its affiliate, the Voice of America.

USIS in South Vietnam has its headquarters in Saigon, branches at Can Tho, Hue and Da Lat, and small offices staffed entirely by Vietnamese in Nha Trang in the coastal lowlands, Khanh Hung in the Mekong Delta and Ban He Thuot in the Central Highlands. Additional offices were being planned in mid-1962.
USIS informs the South Vietnamese population about the United States and the Free World through books, films, periodicals, tape recordings and other channels and cooperates with the Vietnamese information services in the provinces. Small collections of books and other published material in Vietnamese, French, Chinese and English are available at the information centers and through mobile units operating in Saigon, Hue and their environs. Security conditions have prevented mobile units from operating in the provinces.

USIS has an extensive documentary motion picture production program and a project for translating and publishing books by Western authors in Vietnamese. Some 40 to 50 documentary films, on topics ranging from disease prevention to defense against the Viet Cong, are made annually in collaboration with the government-controlled National Motion Picture Production Center in Saigon. An average of 11 American books a year have been translated and published in editions of about 2,000 copies. Thousands of copies of pamphlets on United States policy and American traditions and institutions have also been translated and distributed throughout the country.

Other USIS activities include the administration of an exchange-of-persons program and the teaching of English. English-language instruction was offered in the information centers at Saigon, where 4,000 persons were enrolled in 1961, and at Hue. In 1962 plans were being made to open classes in Da Lat and Can Tho.

USIS published Concept, a scholarly quarterly, in 5,000 copies for circulation in educated circles. In April 1962 it began publishing a special weekly newssheet, Toward the New Life, for villagers in the strategic hamlets. It also distributes three USIS periodicals published abroad: a Vietnamese edition of Free World, a monthly magazine designed for high-school-level readers, published in Manila; World Today, a Chinese-language periodical published in Manila every other week; and Information & Documents, a monthly magazine published in Paris. All except World Today are mailed without charge to selected individuals and institutions.

A special information program for the montagnards in the Central Highlands, to be directed from the Da Lat office, was being developed in 1962. Earlier work with the highland peoples had been confined to the distribution of a small amount of literature in Rhade, one of the most widely spoken montagnard languages.

The Voice of America broadcasts each week, from its studios in Washington, D.C., 14 hours of news, features and commentary in Vietnamese, of which 3½ hours are repeat programs. It also broadcasts to the Far East 14 hours weekly of English-language
programs as well as 66½ hours in various Chinese dialects, including 14 hours of Amoy, 21 of Cantonese and 31½ of Mandarin. "World Wide English," the Voice of America program, broadcast on a 64¾ hour weekly basis, could also be heard in South Vietnam. A combination of news, features and music is carried on these programs.

USIS produces material in Saigon for use on local stations of the government radio network. In mid-1962 it was placing more than 50 hours of material each week, in Cantonese, Mandarin, French and Vietnamese.

The United States Operations Mission (USOM), in addition to its economic and technical aid projects, supports a textbook publication program in cooperation with the Vietnamese Department of National Education. The project involves the production of textbooks for classes in the public school system, particularly those at the elementary level.

The French maintain a cultural museum in Saigon, which has a fairly large library with a selection of French books and periodicals. French magazines designed specifically for the Vietnamese market have largely disappeared, but there is still an active demand for French books and magazines, which are distributed by bookstores in the South. In 1961 France broadcast 2½ hours daily to the Far East in languages including French, English and Vietnamese. The Vietnamese program is 15 minutes in duration.

The British maintain a small library in Saigon. In addition the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) beams a ½ hour daily program in Vietnamese to Southeast Asia.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

Information Media

Radio broadcasting and word of mouth are the most important communications media in the area; the press, books and motion pictures are of growing importance.

Press and Periodicals

In the early 1960's the press apparently consisted of about half a dozen daily newspapers and perhaps two dozen weekly and monthly periodicals published in Hanoi, together with a slightly larger number of newspapers and periodicals published—some of them at irregular intervals—in other towns. Many specialized journals are published for the Army, farmers, women, children, students and other groups.

The principal newspaper is Nhan Dan (The People), organ of the Workers' Party of Vietnam (Dang Lao Dong Viet Nam—the Communist party of Vietnam, usually called the Lab Dong Party.
Its circulation is believed to be about 50,000 copies daily in mid-1962. Another important publication is Cu'u Quoc (National Salvation), organ of the principal mass organization, the Fatherland Front.

All newspapers belong to the Lao Dong Party or one of its front groups and consistently support official policy on all domestic and international issues. As an instrument of the Party and the state, the press is expected to function primarily as a vehicle of political indoctrination, and its handling of news is completely governed by that consideration. All papers are served by the government-operated (North) Vietnam News Agency.

The importance of the press in the dissemination of news among the villagers extends far beyond the number of persons who themselves buy or subscribe to newspapers. Copies of local and provincial newspapers are posted on village bulletin boards for all to read.

Books and Pamphlets

North Vietnam conducts an active book-publishing program in connection with which a large bureau is engaged in the translation of books from foreign languages into Vietnamese. The government claims to have printed 7.8 million copies of various books in 1961, which it said were on sale at some 17,000 bookstalls.

The chief publishing house, Su That (Truth), located at Hanoi, is operated by the state. Its publications have included nearly 40 books and articles by President Ho Chi Minh, various political and historical works on the Soviet Union and selections from the writings of Mao Tse Tung and other Chinese Communist leaders. An important publication in 1961 was an English translation of a series of articles by General Vo Nguyen Giap, Commander in Chief of the North Vietnamese Army, entitled People's War and People's Army, which purported to be a guide to Communist revolution in underdeveloped areas (see ch. 31, The Armed Forces).

Radio

The national broadcasting system of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam consisted of a single station in late 1961—the Voice of Vietnam, commonly called Radio Hanoi. The station broadcasts to domestic and foreign audiences on three medium-wave and eight short-wave bands, using a 100-kilowatt transmitter.

A second station and a network of relay transmitters, constructed with Soviet assistance, were opened in early 1962. Located in the Viet-Bac Autonomous Region, the new facility began broadcasting on February 3, 1962, the thirty-second anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of Indochina (later to
become the Lao Dong Party). It broadcasts on medium- and short-wave frequencies in Vietnamese, Thai and Nung.

Information on the number of radio receivers in the North is lacking. It is claimed that there are 25,700 public loudspeakers located in towns and villages throughout the area.

Films

Information on the production and distribution of films in the North is lacking. Government sources, claiming that the industry was developing rapidly, assert that 377 projection teams were showing films in 1961—179 more than the previous year. Considerable emphasis appears to be given to educational films dealing with industry and agriculture. No figures on the total number of films made in 1961 are available. North Vietnam participated in two international film festivals in 1961, one held in July in Moscow, the other in New Delhi in October.

Word-of-Mouth Communication

Word-of-mouth communication retains its importance in the area as a communications channel. Information originates to a large extent among the upper levels of the Lao Dong Party and the People's Army and is spread throughout the provinces and autonomous regions by members of the armed forces and other persons. The government transmits its messages to the rural population through political agents attached to the village administrative organization (see ch. 19, Constitution and Government).

Domestic Propaganda

Agencies

Information on the structure of the domestic propaganda apparatus and the lines of responsibility within it is fragmentary. Indications are that responsibility for government activities in the field of public information and propaganda is largely vested in the Ministries of Culture and Communications, which are in turn responsible to the People's Supreme Organ of Control.

Activities

The Communist leaders seek to condition and control the attitudes and beliefs of the people through intensive continuous political indoctrination. The regime employs all formal news media, literature, the arts, the schools and mass organizations as channels for the dissemination of propaganda, and it demands of its journalists, writers, artists and teachers exclusive dedication to the ideological remolding of the people to the purposes of the regime.

During and immediately after the Indochina hostilities, war-
related themes, industrial and agricultural production goals and land reforms were stressed. Subsequently these themes were changed to "reunification," "patriotic emulation" and "solidarity with peace-loving nations." President Ho Chi Minh, portrayed as "Uncle Ho," was kept in the foreground as a unifying symbol.

**Propaganda Directed Abroad**

Intensive propaganda campaigns have been directed not only to domestic audiences in the North and to the South, but also to other Southeast Asian countries and to the West. Foreign broadcasts on Radio Hanoi include programs in Cambodian, Loatian, Thai, Cantonese, Mandarin, English and French, as well as in Vietnamese and various montagnard languages. In addition textbooks and other literature are published for foreign audiences and disseminated through Communist bookshops in other Asian countries.

The evident intent of North Vietnamese propaganda directed at the West is to discredit and undermine confidence in the government of President Ngo. To this end the regime endlessly asserts that there is widespread popular discontent in South Vietnam, with what it describes as the rule of a corrupt, feudalistic and reactionary clique allied with an imperialistic United States.

**Propaganda From Abroad**

Information about propaganda entering North Vietnam from abroad is lacking. Presumably government publications from the Soviet Union, its satellites and Communist China were readily available. Also, the international broadcasts from both the Western countries and the Sino-Soviet bloc which could be heard in Saigon could be heard in Hanoi. An important Communist-bloc propaganda activity is carried on through cultural and technical exchange. Between October 1961 and March 1962 North Vietnam received at least 15 delegations of government officials, medical specialists, women's groups, artists, sports teams and others from the Soviet Union; 6 delegations were received from Communist China, 3 from Laos, 2 from Mongolia and 1 from Mali.
CHAPTER 13
LABOR FORCE

In both the North and the South, between 80 and 90 percent of the people are farmers, most of them engaged in the cultivation of rice. Fishing is important along the entire coast. During the colonial period industrial development centered in the North, and most of the industrial labor force is still concentrated in that area where the Communist regime is striving to expand heavy industrial production. Nonagricultural employment in the South shows a relatively greater emphasis on commerce and light industry.

The size of the labor force is difficult to determine since demographic data is incomplete and of uncertain accuracy in both the North and the South. According to the census of March 1, 1960, 45 percent of a total population of 15,916,955 in North Vietnam was of working age. Official figures for South Vietnam, as of October 30, 1959, showed that 39.4 percent of a total population of 13,882,573 in that area was of employable age. If these two figures—7,200,000 in the North and 5,500,000 in the South—are accepted, there were some 12,700,000 persons of working age in all of Vietnam as of January 1, 1960. War losses would account for the estimated 4 percent more women than men in this group.

Despite high population densities there was little unemployment in Vietnam in 1962, although there was some in the cities of the South where local industry was not working to capacity and to which people had flocked for safety from the Communist guerilla activities which had intensified in 1961. Underemployment appeared to be relatively high, but spokesmen for neither North nor South seemed to believe that their labor forces were in excess of requirements. South Vietnamese leaders were in no hurry to industrialize as a means of providing full employment but spoke rather of the importance of bettering the living conditions of the farming majority. The official position in North Vietnam was that there would be a shortage of manpower when the industrialization and communal farm programs were completed.

REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM
Industrial Labor

In the South, where agriculture improvement has priority, industrial development focuses on the construction of small- and medium-sized plants for the manufacture of consumer goods. Fifty additional ones, which will employ about 14,000 people, are projected.

The Constitution of 1956 establishes certain rights for workers,
including the right to organize. Little is known about the extent to which its provisions are implemented.

Article 14 of the Constitution provides that:

Everyone has the right and the duty to work. Everyone who works shall be entitled to an equitable remuneration guaranteeing to him and to his family an existence consistent with his human dignity.

Other provisions for workers are contained in certain laws and in the regulations of the Department of Labor. These have been patterned, in some cases, upon the French Labor Code of July 8, 1952, which established the labor laws applying to all of the French colonies at that time. However, while this Code has served as a guide in the preparation of Vietnamese labor laws, it does not constitute the law in the Republic of Vietnam. Important among the labor laws are those establishing criteria for the annual determination of the minimum wage and setting family allowances for certain workers. Others prohibit the employment of children under 14 years of age and restrict the employment of foreign workers.

A labor Inspection Service has been established within the Department of Labor. The Service is divided into a number of bureaus, each of which supervises a particular labor area: the Legislation Bureau studies the need for new laws; the Control Bureau supervises enforcement of laws and regulations; the Conciliation Bureau settles problems arising from labor contracts; the Professional Relations Bureau mediates disputes between employees and employers; the Social Security Bureau oversees family allowances and compensation for accidents; the Sanitary Inspection Bureau enforces sanitary measures; and the Employment Bureau maintains information on employment opportunities. The Labor Inspection Service has regional inspectorates in the field and below these are the provincial labor services; both levels are organized along lines which are similar to those at the national level.

Distribution

Official figures for South Vietnam show that of the total of 5,500,000 employable workers, about 520,000 were employed in industry and commerce as of the end of 1961. This figure includes urban handicraft industries, such as weaving, but not rural handicraft workers or domestics. Further information concerning the distribution of the industrial population in the South as a whole is lacking.

Almost all factories of any size are in the Saigon area, and some information about the 200,000 workers in industry and commerce there is available. About 70,000 of them are employed by small
commercial concerns, 50,000 by transportation companies, 50,000 by manufacturers and the rest in services and in building and other trades. The whole group works in some 34,000 enterprises, the great majority of which (94 percent) employ less than 10 workers each. Less than 2 percent of the firms employ more than 20 employees, and very few have more than 400 employees.

Structure

The little that is known about the 200,000 industrial workers in the Saigon area indicates something of the variation of the group as to sex, age and degree of skill. Only 20 percent are females. The average age of the males is about 35. Most of the females are under 30. Unskilled workers make up about half of the total; a small portion are clerical, and the rest are rated as skilled and semiskilled. Three-fifths of those in the latter category are considered as skilled and two-fifths, as semiskilled.

Training

An effort is being made to increase the pool of skilled labor through technical and vocational training. School facilities are being built and emphasis is being put on teacher training (see ch. 10, Education). An extensive workshop program is designed to improve the qualifications of existing teachers, and new ones are being graduated from the normal schools which are being increased and improved.

Two polytechnic schools have been built under the United States Operations Mission (USOM) program. In 1962 one of these, the National Technical Center at Phu Tho, had been functioning for 2 years; the other, operating at Yinh Long in the delta area, had been open for a shorter time. Two additional schools are being built in Qui Nhon and Da Nang (formerly Tourane). West Germany has established a school for the training of supervisory personnel in Saigon. As of mid-1962 more than 100 Vietnamese students had been sent abroad for advanced training in industrial management and public works.

Wages

The minimum wage established by the Department of Labor as of 1960 in the Saigon area is 42 piasters a day for men and 38 piasters for women. In the Central Highlands area the minimums vary slightly from one province to another, but the average minimum is 45 piasters a day for men and 39 piasters for women.

Under the law of January 20, 1958, salaried employees receive from employers sizable family allowances in addition to wages: 15 percent of the base wage for a wife, 6 percent for each of the first five children, and 3 percent for each additional child. Day laborers are not eligible for these allowances.
The Labor Code requires employers to provide medical care for employees injured at work and, in case of death, burial costs and one year’s salary to dependents. If an employee is discharged through no fault of his own, he must be paid a “fair” separation allowance, the amount to be determined by a court. The law makes no provision for pensions or unemployment insurance.

The Code establishes a basic work week of 48 hours, with increased pay for overtime. Workers in seasonal industries apparently receive considerable overtime pay, but they also must carry over the slack periods when they are without work. The average wage of the unskilled laborer in Saigon is estimated to be about 60 piasters a day, and perhaps half of these workers earn no more than 1,000 piasters a month. The average for skilled workers in Saigon is reported to be 100 piasters a day, but only 10 percent of this group receive over 4,000 piasters a month. Higher rates apparently obtain in some other places—the mountain city of Da Lat, for example.

A few companies provide such fringe benefits as housing and New Year’s bonuses; some also grant their employees loans without interest repayable through salary deductions—a signal service in an area where the usurer is the main resort of the small borrower (see ch. 17, Public Welfare).

Working Conditions

In most South Vietnamese factories sanitation is primitive, bathing facilities almost nonexistent and medical facilities minimal. These conditions, however, do not contrast with those obtaining in the homes of most workers and apparently are not a source of complaint. A survey made in 1958 by the Michigan State University Vietnam Advisory Group showed that the only demand of most Vietnamese workers was for higher wages. It was noted that the majority of the skilled and semiskilled workers covered in the survey had been with the same concern for 5 years or more.

Recruitment

Both industrial and rural labor is still recruited largely by the traditional boss (cai) system. The cai hires laborers for a particular enterprise under a contract arrangement. He not only recruits them but pays them, and if demand is regular, he may support his crew even during slack periods. This system relieves the management of direct contact with the workers, but it is disadvantageous to the workers since the profits of the cai must come out of their wages. This and other abuses have brought legislation aimed at eliminating the cai system.

The Department of Labor has set up regional offices to inform job seekers of employment opportunities throughout the country.
Most industrial workers, however, continue to be recruited locally. In Saigon perhaps 85 percent are native to the area, and migrants from any great distance are few. The majority find their jobs, not through public agencies, but through the cai system and information received from friends or relatives.

Restriction of the employment of foreign workers has mainly affected the large Chinese minority. Ordinance 56 of September 1956, prohibiting aliens from engaging in a number of professional activities, was evidently aimed at this group which, in 1957, constituted 27 percent of the commercial and industrial labor force and included many skilled and professionally trained persons. In 1960 the official figures showed the number of Chinese in trade and industry to have fallen to 0.3 percent of the total. The statistic was misleading, however, because the Chinese took full advantage of Ordinance 48 of August 1956, which granted Vietnamese nationality to persons born in Vietnam of Chinese parents.

Rural Labor

Government policy has been directed primarily toward increasing agricultural productivity and self-sufficiency in food crops. An extensive land-reform program has the dual objective of increasing productivity and making it possible for the farmers to own their own land. The measures taken include reclamation of abandoned land, redistribution of large landholdings and establishment, with substantial foreign aid, of farm-credit programs to coordinate credit and cooperative activities and to introduce new agricultural methods (see ch. 25, Agricultural Potential). The settlement on abandoned land of many of the more than 900,000 refugees has contributed to a moderate increase in rice production.

Distribution and Structure

About 80 percent of the people of South Vietnam are engaged in farming, and by far the largest portion of them own or lease small plots in the Mekong Delta and the smaller deltas farther north. The principal crop is irrigated rice, and every able-bodied member of the farm family contributes to the intensive hand labor involved. The farmer may also hire people to help him, or, if he owns or leases more land than he and his family can cultivate, he may rent some of it to a neighbor (see ch. 25, Agricultural Potential).

Laborers are hired to work on the plantations of the Central Highlands, but the combined area of all types of plantations hardly exceeds 500,000 acres. About half of this on the southern slopes is devoted to the production of rubber, an occupation which employs about 50,000 workers. Other important plantation crops are tea, coffee and sugar.
Government figures for the end of 1961 show 190,000 workers employed as commercial fishermen, a number which doubtless includes most of the 90,000 fishermen who came as refugees from the North.

Training

The Republic of Vietnam, aided by the USOM, has established an extensive training program for farmers, employing agricultural extension agents and local centers. Rural youth groups, similar to the 4-H Clubs in the United States, now number over 100,000 members. Ten pilot agricultural experiment stations, which have been functioning for several years, conduct test demonstrations for the benefit of the farmers. One of their projects, the testing of fertilizers in soils in different parts of the country, will give important data for increasing yields. A modern soils laboratory was established in 1960 in connection with this effort. The farmers associations and cooperatives also conduct training programs for their members (see ch. 25, Agricultural Potential).

The National College of Agriculture at Bao Loc, founded in 1955, has a faculty of 17 and an enrollment of over 350 students. Most of its recent graduates have been immediately employed by the Department of Agriculture (which, in 1962, became the Department of Rural Affairs). Agricultural students are also sent abroad for advanced training, many of them to the United States.

USOM has also assisted in establishing credit facilities and cooperatives for fishermen (see ch. 26, Agricultural Potential). New equipment has been introduced, and people have had to be trained in its use. At the end of 1961, of the total of 46,500 fishing boats, more than 3,500 had been equipped with marine engines, and new docks had been built in many of the fishing villages. With a 300 percent increase in catch, there has been a 20 percent decrease in the price of fish in Saigon, and fish has become an important export item.

Income

Between 1956 and 1962 the land reform program is reported to have increased the number of farmers owning their own land from one-fourth to three-fourths of the total. There has not been a correspondent increase in the standard of living of the average farmer, however, since much of his new income—usually in kind—goes for installment payments to the government for the land he is buying.

In 1962 the income of the average farmer was reported to be about one-fourth that of the average industrial worker. For the purposes of the comparison, farm income includes earnings from the handicraft work done in the rural communities during the
slack periods (see ch. 26, Industrial Potential). There is no doubt
that the cash income of the average farmer is much lower than
that of the average industrial workers. It is also true that in most
cases the farmer is better off than the comparison suggests. His
food is probably more adequate than that of the urban wage-
worker, and he has few costs which must be paid in cash.

Most of the relatively small number of rural wage earners are
employed on the plantations of the central Highlands. The real
wages of the plantation workers are augmented by company hous­ing,
and their total income is generally higher than that of the
lowland farmer.

Data on earnings in the fishing industry are lacking, but since
improvement has been more rapid in this than in any other field,
it is probable that income is relatively high. Motorization of junks
has increased the catch, many new fishing grounds have been
located and once-sleepy seacoast towns are bustling with activity
(see ch. 26, Industrial Potential). Most fishermen own a share in
their fishing junks and divide the catch on a percentage basis.

Mobility

In 1961 and early 1962 there was considerable movement in the
rural population of the South. Large numbers of farmers moved
to landholdings offered to them by the government. Many, at­
tracted by larger or better holdings, moved voluntarily, but others
were forced to move by the authorities as a security measure.
Many of these shifts took place within the Mekong Delta area, but
a sizable number of persons also went from the crowded coastal
areas to the highlands. Increased guerrilla activity also drove a
large number of rural people into the cities.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

Industrial Labor

The Communist regime is committed to a policy of rapid indus­
trial expansion and state ownership. Some private enterprises
have been permitted to continue in operation, but the government,
with 95 percent of the area's industry in its hands, plays an all­
pervasive role in this field.

As early as 1947, while the Indochinese War was in progress,
the Viet Minh published a labor code which limited the hours of
work, prohibited child labor and established a minimum wage.
The code had more propaganda significance than practical effect,
however, for throughout the hostilities labor of all kinds was
impressed. New decrees issued in 1957 regulated salaries and pro­
vided for certain benefits to employees in case of injury or death.
A law of that year also defined the role of labor unions (see ch. 15,
Labor Relations and Organization).
Distribution

The industrial work force has grown rapidly since 1954. By the end of 1961 an estimated 200,000 workers were engaged in factory work in comparison with 40,000 in 1955. According to the Minister of Labor, there were 735,000 workers in industry and the handicrafts at the end of 1960, and 20,000 construction workers and 120,000 office workers were recruited the next year.

Official reports indicate that in 1961 only 20 percent of gross output was being produced in modern factories and that these employed about 83,000 persons. An unknown number of new plants is under construction (see ch. 26, Industrial Potential).

Structure

Among the 7,200,000 persons of working age in North Vietnam, females outnumber males by approximately 300,000. The percentage of women actually engaged in industry is not known, but the government reports that "the majority of our women are engaged in production," and it is reported that in some factories (probably textile) more than 60 percent of the workers are females.

The work force is relatively young and government sources state that between 70 and 80 percent of the employees in the state-owned factories are youths. Skilled workers are scarce, and there seem to be no more than one or two engineers to a plant.

Training

The authorities are exerting themselves to develop the skilled and semiskilled workers needed for their ambitious industrialization program. On-the-job training is stressed, and many Soviet and Chinese technicians are aiding in this effort. Trainees have also been sent to China and the Soviet Union. In 1960, for example, 1,000 workers reportedly were sent to China for 3-year apprenticeships in steel plants there to prepare them for service at the Thai Nguyen Iron and Steel Works then under construction north of Hanoi (see ch. 26, Industrial Potential). Emphasis has been placed on technical school training at all levels. It is claimed that the technical school enrollment increased by 10,000, or 39 percent, in 1961, bringing the total enrollment to 25,000. An advanced polytechnical school, capable of graduating 600 students a year, was established in Hanoi in 1957. The first graduates should be available in 1962. Three regional intermediate technical schools are planned in the three fields of industry, construction and agriculture. A parallel effort is being made in primary and secondary education to provide students qualified for the technical schools (see ch. 10, Education).
Wages

The Ministry of Labor and the Ministry of Light Industry set wages in fields according to the nature of the work performed. Salaries and family allowances, previously combined, were separated in 1959. The new law raised the base salary, but decreased the allowance for children from 7.2 dong to 5 dong a month for each child in excess of two and under 16 years of age. The minimum wage was set at 27.3 dong per month.

Social benefits provided by law include labor insurance, labor unions, and medical, health, and welfare benefits (see ch. 17, Public Welfare). Employers must pay the salary and medical expenses of an employee injured at work. State-owned industries are required to compensate the families of deceased employees in the amount of 12 months' pay; private employers must pay an amount equal to 15 months' pay.

According to government sources, the average monthly industrial wage increased from the equivalent of 39 dong a month in 1955 to 66 dong in 1960. A Western observer estimates the average monthly earnings in 1961 as follows: unskilled workers, 40 dong; skilled workers, 40 to 60 dong; the most highly skilled miners, 150 dong; factory managers, 100 dong; government ministers, 200 dong; and engineers, 250 dong.

Working Conditions

Working conditions in industry in the North vary greatly. Most industrial workers are still employed in old installations, perhaps renovated and improved but generally primitive and unsanitary. There are, however, some completely modern plants—all of them state-owned. The machine-tool factory near Hanoi, for example, is a new, well-ventilated plant with some air-conditioned sections and a dining hall for employees. It is claimed that many more factories are under construction or in the planning stage.

The industrial worker in North Vietnam occupies a special position in regard to salaries and, in the newer plants, working conditions. More is also required of him than of other elements of the labor force, and he is under constant pressure from the government to increase production. The principal device used by the government to exert this pressure is the so-called "patriotic emulation program," under which workers are urged to exceed one norm or work record after another. The successful " emulation fighters" are rewarded by extra bonuses and decorations for their accomplishments. Similar to industrial speedup measures in Communist China and the Soviet Union, the program is presented as a campaign to "rationalize production and improve techniques." The extent of participation is shown by the fact that in 1959 there were 1,963 " emulation fighters" among the 75,630 workers then
employed in state-owned industries. Apparently it was getting results, for the Prime Minister, reporting to the Council of Ministers in January 1962, declared that the key to the increase of industrial production was the “patriotic emulation of the working people.”

Recruitment

There is ample manpower in North Vietnam to support the industrialization program. The industrial workers who were trained under the French in the Red River Delta area have been incorporated into the industrial labor force, and many others seek such employment. The problem is one of selection and training, and it is made difficult by the pace and scope of the regime’s effort to industrialize. The concern of the authorities with the development of skills rather than the simple expansion of the industrial work force is indicated in the statement of a government spokesman on the minimum wage. He explained that it had been set low because if it had been set too high it would have caused an exodus from the countryside into the city.

Rural Labor

While industry has been the center of official attention, agriculture has not been neglected. Following the allocation to the peasants of abandoned land, a redistribution of the holdings of “landlords” and “reactionaries” had primarily political and propaganda ends, since the area has never had any significant percentage of large landholders. Subsequently efforts were made to increase the productivity of land by introducing cooperative farming methods, providing tractors, and granting government loans to farmers for the purchase of fertilizer and modern tools. Reportedly taxes on agricultural land have been lowered for cooperatives and collectives. A campaign has also been launched to introduce peasants to stop spending large sums on wedding and death ceremonies and to use their money to improve the land.

The land redistribution campaign and the pressure for collectivization quickly roused strong opposition in the countryside, and in 1956 the authorities were forced to slow down. Since that time there has been a gradual increase in farm cooperatives which, in simple or advanced forms, are said to include, as of 1962, about 85 percent of the farmers. There has been a much less extensive development of collectives, and communes on the Chinese Communist model are completely absent. The stated official goal, however, remains the ultimate collectivization of all agriculture.

Distribution and Structure

About 90 percent of the working population in North Vietnam
are farmers, most of whom grow rice in the Red River Delta area. A relatively small number in the Northern Highlands are engaged in raising livestock and cultivating cereal crops. About 140,000 men on the coast gain a livelihood from fishing.

Income

When the government completed its program of land distribution, the average per capita landholding was about one-third of an acre or two acres for the average farm family. With the two crops a year common to the area, this amount of land enables the peasant to support his family just above the subsistence level (see ch. 25, Agricultural Potential).

Little is known about the effect of subsequent government measures on farm income. It is evident, however, that greater productivity and returns to the state, rather than increased income for the farmer, are the primary objectives of the regime since the peasant is “encouraged” to sell his crop to the state at a price which is much lower than the open market price.

Training

Training emphasis is placed on group farming methods and on the introduction of new techniques and modern tools. Instruction in modern agricultural techniques is primarily accomplished through the use of permanent work-exchange teams whose members are centrally trained and sent into the countryside to teach and demonstrate improved methods to local work-exchange teams. The local teams thereafter instruct others in their communities in plowing, raking, transplanting, harvesting and insect control, as well as in reducing the effects of drought on crops. The program seems to have had considerable success. Recently, however, the teams have been criticized by Lao Dong Party members for not sufficiently fostering collectivization.

Educational institutions are being developed for the training of agricultural agents (see ch. 10, Education). Technical and vocational education, including training in agricultural subjects, is also being emphasized in the regular schools. Increasing numbers of students are being prepared for further training in the agriculture department of the advanced polytechnical school at Hanoi.

Volunteer Labor

To increase rice production, a program has been undertaken to reclaim unproductive land by the use of so-called volunteer labor (see ch. 14, Forced Labor). Under this program 1,360,000 acres of land, an area equal to about one-fourth of the present cultivated area in the North, are to be brought into production by 1965. Those who have volunteered for the project have been primarily
members of worker and youth groups from the cities. Such groups also help in other ways. Thus in 1961, 120,000 student workers and army men were mobilized to help bring in the winter rice crop before the floods.

Mobility

At government urging large numbers of rural workers have moved to the city to augment the industrial pool. Attempts are also being made to induce peasants in the crowded delta to relocate in the highlands, but these efforts have met with little success.
CHAPTER 14

FORCED LABOR

Forced labor is defined by the International Labor Organization in its Convention 105 of June 1957 as any form of forced or compulsory labor used:

... (a) as a means of political coercion or education or as a punishment for holding or expressing political views or views ideologically opposed to the established political, social or economic system; (b) as a method of mobilizing and using labor for purposes of economic development; (c) as a means of labor discipline; (d) as a punishment for having participated in strikes; (e) as a means of racial, social, national or religious discrimination.

Forced labor, so defined, does not exist in South Vietnam, although the method of recruiting labor by hamlet and village units for the construction of agrovilles in 1959-60 no doubt left many individuals little real option to refuse. Current detailed information on the subject in the North is lacking. What is known, however, points to the existence of a system of forced labor similar to that in other Communist countries.

BACKGROUND

The practice of requiring people to contribute a certain number of days of work to communal projects each year has been carried on in Vietnam for centuries; it was an accustomed burden of the peasantry under the emperors who ruled before the coming of the French. Masses of people were forcibly employed on various kinds of economic development projects, particularly water-control works. During the reigns of Gia Long (1806-20) and Minh Mang (1820-41), for example, the authorities exacted such a heavy levy of manpower for work on the fortifications system and other public projects that rice production suffered. Working conditions at the construction sites were harsh, and the long hours which were enforced gave the peasants barely enough time to eat or sleep. Many died of exposure or exhaustion. Temporary forced labor of this sort was required of all able-bodied males, but well-to-do persons avoided it by forfeiting a lump sum in cash.

French colonial authorities continued the practice of compulsory labor for public purposes with the corvée, a tax paid in a specified number of days of work on such programs as dike repair, construction of irrigation ditches and road building. During both World Wars corvée units provided important support to the French Army in France by building trenches and fortifying positions behind the frontlines. Some were employed in munitions factories.

The corvée was abolished by the Communist regime which took
over the North in 1945, but in 1949 a general mobilization of the entire adult population was announced as a necessary part of the armed struggle against the French. All persons over 18 not drafted for military duty were subject to service in civilian labor cadres.

Civilian laborers were enrolled in units of the People’s Workers, an organization which, among its other functions, provided logistical support for the regular Armed Forces. Many were assigned to act as porters for the military. In a single offensive carried out by 12,000 troops, 15,000 civilian bearers were used, including many women. Some had bicycles on which they pushed loads of up to 100 pounds. Most traveled on foot, however, averaging 20 miles a day and carrying loads of up to 60 pounds each under very difficult conditions.

REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

South Vietnam has neither ratified the International Labor Organization Convention 105 of June 1957 on the Abolition of Forced Labor nor specifically prohibited forced labor in its 1956 Constitution. Its practice, however, is generally in accord with the prescriptions of the Convention. As in the past, ordinary citizens are subject to call for temporary service on communal projects, but such duty is considered part of a normal civil obligation and is not widely regarded as a transgression of rights.

Notwithstanding the traditional sanction for the principle, the manner in which some officials have administered obligatory work has evoked much resentment among the peasants. For example, when the government undertook in 1959 to regroup a sizable number of villagers into the agrovilles where they could more easily be provided with social services and protection from Communist guerrillas, a number of peasants called to work on this program complained that they had suffered economic loss because they were recruited for service during the harvest. It was also claimed that, because of bad planning, they were not always fed properly and that they were sometimes kept at the task longer than the brief period for which they had expected to work. There was also indignation because only a small portion of the persons who helped to build the agrovilles could actually be accommodated in them.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

A system of corrective labor, resembling that in other Communist countries, is evidently in operation in the North, although current information about the details of its organization and operation is lacking. The Constitution does not prohibit forced labor nor has the regime ratified the International Labor Organization Convention 105 of June 1957 on the Abolition of Forced Labor.
Forced labor was used in the reconstruction of the railway between Hanoi and Lang Son, a project on which some 80,000 workers were employed and which was completed in 1955. The group conscripted included an unknown number of "irrecoverable" members of the urban middle class and probably also some former landlords who had been denounced and were punished in this way for "crimes against the people" in the early phase of the land-reform program.

Political punishment or coercion is only one aspect of the compulsory labor system employed by the Communist regime in its economic development program. The authorities have also recruited the unemployed "volunteer" cadres, the military and ordinary citizens who, by a 1957 law, are required to contribute 30 days' labor to public projects each year.

The 1957 law provides for the recruitment and utilization of a peacetime civilian labor corps. All men between the ages of 18 and 50 and all women between 18 and 45 are subject to call. Certain persons, including certain administrative officials, teachers, pregnant women and persons who are the sole support of their families, may be temporarily or permanently exempted.

The law states that civilian labor battalions are to be used for major irrigation, communication and transport projects and for "special tasks which have been approved by the cabinet office." Transport projects on which such battalions may be used are described as those which involve the supply of army units under conditions where it is impossible to use trucks, boats, carts or pack horses or where it is impossible to hire labor.

As a general principle, labor recruits are assigned duty in their own or a neighboring province, but the authorities can override this ruling if they so desire. During their service period of 30 days per year, workers are required to bring their own tools. They are paid for their services. When the law was promulgated in 1957, the pay scale was set at 600 to 1,000 dong per day.
Sharply contrasting principles of labor organization emphasize the divergences between South and North Vietnam. Labor unions in the South are fostered and supervised by a paternalistic government which restricts their activities to the economic sphere. The labor movement in the North is less an object of government control than an instrumentality of the Communist regime. As such, its primary task is the political indoctrination and mobilization of the workers. Its economic functions are largely confined to increasing production.

Traditionally, paternalism has characterized the relationship between the employer and employee in Vietnam. The Confucian ideal, which held up the family as the organizational model for all human groups, placed the employer in the role of father to his employees. Since most small enterprises of all kinds were in any event family undertakings and largely or completely staffed by relatives, paternalism was rooted in social conditions as well as in ethical principles. The merchant and master artisan commonly housed and fed his employees and was generally responsible for their welfare. In return they owed him obedience and personal loyalty.

The ideal was, of course, by no means always realized in practice, since there were bad masters and disloyal employees. Moreover, paternalism has declined in the modern period with the growth of large-scale enterprise and wage labor and the introduction of Western concepts of individualism on the one hand and economic class interest on the other. Nevertheless, in the South, President Ngo Dinh Diem, dedicated to preserving the continuity of what he regards as of lasting value in the Vietnamese past, conceives of leadership in paternalistic terms, and this outlook is reflected in government policy toward the labor movement. In the North the Communists explicitly repudiate paternalism as a feature of a reprehensible and outworn social order at the same time that the public is encouraged to think of President Ho Chi Minh as "Uncle" Ho, who in turn regularly addresses himself to his "nieces" and "nephews."

The first clandestine labor organizations of the 1930's were almost exclusively Communist-controlled. They became the nucleus of the present labor organization of North Vietnam, and their leaders continue to be the leaders of organized labor in North Vietnam. On the other hand, in the South no continuity exists between the early organizations and the present labor union movement, which did not start until 1949.
In North Vietnam the General Confederation of Labor of Vietnam (Viet Nam Tong Lien Doan Lao Dong—TLD), with about 500,000 members, is the only legal labor organization. In South Vietnam there are three federations whose combined membership totals over 700,000: the Vietnamese Confederation of Christian Labor (Confédération Vietnamienn du Travail Chrétien—CVTC), the Confederation of Unions of Workers of Vietnam (Confédération Syndicale des Travailleurs Vietnamienn—CSTV) and the Vietnam Labor Union (Union Ourière du Vietnam—UOV).

BACKGROUND

In 1930 a young miner from Tonkin, Hoang Quoc Viet, organized a dock workers' union in Saigon, and other unions were formed about the same time among the textile workers and miners in Tonkin. These first unions, organized along the lines of the Communist-led General Confederation of Labor (Confédération Générale du Travail—CTG) in France, were clandestine. The Communist Party of Indochina played a leading part in creating the unions and soon controlled them completely. In this early period, and especially after it acquired legal status in the mid-1930's, the Party sought to win support among wage earners by promoting demands for increased pay and benefits and improved working conditions.

By the beginning of World War II the labor movement was well established, although unions were still banned by law. At this time Hoang Quoc Viet, an associate of Ho Chi Minh in founding the Viet Minh, was put at the head of all the unions affiliated with the Viet Minh. In July 1945, when the Japanese-dominated government of Vietnam made the formation of unions legal, Hoang Quoc Viet and other Communist labor leaders were ready. The first labor union congress was held in Hanoi in March 1946, and the TLD was founded on April 20, 1946.

The Viet Minh, on April 12, 1947, issued a Labor Code setting a minimum wage, regulating child labor, limiting hours of work and establishing procedures for settling labor disputes. The Code proved to be of little value other than for propaganda during the remainder of the Indochina War. After the signing of the Geneva Agreement in 1954, it was replaced by the Labor Law of 1957 which was still in effect in North Vietnam in 1962 (see ch. 2, Historical Setting).

An ordinance in 1950 by the government of Bao Dai permitted the establishment of trade associations, but it was not until 1952 that Vietnamese trade unions were given legal status and a Labor Code was formulated by the government. This Code was the basic labor law for the Republic of Vietnam in 1962.
REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

The Constitution of the Republic, adopted in 1956, provides (in Article 23) that "the right to free trade unions and the right to strike are recognized and shall be exercised in conformity with the procedures and conditions prescribed by law." The same Article, however, withholds the right to strike from public officials or workers in activities "related to national defense, public security or the needs indispensable to the life of the community."

In 1962, with 80 percent of the total population engaged in agriculture and only the beginnings of industrial development in the urban centers, there was limited scope for labor organizations. Even among industrial workers in Saigon, union membership was relatively small, including less than 45 percent of the city's factory workers. Reportedly, many of the 725,000 members of the three main labor groups in the South were farmers.

Organized Labor

The most important of the three labor organizations is the CVTC. It is affiliated with the International Federation of Christian Trade Unions. The CVTC claimed a membership of almost 500,000 in 1959, of which two-thirds were rice farmers. As a result of security conditions in the countryside, however, membership reportedly had fallen to 400,000 by early 1962.

The CVTC, which includes all or most of the plantation workers in the South, was founded in 1949. Its founder and president, Tran Quoc Buu, is a Buddhist, as are 90 percent of the organization's members.

The CSTV, founded in 1952, includes many rice farmers and plantation workers but has a solid urban nucleus in the Saigon area. It claimed to have a million members in 1959, but it apparently has suffered from factional division and, in January 1962, the government credited it with 225,000.

The UOV is affiliated with the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. Formed in 1953 by Nguyen Khanh Van—still its president in 1962—it was composed chiefly of civilian technicians employed by the French Army. Its dues-paying membership probably does not approach the 100,000 which the union claimed in early 1962.

The UOV is a craft union, but the affiliates of the two larger confederations are organized on both territorial and craft lines. Some of the CVTC unions, for example, draw members from a single trade; others, from a variety of them. Among the larger unions composed of workers in a single occupation or industry are those of the taxi drivers, the boatmen and the airport workers.

Vietnam has taken an active part in the annual International
Labor Conference at Geneva since 1952. The South Vietnamese delegation to the 46th Conference in 1962 included representatives from the government, all three labor federations and the employers' associations.

The country's two employers' associations, the Association of Employers of Vietnam and the General Confederation of Industry and of Commerce, are governed by the same Labor Code as that which applies to employees' unions. Representatives of the associations, the unions and the government deliberate on matters of mutual concern in regional and national consultative committees.

Union Management and Membership

At the top of each of the three labor federations is a small group of men who founded the union and have continued to manage it ever since. High union officials are elected by indirect vote. In the CVTC, for example, members vote for delegates to the union congress, and the congress elects an executive committee which selects the federation officers. Union representatives at the plant level, who present grievances to the management and maintain liaison with union headquarters, are directly elected but they themselves have no vote in the higher bodies.

The weak development of industry and the small size of most enterprises limit the potential scope of the labor movement. Other factors which inhibit union growth and activity are government restrictions and surveillance, the lack of an effective membership voice in union affairs and employer paternalism. The skilled worker, in particular, is likely to see little benefit for himself in the unions and to rely for advancement and security on his personal relations with his employer and the demand for his services.

Most union leaders are not workingmen but members of the educated minority. The prevailing view, with evident roots in the mandarinal order of the past, seems to be that only the educated man is qualified to lead. The workers themselves apparently accept this traditional judgment.

Department of Labor

The Secretary of State for Labor heads the Department of Labor. Charged with implementing labor legislation, the Department is governed by the Labor Code. This Code, which was adopted in 1952 and modified in 1955, is based on that of France. Together with the decisions of the Department of Labor, it constitutes the legal framework within which the unions exist and function.

Under the Department of Labor is the Directorate General of Labor Inspection which is divided into the Central Directorate of Manpower, the Central Directorate of Inspection, the Legislation
Service and the Social Security Service. Two of these agencies have subdivisions which are primarily concerned with trade unions. The Trade Union Liaison Bureau of the Central Directorate of Inspection keeps in touch with the unions and seeks, through consultation and advice, to help them avoid labor disputes and to promote cooperation between labor and management. The Professional Liaison Bureau of the Legislation Service oversees the application of labor legislation and regulations, exercises a control and advisory function in the conclusion of agreements between labor and management and studies living costs in relation to wages.

Labor Code

The national Labor Code was adopted on November 16, 1952, as Ordinance 23. The Code defines the purpose of labor organizations as being the study and defense of the occupational interests of their members. It strictly forbids unions to engage in religious or political activities. The Code provides for compulsory conciliation and arbitration in labor disputes, and it permits strikes and lockouts only when arbitration and conciliation have failed. Collective bargaining procedures are set forth in Chapter V of the Code.

The Code is by no means uniformly applied and many of its provisions remain largely inoperative. It does, however, provide a standard to which, depending on the issue, both employers and employees frequently appeal in their dealings with one another.

Government Attitude Toward Unions

The French formulators of the original Labor Code in 1952 were moved more by a concern to control and regulate unions than to promote them. That attitude has persisted in the Republic and has no doubt been reinforced by the magnitude of the Communist threat and fear that the unions were peculiarly vulnerable to infiltration and subversion. It has been observed that the unions meet most obstruction, not from the higher levels of government, but from local officials. The Secretary of State for Labor, however, has stated that although the government does not wish to restrict labor unions, it is reluctant to give them too much freedom of action lest it be used for political purposes.

President Ngo in a May Day address in 1962 called attention to the steps which the government had taken in behalf of labor despite the unsettled conditions created by the Viet Cong. He noted that during the year a National Economic Council had been created to aid the government in planning for industrial expansion and
that one-third of the Council's membership were representatives of labor. The President further stated:

... the government has encouraged the growth of the trade union movement, seen to a judicious implementation of the labor code, helped to reach agreements on collective bargaining and finally stepped up the industrialization of the country with a view to improving the living standards of the workers.

**Labor Disputes**

Strikes and strike violence have been uncommon, and fewer disputes were reported in 1961 than in 1960. The most frequent issues were wages and allowances of various kinds, and in the majority of cases settlements were brought about without stoppage of work by the actions of the Department of Labor or the Labor Tribunal. In a number of instances the government approved small wage increases for the workers.

It is difficult to gauge the attitudes beneath the surface of this imposed labor peace. Some observers believe that there is an undercurrent of discontent among wage workers and attribute the calm of 1961 mainly to reluctance on the part of union leaders to strike during a presidential election year and to a lack of funds to sustain union members during a work stoppage.

**Collective Bargaining**

Chapter V of the Labor Code of 1952 authorizes the conclusion of collective agreements between labor and management and outlines bargaining procedures. Formal approval of the government must be obtained for any agreement to be legally binding. Relatively few agreements appear to have been made, and President Ngo on May Day 1960 emphasized the government's wish that greater use be made of collective bargaining.

**DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM**

Hoang Quoc Viet, as president of the permanent executive committee of the TLD, runs this union which is the single labor federation in North Vietnam. The TLD is under the complete control of the Lao Dong Party, which also controls the government and is almost the sole employer of industrial labor. As an instrument of the totalitarian state, the TLD serves, not to express the wishes of labor to the authorities, but to convey to labor the commands and policies of the authorities. Most of its national leaders are influential members of the Lao Dong Party, and their chief concerns are the political indoctrination of the union membership and the promotion of production "emulation" campaigns in the factories. The TLD is a component of the Fatherland Front, which the Party has fostered to broaden the base of support of the regime.
According to Hoang Quoc Viet, TLD membership increased during 1961 by 113,480 to a total of 505,480. The expansion was probably in large part the result of the effort to complete numerous projects of the Three-Year Plan for long-term industrialization which was begun in 1958. Information is lacking as to the occupational composition of the union membership, but of the reported 253,000 members in 1949, 20 percent were said to be engaged in manufacturing and mining. The other 80 percent must have included a considerable proportion of agricultural workers, and it is probable that the rice farmers and plantation workers unions still constitute a sizable percentage of the total membership of the TLD. Little mention is made of the agricultural group, however, and it is the industrial workers who are regarded as the core of the TLD. The industrial workers are reported to have increased from 1.3 percent of the total population in 1957 to 4.8 percent in 1959.

Many labor unionists are probably displeased with the emphasis on raising individual output rather than on increasing benefits to the worker. In 1962, for example, a complaint was made in the TLD newspaper that cadres were urging more and more individual effort in the “emulation” campaign but were giving no explanation as to the reasons involved.

Union Management and Membership

As president of the permanent executive committee of the TLD, Hoang Quoc Viet has dominated the organization since it was founded. He is also a member of the Central Committee of the Lao Dong Party. Within the permanent executive committee of the TLD are a central committee (for administration) and an activities committee (for political matters). Regional executive committees are similarly organized.

Among the more important member unions of the TLD are the Industrial Workers Union, the Miners Union, the Teachers Union, the Civil Servants Union, the Police Union, the Postal Workers Union, the Railroad Workers Union, the Medical Workers Union, the Farmers Union and the Plantation Workers Union.

Within the TLD the unions are grouped into federations for particular trades and into regional trade union councils. Both federations and councils operate according to rules established by the TLD and are autonomous only within narrow limits. Local unions contribute to the TLD treasury and are dependent upon it for their operating funds.

Ministry of Labor

The Ministry of Labor in North Vietnam is charged with maintaining labor statistics and with keeping the work force employed.
Actually, it appears to have little to do with the workers themselves or with the unions. The Minister of Labor, Nguyen Van Tao, is a trade unionist but not a leading figure in either the government or the Party. It is apparently the Minister of Heavy Industry and the chairmen of the Industry Board and the Agricultural Board who, with the approval of the Premier, dictate the allocation of workers.

**The Labor Law**

The Labor Law of November 5, 1957, which is the basic statute defining the rights of labor, makes it plain that the role of unions is seen as primarily political. It does provide that unions shall "defend the interests of the laborers, work for the improvement of their living conditions, and undertake all steps capable of raising steadily their material and cultural life..." qualifying the injunction with the phrase, "on the basis of increased production." The remainder of the lengthy law is devoted to explaining the role and duties of unions to increase production in all spheres. The rights to strike and to bargain collectively are not mentioned in the Labor Law.
CHAPTER 16

HEALTH AND SANITATION

In mid-1962 the level of health and sanitation constituted a major social problem in both South and North Vietnam. Safe drinking water was not generally available even in the major urban centers, and the general level of sanitation throughout the country was poor. Dietary deficiencies lowered energy and reduced resistance to disease. Malaria, tuberculosis, parasitic infections and waterborne diseases, such as amoebic and bacillary dysentery, and intestinal parasites were leading causes of illness and death. Everywhere qualified medical personnel was lacking.

In both the areas, however, medical and sanitary standards had improved since 1954. The South had received substantial aid from the United States and various international health organizations, and the North had received help from the Communist-bloc countries. In both areas malaria eradication programs had been carried out on a wide scale, the incidence of cholera and smallpox had been reduced considerably, and dispensaries and clinics had been established in rural areas which had previously been without modern medical care. Nurses, midwives and physicians were more numerous and better trained. In the South, a massive inoculation program for diphtheria, tetanus and whooping cough was scheduled to get underway in early 1962, while in the North it was claimed that over 9 million persons had already been vaccinated against diphtheria, typhus and some other communicable diseases.

These accomplishments represented some eight years of slow but steady progress in both North and South. In the North the only means of assessing the situation as it developed was on the basis of Communist figures which, in this case, were certainly exaggerated. In the South a more rapid improvement, even perhaps the possibility of preventing the situation from deteriorating, depended on tightening security, since Communist terrorism and intimidation and the attendant administrative disorganization had already seriously undermined the rural health program. Health officers and spraying teams had gradually been compelled to restrict their activities to the environs of a few large cities.

REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

Diet and Nutrition

In South Vietnam rice is the principal foodstuff—the basis of the diet in the cities, lowland villages, highland areas and among all ethnic groups. Virtually everyone prefers rice to any other food,
and in a typical household it is eaten at least once a day. A main meal without rice is considered a poor one.

Fish and vegetables, manioc, maize and sweet potatoes are also consumed regularly with, or in place of, rice. The average diet includes large quantities of the fish, frogs and shellfish which abound in the ponds and waterways of the delta lowlands and in coastal waters. *Nuoc mam*, a pungent fish sauce made by a salt-pickling process, is served with most meals. Other important foods are soya beans, peanuts, coconuts and sugar cane. Sugar cane juice or locally made brown sugar is used for sweetening, while raw sugar cane is consumed as candy. Vegetables, such as cabbage, water cress, spinach and squash, are plentiful and cheap. In the average household poultry or pork-back is served two or three times a week, but beef, priced out of reach, is rarely eaten. Water buffalo, raised chiefly as draft animals, are not a primary source of food and are rarely eaten until they become sick or too old to work.

Tea is the most popular beverage, drunk by all classes at meals and served to guests as a gesture of hospitality. Many attribute medicinal qualities to it. A taste for fresh milk has developed among the Westernized segment of the Saigon population, and recently a dairy has been established at Ben Cat, north of the city. The supply does not meet the demand, however. Sweetened, condensed milk and powdered milk, imported from France and the United States, are widely used in the cities as infant formula and in the making of ices and milk beverages.

To some extent the traditional Vietnamese cuisine reflects Chinese influence in the choice of foods and methods of preparation. The educated elite of the cities has developed a preference for French cooking, although its members continue to serve rice and fish sauce with such meals. They have also acquired a taste for ice cream and soft drinks between meals, luxuries which the average person can rarely afford.

City dwellers eat three daily meals—in the early morning, at noon and at sundown. The noon meal, generally the heaviest of the day, is followed by a siesta. In rural areas the number of meals varies, depending on the availability of food and the work season. A common pattern during the period of intense agricultural activity is a heavy meal at breakfast and in the evening, a bowl of rice for lunch. In many areas, however, only two meals are taken per day; one at 10 in the morning, the other at 6 in the evening. Food is eaten from individual bowls with chopsticks—never with the fingers. In village households it is customary for the family to sit on mats on the floor or on a wooden platform which also serves as a bed. In the cities the family usually gathers around a table.
In late 1959 it appeared that the diet of the average South Vietnamese was quantitatively adequate but qualitatively deficient especially in thiamin and riboflavin. According to a study conducted at that time by a team of United States nutrition experts, the average daily food consumption in the households surveyed ranged from 1,744 to 2,644 calories per person. Highest intake was found among the military and their dependents; the lowest among coastal dwellers who averaged slightly less than the 1,768 calories deemed adequate for their nourishment.

By 1961, however, the situation had altered somewhat, especially in the densely populated delta areas north of Saigon which were dependent on supplementary shipments of rice from the areas further south. Rail service from Saigon had been curtailed because of the destruction, in November 1960, of key bridges along the line, while shipment by road had gradually become more hazardous as a result of Viet Cong activity. By early 1961 rice prices in the delta areas were high, and rationing was being enforced. During the same period shipments of rice from the beleaguered Mekong Delta area into Saigon were being subjected to interference by the Viet Cong. Barges were sunk or destroyed, buses, trucks and other land vehicles were being robbed and the peasants were selling rice to the Communists, much of which went into neighboring Cambodia. The great floods over large areas shortly after the planting season also resulted in serious losses of rice, as well as of livestock, fruits and vegetables. Although the government, in mid-1962, requested that the United States stop shipping rice into South Vietnam—indicating that the rice shortage was no longer serious at least in the Saigon area—the scarcity was expected to continue in the central regions throughout 1962.

**Sanitation**

Because of polluted water supplies, dysentery, typhoid fever and other waterborne diseases have become endemic. Not even the largest cities have drinking water which is considered safe at the source, since these supplies are apt to become contaminated through infiltration of ground water into leaking pipelines.

In Saigon water is chronically scare during the dry season, at which time city water is usually shut off between midnight and 6 a.m. Some of the poorer centers are entirely without a local supply.

Less than half the smaller towns have public water systems and these provide neither a sufficient nor a safe supply. Shallow and deep wells, rivers and ponds are the chief sources in the countryside. Few houses, even in Saigon, have drinking water piped into the house. The usual practice is to draw water from a street corner
hydrant, which may be public or private, or to buy it from a door-to-door vendor.

In rural areas some families collect rainwater in large cisterns to use for drinking; others draw it from crude wells. Most, however, depend on the polluted waters of irrigation ditches and canals, streams and shallow pools—which are also used for bathing, laundering clothing and watering animals.

In 1955 the government established an Environmental Sanitation Commission to study water supply and waste-disposal problems. A private United States civil engineering firm was retained to survey water systems in 50 cities and large towns, and a well-digging program in rural areas was organized under the guidance of the United States Operations Mission (USOM). In late 1960 Saigon received a loan of $17.5 million from the United States for the improvement of its water system. Plans called for construction of a dam and filtration plant on the Song Dong Nai about 18 miles north of Saigon. These were to be linked to a network of canals, water mains and pumping stations.

Methods of sewage and waste disposal are rudimentary. Sewer lines and flush toilets are found only in the cities. Even there, however, plumbing facilities are few in proportion to the population, and untreated sewage is discharged into rivers and canals.

Garbage collection systems exist in Saigon and in other major urban centers, but garbage and waste are put out for collection in uncovered containers and are transported in open vehicles—practices which attract flies and rats. There is little supervision or control of sanitary practices in markets, slaughterhouses and restaurants. Standards of cleanliness in such places are highest in Saigon and other main centers and lowest in the small towns.

Efforts to improve rural sanitation have included the construction of simple pit privies and the distribution of concrete slabs for such privies to thousands of villagers. Rural health education is needed as much as material assistance, however. The old ways of doing things have the sanction of generations of practice, and lacking an understanding of the elementary principles of hygiene, people see no reason to change.

**Disease**

Malaria, tuberculosis, intestinal diseases, parasitic infections and nutritional deficiency diseases are the leading causes of illness and death. Such ailments take the lives of many infants and young people. Statistics indicate that 46.8 percent of all deaths in 1958 occurred among persons under 15 years of age, as compared with 9.7 for the same age group in the United States. Of reported deaths in that year, nearly 18 percent were children under one year of age.
Malaria has long been a serious disease problem in many parts of the South, including the entire Mekong Delta area and particularly the Central Highlands. In the colonial period and during the early years of independence it was a leading cause of illness and death. Some idea of its incidence may be seen from health statistics for 1958, which show that some 26,000 persons were hospitalized with the disease while 650,000 more received out-patient treatment for it.

An intensive eradication program was begun in 1958. By 1961 large areas of the South had been sprayed and the results were impressive. The incidence of malaria around Saigon and in the Mekong Delta area dropped to a low level. However, in the highland region—much of which had not been reached by mobile spraying teams—the incidence remained high.

In 1961 and early 1962 the Viet Cong launched a campaign to undermine the malaria eradication program by means of a propaganda campaign and terrorist tactics. Its agents spread the rumor among the illiterate and credulous villagers that harmful side effects resulted from the use of DDT. They also captured, intimidated and killed technicians and other personnel assigned to carry out the eradication program. As a result villagers became increasingly reluctant to cooperate in malaria eradication procedures.

Tuberculosis, like malaria, is common through the South and is a leading cause of illness and death. Pulmonary tuberculosis is the most common type. While more cases have been reported in the cities than in rural areas, medical authorities point out that this may be due to the better facilities available in the cities for detecting and diagnosing the condition rather than to a higher incidence rate.

Trachoma is widespread, and it is reported that perhaps four-fifths of the population has been affected at one time or another. Two-thirds of the cases are of a mild chronic nature, but an estimated 30 percent of the people have suffered partial loss of vision from this disease, and a small number have become totally blind.

Other infectious diseases include bacillary and amoebic dysentery, smallpox, tetanus, rabies and leprosy. The incidence of smallpox is decreasing as a result of vaccines. Leprosy is greatly feared, and it is thought that the 5,000 lepers confined in government or private institutions represent only a minor portion of the total number of persons in the South who are afflicted with the disease.

Infection with intestinal and other type parasites is almost universal. Roundworm, hookworm and tapeworm are common, as are oriental liver flukes. Even when cured of parasitic infection, the peasant is almost certain to be reinfected, since he must work barefooted in the flooded rice paddies where he is again exposed.
Respiratory diseases—of which the most common are pneumonia, influenza and bronchitis—and venereal diseases occur throughout the area. The incidence of yaws is not high, and scarlet fever is seldom reported. A few cases of typhus fever and cholera are reported annually, but no epidemics have occurred since 1957.

Beriberi, night blindness and goiter are among the chief nutritional diseases. Goiter, which results from iodine deficiency, is found mainly in Kontum Province in the Central Highlands and in the Mekong Delta area around Can Tho. Anemia is common, and there is a high incidence of inflammation and infection of the mouth.

Addiction to alcohol has not been a major problem in the South. Most persons drink in moderation and mainly on ceremonial occasions. Drug addiction has been a more serious problem. In February 1955, at a time when perhaps 30 percent of the population was using opium to some degree, President Ngo Dinh Diem issued a decree forbidding its cultivation, possession, sale or consumption. Opium dens were closed, and continuing offenders were brought into court. Although consumption fell as a result of this decree, the use of opium continued on a much smaller scale.

**Popular Beliefs and Practices**

Traditional medical practices and beliefs are widespread in Vietnam in the cities as well as the villages. Many of these probably originated in China, such as those surrounding pregnancy, childbirth and weaning. Special diets based upon a concept of the spirit, for example, are adhered to in the months just preceding and succeeding birth. Another set of beliefs, predominant in the South, is attributed to Cambodian and Cham influences. According to these homeopathic beliefs, illness can be caused by a sorcerer who possesses something belonging to the victim—a picture, a piece of clothing, a lock of hair or even his name. The sorcerer need not be a highly skilled craftsman, since nearly anyone in the community is considered capable of inflicting injury or even death in this manner.

Many ailments are thought to be caused by the entry of evil spirits into the body, and people try to protect themselves with charms, sacrifices and petitions. Some believe that when a spirit has entered the body, it can be induced to depart by sorcerers or village priests employing formulas and traditional rites. Firecrackers are used to frighten timid spirits, imitation paper money to bribe greedy ones and politeness to mollify those who are angry.

But such beliefs do not necessarily conflict with an acceptance of modern medical treatment. Sulfa drugs and quinine are becoming accepted, while antibiotics have come to be regarded as a cure-
Reliance upon Western medicine is greatest in the cities, but rural people are tending more and more to take advantage of such modern medical help as is available to them. In doing so they are apt to view it as an additional resource against illness rather than as a substitute for the traditional remedies. In villages many persons trained in Western medical techniques are also versed in oriental medicine.

Medical Facilities and Services

The first Western-type medical services in Indochina were introduced by European and American missionaries before 1800. These efforts were later supported and augmented by the French colonial authorities. The French organized a public health service, constructed and maintained a network of hospitals, clinics and sanitariums, and established a school of medicine at the University of Hanoi. The Pasteur Institute, with branches in Hanoi, Saigon and other cities, provided diagnostic services, tested food and water supplies and did basic medical research.

French physicians were reluctant to serve in Indochina and Western-trained Vietnamese doctors eventually came to predominate in the colonial health service. In addition to this small component of Western-trained Vietnamese doctors, there were many practitioners of Chinese traditional medicine. These so-called Chinese doctors, who were of either Vietnamese or Chinese ethnic origin, employed a considerable pharmacopoeia of herbal medicines and a number of manipulative techniques, such as cupping, cauterizing and acupuncture. Their knowledge, which was acquired through apprenticeship, was founded on a well-organized Chinese medical lore and an extensive literature, the value of much of which has been confirmed by scientific research. The Chinese doctor was sometimes the village scholar who practiced medicine as a sideline; more often he was a professional practitioner and pharmacist who maintained a shop of his own.

After independence the Department of Public Health was organized under the direction of the Secretary of State for Public Health, to whom a chief executive and various administrative sections were responsible. The administrative sections included the Directorate General of Health and Hospitals, under which were the Services of Health, Health Protection, Public Sanitation, Medical Supply and Sanitary Police; the General Administration for Malaria Eradication; and the National Institute of Cancer. In early 1961 the post of Secretary of State for Public Health was held by Doctor Tran Dinh De, Professor of the Medical School at the University of Saigon and formerly medical director of Saigon Hospital. His principal assistant was an American-trained dentist.
In 1961 the sum of 396.7 million piasters was budgeted for the Department of Public Health. This amounted to 2.6 percent of the total budget, a slight increase over the 2.3 percent allocated to this department in 1960. In 1962 the sum provided for the Department was 443.2 million piasters, but the percent of the total budget which this represented is not known since total budget figures had not been published in mid-1962. In all these years substantial additional sums were provided for medical education, mother and child care, malaria eradication and other health projects by specialized agencies of the United Nations and by the International Cooperation Commission (ICA) of the United States, which subsequently became the Agency for International Development (AID).

In early 1960 there were 512 Western-trained physicians in the South—far too few to provide adequate care for a population of over 13 million persons. Many of the physicians were in government service. In addition there were 1,106 medical assistants, 62 dentists, 228 pharmacists, 348 midwives and an unknown number of Chinese physicians. The majority were practicing in Saigon.

The lack of trained medical personnel at all levels was acute and constituted a major problem to those persons responsible for the maintenance of health services in the country. Conspicuous testimony to the scarcity of trained medical personnel were the many newly built and well-equipped rural health clinics which, in early 1961, stood empty and unused because they could not be staffed.

In 1959 the South had nearly 14,000 beds in some 50 general hospitals, as well as 207 infirmaries and dispensaries and 480 maternity centers. Most of these institutions were public and provided free care to patients. Saigon had a number of well-equipped hospitals, including the large Maternity Hospital, the Seventh Day Adventist Hospital and the French Hospital General, as well as two dispensaries with maternity facilities, two maternity centers, nine dispensaries, six sanitary posts and two mobile medical units.

Other medical facilities in Saigon included the Pasteur Institute, which engaged in a wide range of bacteriological research, and the medical school of the University of Saigon. Another medical school was affiliated with the University of Hue.

In contrast to the better hospitals in Saigon, provincial hospitals and dispensaries frequently lacked adequate space and equipment. Villagers who became seriously ill were occasionally brought to these institutions in the major centers; but medical care for the peasants was dispensed chiefly through village first-aid stations which, in mid-1961, existed in about half the villages of the South. Most of the stations were manned by persons with only minimal
training in hygiene, sanitation and the dispensing of patent medicines.

As of 1962 Western medicine continued to be imported into the South under the commercial import program, and low-cost pharmaceuticals were abundant in the cities. In addition, Vietnamese firms had, with the help of American aid, established plants for the production of a wide variety of pills and serums, the materials for which were imported from the West. USOM officials estimate that the combination of imported drugs and locally produced pharmaceuticals is sufficient for the immediate demand. However, inequitable distribution between the cities and the countryside remains a basic problem.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

Diet and Nutrition

The traditional diet in the North is similar to that in the South. Rice, supplemented by vegetables and fish and occasionally by other foods, constitutes the basic diet. When rice is short, manioc, fonio or sweet potatoes are substituted for it.

Information pertaining to the food supply in North Vietnam in mid-1962 was scanty. Indications were that the provision of food for an expanding population was a serious and continuing problem, but that on the whole the people were not suffering serious distress from hunger. While the area had long been dependent on food imports from the South, the regime had exerted strenuous efforts to increase domestic agricultural production through such measures as land reclamation and irrigation. A government spokesman in mid-1962 asserted that with abundant harvest in 1961, the individual share of total food production had risen to 332 kilograms (1 kilogram equals 2.2 pounds) per year.

While the Communist regime had seemingly prevented the development of a serious food shortage, the problem of supply was far from solved. The government continued to warn that a reserve must be built to provide for future needs and to call for increases in agricultural production. Popular fear of actual or potential famine was not entirely allayed, and in Hanoi food was reportedly perennially scarce. In the cities many persons also complained about the scarcity of rice and the necessity of substituting some less-liked food as the basis of the diet. In some rural areas people were engaging in the clandestine manufacture of rice noodles, a form in which rice could be stored for long periods.

Sanitation

As in the South, the water supply has long been a serious health problem. Because the ponds which provide drinking water for
much of the rural population are also used for bathing, watering animals and other purposes, they were subject to contamination and pollution. Cities such as Hanoi use filtered well water which is considered safe, but which probably would not be so regarded by Western standards.

Official concern with the improvement of sanitation levels is seen in the organization and training of sanitation cadres, which will presumably instruct the population in good health practices and the prevention of disease. A health education program has been undertaken, utilizing such slogans as “clean food, clean habits, clean water” and “destroy rats, destroy flies, destroy mosquitoes.”

**Disease**

The government appeared to be taking an active role in the prevention and treatment of disease. Efforts to prevent typhus, cholera and diphtheria epidemics, to control malaria, to isolate and cure cases of tuberculosis, leprosy and trachoma were among widely publicized health programs. The regime claimed, for example, that mobile medical teams sent into the countryside had, by late 1961, identified and registered nearly 5 million cases of trachoma and other eye diseases, of which more than 500,000 had been treated.

It is also asserted that between 1957 and 1961 nearly all individuals under 15 years of age were tested for tuberculosis and all nonreactors in the group were vaccinated.

**Medical Facilities and Services**

In late 1961 primary responsibility in matters pertaining to health lay with the Ministry of Public Health, headed by Doctor Pham Ngoc Thach. Responsible to him were: the vice-minister; the chiefs of the Departments of Cadre Organization, Prophylactic Medicine and Chinese Medicine; and the directors of the Hygiene and Epidemiologic Institute and the Anti-Malaria Institute.

Local sources claimed that in 1959 medical personnel, exclusive of nurses and midwives, numbered 2,313, of whom the vast majority were physicians or medical assistants of middle or superior rank. There were also said to be nearly 10,000 nurses and midwives, about 100,000 members of the health service who were responsible for carrying out health education programs in the field, and thousands of Chinese physicians.

As in the South, the major cities had general and specialized hospitals of various kinds, while the rural areas were served by small dispensaries and clinics or mobile health teams. Among the hospitals in Hanoi was a general institution which had been rehabilitated and supplied with modern equipment by the East Ger-
mans in 1955. Research activities were carried on in the Microbiological Institute.

Other Communist nations had also helped in equipping medical facilities, training health technicians, organizing preventative programs and conducting research. The North was also dependent on Communist-bloc countries for pharmaceuticals to supplement domestic production.
CHAPTER 17
PUBLIC WELFARE

In 1962 living conditions in South Vietnam were substantially better than in the North. Although rice was scarce in areas north of Saigon because of Viet Cong guerrilla action, people by and large had enough to eat and were adequately clothed and housed. In the area controlled by Communists, austerity and hardship apparently prevailed. People were hoarding rice and clothing, and other essential goods were reportedly scarce. All indications were that only a few top leaders enjoyed luxuries of any sort.

After independence steps were taken in both the North and the South to cope with certain long-standing problems of the peasants. Much was done in such fields as education, agriculture and public health (see ch. 10, Education; ch. 16, Health and Sanitation; ch. 25, Agricultural Potential). After 1959 progress in the South slowed down considerably, however, because of the Communist campaign of intimidation and terrorism, although by early 1962 there had been some improvement in security conditions.

In the South the government played a key role in welfare activity, but important supplementary and advisory functions were being performed by the United States, which had also given vast amounts of financial aid, by various international organizations and by private philanthropic groups. The Communist regime, by contrast, maintained control over virtually all public aid and social services and dispensed them through such institutions as cooperatives, day nurseries and worker dining rooms. Some of health and welfare programs were being supported by Communist-bloc countries.

REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM
The Standard of Living

In 1962 the South Vietnamese were better off with respect to the material conditions of life than were many people in other parts of Southeast Asia. In most places food and shelter could be secured without great difficulty. In the rich Mekong Delta, where nearly two-thirds of the people lived, the land was productive and responded quickly to cultivation. The standard of living was lower in the mountainous area north of Saigon and could decline rapidly with deteriorating security conditions.

In the villages family members contribute to total household earnings by working in the rice paddies, fashioning handcraft articles at home or performing outside labor for cash. In areas
where only a single crop of rice is grown, for example, many men take outside jobs in construction during the off-season.

Rural incomes are low by United States standards, and the differential between those of the great majority of rural families and those of the few who are relatively well-to-do is narrow. Figures show that in one village in 1960 the net yearly income among tenant farming families ranged from 9,000 piasters to 25,600 piasters. Cash income is not the only measure of living standard, however, since the rural economy is only partially monetized. The majority of village families raise all or most of their own food, and many build their own houses from locally available and inexpensive materials.

Goods are far less evenly distributed in the urban centers. Some urban families are inordinately wealthy by Vietnamese standards. They may own two or three houses and several automobiles, be attended by a retinue of servants, send their children abroad for higher education and spend their leisure frequenting expensive clubs and other upper-class social institutions. Much of their wealth is invested in gold, jewels and real estate.

The small but growing urban middle-income group has only a modicum of capital resources. Its members live in small masonry or wooden houses, some of which lack utilities, and have to budget carefully to provide themselves with small luxuries. However, they have a larger share of material goods and a greater sense of economic security than do the families in the lowest income bracket which make up the vast majority of the urban population.

Families in the lower income brackets experienced increasing economic difficulties in the late 1950's and early 1960's. Although runaway inflation was prevented by government controls on wages and prices, the cost of living swung steadily upward. Retail prices on the essential goods of working-class families in Saigon rose 37 percent between 1954 and early 1961—a gain of 140 percent over 1949 levels. In mid-1961, as a result of growing popular dissatisfaction with the continuing upswing in prices, the government was faced with some demands for wage increases from both organized and unorganized labor groups (see ch. 15; Labor Relations and Organization).

In most parts of the South food, including rice, is generally plentiful. No severe shortages of fish, vegetables or other staples of the diet were reported in mid-1962. The availability of these basic foods ensure an adequate caloric intake for the vast majority of the population, probably ranging between 1,700 to 2,600 calories per day. However, nutritional deficiencies, particularly of the B vitamins, are common (see ch. 16, Health and Sanitation). Corn, corn meal, wheat flour and dried milk are distributed, under the
United States surplus foods program, to orphans, relocated families and other needy persons by the Mennonite Central Committee, Catholic Relief Services and other voluntary agencies.

Simple, light clothing is adequate in the hot climate. The basic outer garments of traditional dress for both men and women are loose-fitting trousers and a long-sleeved collarless shirt. Those worn by peasants are usually made of cotton fabric which, in 1958, sold at a price equal to one-half to two-thirds the basic daily minimum wage. Wooden clogs are worn with traditional attire, although many peasants go barefoot a good deal of the time as a matter of economy. While purchases of wearing apparel are kept to a minimum in most households, even poor families try to buy at least one new set of clothing for each person at least once a year—usually at the time of the New Year’s celebration.

Much about a man’s social and financial position is revealed by his manner of dress. In the cities, rich men wear Western business suits; those in the middle- and lower-income brackets, Western-style slacks, shorts and open-necked shirts or traditional Vietnamese attire. In the villages, prosperous men appear in public in slacks and shirts, but usually wear traditional garments at home. The latter are made of silk or satin or, if they are of cotton, the color is white—never the black garb of poor peasants.

The gap between rich and poor is even more apparent in their housing, especially in the cities. The wealthy urban elite live in spacious, solidly built houses of stone or brick which are equipped with running water, electricity and sanitary facilities. Housing of this caliber commands a rent well beyond the means of the ordinary families—in some instances 25,000 piasters a month, plus about 10 percent for utilities.

In contrast to such luxurious dwellings, the houses of the majority of the population are usually small and of masonry, frame or thatch construction. Most common is the thatch type which ordinarily has a dirt floor, poor sanitary facilities and no running water or electricity. The occupant often owns the house but not the land on which it is built. A small number of urban families live in multi-unit structures, resembling a barracks, which afford little privacy to individual families. In the absence of running water and utilities, people rely on kerosene or gasoline lamps or candles for lighting and on charcoal braziers for heating. Water is drawn from nearby rivers or canals or from street-corner hydrants.

Rent on working-class housing is not high by local standards, even in Saigon. A 1960 survey indicated that most tenants of thatch dwellings probably paid less than 250 piasters per month. The major burden on the family is the money, a sum of money
equivalent to about one-third of the value of the house which is
demanded of a new tenant at the time he moves in. It is, in effect,
a deposit which is returned in part or in its entirety when the
renter leaves.

With the exception of the few solidly built masonry or frame
houses of the well-to-do, village dwellings resemble those of the
urban working class. They are small, dirt-floored thatch struc­
tures without electricity or running water and with only the most
rudimentary toilet facilities. Furnishings consist for the most
part of a simple ancestral altar—the focal point of the main room
—a few tables and chairs and hardwood planks which serve as
beds.

Because the Vietnamese, though frugal, are given to conspicuous
consumption, a comparatively rich array of furniture and house­
hold goods may be displayed in the houses of the most prosperous
villagers. These may include heavy pieces of hardwood furniture
intricately carved and inlaid with mother-of-pearl, solid brass
candelabra, bowls and similar items representing an accumulation
of many years. There may also be more recent acquisitions, such
as radios, French china and pressure lamps. Perhaps the most
striking symbol of prosperity in the villages is a motor scooter.

Welfare Efforts

During the period of French rule social assistance by the gov­
ernment began to assume importance, along with family and
village charity, as means by which welfare was provided. The
colonial administration extended education, inaugurated vaccina­
tion programs and built hospitals, clinics and medical research
institutions. Its activities were supported by contributions from
French-Vietnamese Catholic welfare organizations, aided by funds
from foreign Catholic sources. These efforts were mainly con­
fined to the cities, however, and accordingly benefited only a small
fraction of the population.

After 1954 the Government of the Republic of Vietnam took
over the administration of the welfare institutions which had been
established in the South by the colonial administration. It con­
tinued their operation and, with material aid and technical assist­
ance from the United States, pressed vigorously to improve living
conditions, particularly in rural areas. As in the past nongovern­
mental organizations, including various international relief groups,
private American philanthropic agencies, religious orders and lay
groups, also engaged in various charitable activities. Other forms
of social assistance were left to the village and family.

In mid-1962 the responsibility for the administration of welfare
programs at the national level was distributed among the Depart­
ments of Public Health, National Education and Civic Action and various other governmental agencies. Although the principal functions of the Department of Civic Action pertained to information and propaganda, it carried out various projects in youth work and also retained a corps of mobile teams equipped to work with villagers in various health, education and security programs.

Rural Welfare

Since independence, official policy in the realm of public welfare has stressed the provision of economic and physical security and the extension of social service in the villages. A land-reform program was initiated; agricultural credit was extended; and roads and canals were built linking hitherto isolated villages with provincial centers. Health facilities, including maternity centers, dispensaries and clinics, were increased. In addition, thousands of villagers were resettled in centralized communities where the authorities could more easily protect them from Communist guerrillas and provide schools, medical services, pure water and other municipal services. Units of the South Vietnamese Army have contributed to these and other public projects in rural areas by providing assistance in road building, construction of irrigation ditches and resettlement.

As of mid-1962 the government had achieved limited success in easing certain long-standing problems of the villagers. But other difficulties persisted, and in some cases they were intensified by the Viet Cong campaign of terrorism and intimidation. Hundreds of villages were still not only without schools or medical facilities but also without means of communication with provincial centers through which they could summon help in case of guerrilla attack. Malaria eradication had been brought almost to a standstill by deteriorating security conditions, and many of the extensively equipped new dispensaries had been abandoned for the same reason, or because of lack of trained personnel to staff them.

Worker Welfare

In 1962 the worker was largely, but not entirely, dependent on his own resources for protection against unemployment, illness or old age. A comprehensive social security system was lacking. Most daily wage earners received no fringe benefits other than paid vacations and reimbursement for injuries incurred on the job. Unemployment insurance and pension plans had not been put into force. On the other hand, a few companies provided their employees with housing, and some permitted them to borrow money from the company at low interest rates. In addition, all employers gave a family allowance to salaried employees, amounting to 15 percent of the base wage for each legitimate wife, 5 percent for
each of the first five children and 3 percent for each additional child.

Low-income housing, built by the government and financed through the national lottery, was available, but only a small fraction of those who applied could be accommodated. Tenants paid 200 piasters per month for a small apartment, receiving title to the property after 5 years. More spacious apartments and detached dwellings were available to white-collar workers in government and business who paid 800 to 1,000 piasters per month for 12 years.

Women and Youth

In the early 1960's women had a more prominent place in public life in South Vietnam than their counterparts in many other Asian countries. They were active in welfare, education, journalism, the professions and government. The editor of the largest newspaper in Saigon was Mme. But Tra, and 10 women were serving in the National Assembly. The equality of women with men was formally recognized in the Family Code, enacted in January 1959, which also condemned polygamy (see ch. 7, Family). Vietnamese Women's Day is celebrated each spring in conjunction with the anniversary of the Trung sisters, national heroines who led an insurrection against the Chinese in 40 A.D. The occasion is marked with parades, speechmaking, baby beauty contests and awards to outstanding women.

In the forefront of women's activities in 1962 was Madame Ngo Dinh Nhu, sister-in-law of President Ngo. Madame Nhu is a member of the National Assembly and also the founder of the Vietnamese Women's Solidarity Movement, a nationwide women's organization with nearly a million affiliated members.

Established in 1958, the Women's Solidarity Movement is a civic group designed to promote the interests of women and mobilize them in support of the regime (see ch. 12, Public Information and Propaganda). It operates social centers, under the direction of local executive committees, in all of South Vietnam's provinces and in most of its districts. It maintains a network of visitors who travel widely talking to women's groups and interviewing them in their homes. It assists in the supervision and direction of the Women's Paramilitary Units (see ch. 21, Public Order and Safety).

In 1962 the collective strength of South Vietnam's various youth groups surpassed that of the Vietnamese Women's Solidarity Movement by a wide margin. The largest of these groups, the Republic Youth Movement (Cong Hoa), had a membership of more than 1,310,000 persons. The Cong Hoa organizes popular education courses and cultural performances and participates in such projects as road repair, canal digging and the construction of...
hospitals and of agrovilles. Many of their members are organized into Republican Youth Rural Defense Groups for the primary purpose of assisting other internal security agencies to maintain public order and safety in rural areas. Similar groups in the municipalities are called Republican Youth Groups, and their members aid the traffic police and participate in patrol and guard duties (see ch. 21, Public Order and Safety; ch. 24, Subversive Potentialities).

A number of institutions were concerned with the welfare of young children. The Department of Civic Action maintains dispensaries, nurseries and kindergartens for working-class families. The government also operates a 250-bed pediatric hospital in Saigon which was established with assistance from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United States Operations Mission (USOM). UNICEF operates maternal and child health centers through South Vietnam. Various foreign philanthropic organizations are also active, including CARE, Catholic Relief Services, the Mennonite Central Committee and Foster Parents Plan, Inc.

Refugees

One of the largest and most successful welfare efforts undertaken by the Republic of Vietnam after independence was the resettlement of nearly a million persons who fled North Vietnam between August 1954 and May 1955. The task was accomplished through the joint efforts of the South Vietnamese Government, the USOM, Catholic Auxiliary Resettlement Committee and Catholic Relief Services of the National Catholic Welfare Conference. Although by the early 1960's some refugees with special problems, such as the aged and physically handicapped, still required public assistance, most were reasonably self-sufficient. Scattered in some 300 villages throughout the South, they were earning an adequate living as farmers, weavers, tradesmen or fishermen.

The amount of assistance given to the refugees—most of whom were Roman Catholics—at a time when many South Vietnamese were themselves in great need left a residue of popular resentment against the government. Because most of the key figures in the government of South Vietnam are Catholics and President Ngo's brother, Archbishop Ngo Dinh Thuc, is a leader in the Church hierarchy, some non-Catholics felt that, in the dispensation of welfare, the administration had given Catholics preferential treatment (see ch. 4, Ethnic Groups).

Social Problems

Serious underemployment throughout much of the South appeared to be a continuing problem. Temporary relief to the un-
employed was being provided, in 1962, by the Department of Civic Action which, in turn, received assistance from CARE, Catholic Relief Services, the Mennonite Central Committee, UNICEF and other groups. Jobless workers could apply for emergency food and supplies.

Public morality has received a good deal of attention from the Ngo regime, largely owing to the concern of Madame Nhu. In 1959 she sponsored the Family Code which ended concubinage, polygamy and arbitrary divorce rights for husbands in South Vietnam. In late 1961 she presented another bill to the National Assembly prohibiting boxing, cockfights and fishfights, sorcery, beauty contests, erotic dances, the cabaret dancer trade, the sale of alcoholic beverages or tobacco to minors, the use of contraceptives and the advocacy of birth control. The bill passed the National Assembly, but was held up in the President’s office pending possible modification. It was returned to the National Assembly with recommendations and, in May 1962, again passed the National Assembly and became law.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

Standard of Living

Fragmentary evidence suggests that the material conditions of life in North Vietnam in the late 1950’s and early 1960’s were poor—well below the general level in the South. The people lived frugally and knew much hardship. The urban worker got barely enough to eat, wore wooden clogs or went barefoot and spent most of his time working or attending meetings and study groups. In Hanoi electricity was reportedly turned off at 9 p.m., and although some Soviet trucks, government-owned automobiles, many bicycles and draft animals were seen on the streets, walking was the chief mode of transportation.

The purchasing power of city workers was low and that of rural peasants even lower. Newspaper accounts of mid-1958 revealed that a first-quality sleeveless white shirt cost 7,000 dong in a state-operated store, a sum then equivalent to about one week’s wages for the average worker; cigarettes cost 950 to 1,000 dong per pack. The system of providing free rent, water and electricity in government-owned worker housing (which prevailed during the late 1950’s) was apparently no longer in effect. Government sources reported that the per capita income among poor rural peasants in late 1959 was 13,400 dong per year.

Because of the shortage of arable land, cultivation of enough food for the swiftly multiplying population posed a grave problem to the authorities. Government sources asserted that food production had risen from 287 kilograms (1 kilogram equals 2.2 pounds)
per person in 1957 to 332 kilograms in 1961. But press accounts, which told of the illegal slaughter and sale of pork and the illegal manufacture and sale of rice noodles, indicated that food was in short supply.

An emphasis on mining and heavy industry at the cost of consumer goods has led to shortages of clothing and other essential commodities. The simple khaki, blue or gray cotton work clothes which everyone wears were relatively expensive and were apparently rationed except in the autonomous zones. There was a thriving black market in cotton cloth, but woolen fabrics were not available at any price.

As in the South, the government was building some new public housing units, but in general construction lagged well behind the needs of the population. In Hanoi the regime put up a number of multifamily dwellings—provided with electricity and running water—for workers and civil servants. Rents were cheap, averaging 2 or 3 percent of an unskilled worker's monthly wage. From all indications, however, these provided for only a small fraction of the population, and as in the South, most families lived in thatch huts without electricity or water.

Welfare Efforts

The government was active in the welfare field, dispensing assistance to various groups in the population in accordance with its political and economic goals. The only private welfare agency referred to in press reports was the North Vietnamese Red Cross, which sent an offer of assistance to victims of the Mekong Delta floods in late 1961.

Even more than in the South, the regime relied on the Army to assist in its welfare efforts. The Army has contributed manpower for gathering and processing of food crops, has supplied technicians and other personnel to give medical examinations and treatment to civilians and has organized popular lectures on scientific and cultural subjects (see ch. 31, The Armed Forces).

Worker Welfare

Industrial workers and office employees were more adequately protected against serious deprivation than were the rural peasants. They were entitled to compensation for injury on the job or occupational disease, to pension benefits ranging from 45 to 75 percent of wages, to funeral allowances, to paid sick and maternity leave and to annual vacations. Laws governed wage scales and working conditions. In respect to benefits, preferential treatment was given to persons working in mountainous areas, to those doing heavy work, to labor and war heroes, and to disabled veterans.