Dissatisfaction within the Party was probably even more significant than
Catholic unrest in changing policy to the rectification of errors. Many Party
members and resistance leaders were arrested or even executed during the land
reform campaign. This doubtless caused anguish to many of their ex-comrades in
the fight against the French. The criticism, in early 1956, of Stalin's purges
by Khrushchev probably strengthened and gave legitimacy to the doubts of Lao
Dong Party members about the purge going on in their country. A statement by
Truong Chinh attributes the greatest importance to this Soviet example.
"Following the example of criticism and self criticism set by the Communist
Party of the Soviet Union at its 20th congress, we reviewed our work in land reform."30
IV. Effects of the Land Reform.

A. On Land Tenure Structure.

A majority of the peasants of North Vietnam benefited from the land reform. (see p. 37-38: estimates cited there include 66.6% of peasant families and 72% of the peasant population to benefit from the reform) All disadvantaged farmers benefited. Although land holdings were equalized, there simply was not much land to go around. The amount of cultivated land per head of population in the Tonkin delta at that time was 1/10 of a hectare, or 1,000 square meters, one of the lowest figures in the world. Land distribution per head of population after the land reform came very close to this figure, as most per capita holdings were in the range between 1,372 and 1,565 square meters (average holdings of middle and poor peasants, see table page 38), while the smallest lots, those of the ex-landlords, were 825 square meters. Tenancy was abolished, but the hiring of farm laborers continued, especially in the case of the rich farmers.

Obviously, with such small holdings, such events as sickness in the family, the death of a buffalo, or a bad harvest were enough to ruin a small farmer.

Surveys carried out in May 1958 among 12 villages in Hong Quang, Nam Dinh, Thanh Hoa, Ninh Binh provinces revealed that 119 peasant families had sold their ricefields (74 poor peasant families, 28 middle peasant families, one rich peasant family and 16 small trader families).

Of the 200 households in a hamlet in Ha Nam province 47 households had sold their land; among them 17 poor peasant households, 6 middle peasant households and one handicraft household had sold their land on the score of illness or of want; 47 households had sold their draught animals (22 poor peasant households and 15 middle peasant households).

B. On Production and Productivity.

Most accounts agree that, despite the shortage of cultivable land, and despite the errors of the land reform campaign, production increased during and just after the reform. A North Vietnamese source attributed this to the fact that "the peasant,
freed from the feudal and colonial yoke, encouraged and assisted by the state, set to work enthusiastically. The same source provides the following index figures to illustrate the progress.

**Total output value of agriculture from 1955 to 1959.**
(on the basis of 1956 prices. 1955=100)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1955</th>
<th>1956</th>
<th>1957</th>
<th>1958</th>
<th>1959</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1955:100</td>
<td>1956:117.8</td>
<td>1957:121</td>
<td>1958:140.7</td>
<td>1959:152.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, other sources, including North Vietnamese sources, state that though production increased as a result of the land reform campaign, there was a decrease in rice production in 1957. One source attributes this to unfavorable climatic conditions, and gives the following figures for total rice yield.

- 1955: 3,600,000 tons
- 1956: 4,132,000 tons
- 1957: 4,000,000 tons

However, a table drawn up by Bernard Fall indicates that this decrease in rice production resulted from a reduction in the area planted in rice, as yield per hectare increased between 1956-1957.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Cultivated area (in hectares)</th>
<th>Yield (in tons per hectare)</th>
<th>Total yield (in tons)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>2,196,000</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>3,600,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>2,280,000</td>
<td>1.86</td>
<td>4,238,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>1,945,000</td>
<td>2.01</td>
<td>3,890,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The decrease in rice production was probably partially due to an increase in the area planted in industrial crops. A table showing the index of increase in agricultural production compared to 1955 shows a marked increase in industrial crops between 1956 and 1957.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Food crops</th>
<th>Industrial crops</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>120.1</td>
<td>161.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>111.1</td>
<td>232.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One author attributes the low percentage of increase in overall agricultural production from 1956 to 1957 to the rural crisis following the land reform. Annual index of increase in production compared to the previous year:

- 1956: 117.8%
- 1957: 102.5%
- 1958: 116.0%
How reliable are North Vietnamese statistics? The only American economist, to my knowledge, to write on the economy of North Vietnam, made the following evaluation in an article published in 1962.

The uninitiated may well wonder how much reliance can be placed in official claims as presented to the Central Committee and ultimately released for publication by the Central Statistical Office... Considerable caution is advisable in the use of indices of such composite economic concepts as gross industrial and agricultural production... In the agricultural sphere there can be little doubt that the Vietnamese government and Party, infected by China's exuberance, began to exaggerate crop results substantially from 1958 onwards. The tight food supply situation of the last three years does not lend credence to a grain output anything like the official harvest returns.10

In using the following table, the reader should keep this caution, which applies particularly to the years 1958-1961, in mind. It should also be recalled that French scholars, such as Pierre Gourou, did not consider French statistics very reliable either, except as indications of order of magnitude.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Cultivated area (in hectares)</th>
<th>Yield (in tons per hectare)</th>
<th>Total yield (in tons)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>1,836,000</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>2,453,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>1,833,000</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>2,275,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>2,650,000</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>3,770,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>1,898,100</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>2,600,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>2,196,000</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>3,600,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>2,280,000</td>
<td>1.86</td>
<td>4,238,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>1,945,000</td>
<td>2.01</td>
<td>3,890,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>2,288,450</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>4,576,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>2,260,609</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>5,114,300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following table, based on official North Vietnamese statistics, shows the overall increase in agricultural production as well as in various agricultural sectors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total agricultural production</td>
<td>117.8</td>
<td>121.0</td>
<td>140.7</td>
<td>152.4</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-- crops</td>
<td>118.8</td>
<td>113.4</td>
<td>129.7</td>
<td>146.2</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food crops</td>
<td>120.1</td>
<td>111.1</td>
<td>127.6</td>
<td>146.3</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial crops</td>
<td>161.9</td>
<td>232.3</td>
<td>278.7</td>
<td>290.4</td>
<td>30.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Livestock</td>
<td>118.4</td>
<td>143.4</td>
<td>205.7</td>
<td>202.8</td>
<td>19.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handicrafts</td>
<td>113.0</td>
<td>132.7</td>
<td>128.9</td>
<td>130.3</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index of annual growth compared to previous year</td>
<td>117.8</td>
<td>102.5</td>
<td>116.0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
C. On Rural Employment and Underemployment.

This was not affected by the reform. The tenant, sharecropper or debtor peasant became landowner, but mode of farming continued as before, in a highly labor intensive way. Population growth rate remained high, and rural-urban migration low.

D. On Income Distribution.

The results of surveys carried out after land reform in 34 villages of Bac Giang, Hai Duong, Thanh Hoa, Nghe An and Nam Dinh were as follows:

- Poor peasants:
  - 19.8% have more than enough to eat
  - 52.6% have enough to eat
  - 27.9% have not enough to eat

- Middle peasants:
  - 27.9% have more than enough to eat
  - 55.9% have enough to eat
  - 16.2% have not enough to eat

- Rich peasants:
  - 41.3% have more than enough to eat
  - 45.8% have enough to eat
  - 12.9% have not enough to eat

- Ex-landlords:
  - 19.8% have more than enough to eat
  - 51.3% have enough to eat
  - 28.9% have not enough to eat

The results of studies on the cash holdings of each class were as follows:

Average for a district in Kien An province:
- Poor peasant household: 55 dong
- Middle peasant " : 62 dong
- Rich peasant " : 584 dong
- Ex-landlord " : 90 dong

Villages in a district in Ha Nam:

a. Rice-growing areas
- Poor peasant household: 32.5 dong
- Middle peasant " : 32.5 dong
- Rich peasant " : 42.8 dong

b. Areas with subsidiary crops and handicraft side occupations as well as rice
- Rich peasant household: 420.87 dong
- Middle peasant " : 97.18 dong
- Poor peasant " : 66.55 dong

(E, F, G and H have been touched on in section III; later developments will be discussed as part of the cooperativization stage.)
V. Cooperativization.

Land redistribution was not intended to be permanent, but rather a step in the transition to socialism. As with land reform, there was debate in the Party as to the timing of change. Although all agreed on the necessity of agricultural cooperation, some thought that it should not occur until heavy farm machinery was available, as had been the case in the Soviet Union when the first kolkhozes were created. Others argued that to increase farm commodity production and supply large quantities of food to the market, the State should stimulate small-scale production, especially by middle peasants. However, the Central Committee decided in November 1958 in favor of immediate launching of a cooperative campaign.

As in the Chinese model, cooperativization was to progress through the following stages:

1. **Mutual Aid Teams**: small groups of peasants, each retaining full ownership of his property and farm tools, group together in seasonal or permanent work-exchange groups. This is very much like the traditional pattern of mutual aid among poor peasants who could not afford to hire wage labor, but the traditional pattern was not organized and was only operative during peak work times.

2. **Semi-Socialist Cooperatives**: The peasant rents his land and other means of production to the cooperative. He remains owner of his land, and receives rent for it from the Cooperative, which manages the land and organizes labor on it. Owners participate in the labor and also in the management as one of the cooperative's members.

3. **Socialist Cooperatives** (similar to Soviet kolkhozes): All means of production and land become the property of the collective. Rent to the former owner is eliminated. All cooperative revenue, after investment, reserves and other expenses are deducted, is distributed to members on the principle "to each according to his work".

### A. Legislation.

The basic legislation governing semi-socialist cooperatives was issued in 1959: "General regulations concerning Agricultural Producers' lower-type cooperatives". Its major characteristics are:

**Article 2.** The co-operative is organized on the basis of three principles: voluntariness, mutual benefit and democratic management. The fruits of labour are distributed according to the work done by each member.
Article 5. People coming from the exploiting classes are not to be admitted into the cooperative. After the cooperative has been consolidated, and almost all poor peasants and middle peasants have become coop members, rich peasants who have been allowed to change their social status and who show a good attitude may become members after a probationary period. Landlords who took part in the Resistance and had reeducated themselves through labor may be admitted at the same time as rich peasants. Other landlords can be admitted as probationary members after the coop has admitted a number of rich peasants.

Article 6. Rights of members: To discuss, put forth criticism and suggestions and vote on the work of the cooperative, to elect and stand for election of the leading bodies of the cooperative and participate in the control over the activities of the managing board. To engage in family side-line occupations on condition that these do not hamper work in the cooperative.

Article 7. Co-op members may withdraw from the co-operative but only after harvest time. They must notify their decision in advance. Members withdrawing may take out their own means of production, their share in money and any money lent to the co-operative, but they may not ask for a share in the common funds and other properties of the co-operative.

Article 9. Private plots: Every family is to be given a plot of land which must not exceed per head 5% of the per capita share of land in the commune (higher in mountain regions)

Article 10. Rent: Every year, the co-operative is to put aside 25-30% of the annual output of lands which have been brought into the co-op by members to pay rent. (followed by a list of special cases)

Article 12. Lands left to pagodas or churches after the land reform shall continue to be used by them.

Article 17. The co-op members must buy production shares to cover production expenses. Co-op members too poor to pay for their shares who cannot borrow from other people may borrow from credit co-operatives or from the State bank.

Ten years later, in 1969, a statute governing high-level Agricultural Production Cooperatives appeared. The major distinction between this and the 1959 law is that rent for land has been eliminated, and all means of production are owned collectively.

B. Institutional Arrangements.

The government learned from the mistakes of land reform: Party and government organs at the central, provincial and village levels were responsible for directing the co-operativization movement. No outside cadres were sent into the village as in the land reform; Party cells and village administrative councils were responsible for founding coops. Committees for Rural Affairs were set up
at the national and provincial level, but unlike the Land Reform Committees, they never had an executive function. They were advisory and co-ordinating organs.

C. Program objectives.

The principal motivations for launching the campaign were apparently ideological and economic. On the one hand, there was the model of other socialist countries, especially China, who had already begun co-operativization—indeed they were launching communes as North Vietnam took the decision to accelerate co-operativization, and some of the enthusiasm of the beginning of the "Great Leap Forward" may have affected the North Vietnamese. Equally important, however, is the fact that under French rule private ownership had developed into a situation of appalling oppression of the poor on the one hand and peasant revolutionary ferment on the other. As a process of reconsolidation began right after the land reform, North Vietnamese leaders had visions of the old, hated system reemerging in a few years.

A few years would be enough for social classes to appear again, as well as the differentiation between those who have land and those who have not. The former would try to enlarge their property, would again practise usury and collect rents and would become in time a new class of landowners. But...poor peasants... would not let themselves be exploited and oppressed as before, because they had participated in nine years of war. One would witness an acute class struggle in the countryside, and the central power would have to intervene in favour of one side or the other. The precedent of the Indian government ordering troops to open fire on peasants in Telangana shows that this is by no means a speculation of the mind.

Co-operativization also aimed at increasing production:

The individual small peasant had not the necessary labour force to build waterworks of any importance, and no one wanted a canal or a dike to run across his tiny plot of land. Only collective farming could give water conservancy the necessary push, and consequently increase production rapidly, by getting more crops each year and higher yields.

D. Implementation.

Implementation was radically different than that of land reform. Although there was a great deal of social and political pressure on peasants to join cooperatives, there was no official coerision like the confiscation and the Special Tribunals of the Vietnamese land reform or the coercion of Soviet collectivization of 1928-1930. The program was implemented by village cadres and
Party members (again unlike North Vietnamese land reform and Soviet collectivization) it was gradual, taking place in 2 stages over several years.

As early as 1955 pilot co-operatives had been set up, and towards the middle of 1958 there were 134 co-ops scattered in different regions. Pilot co-ops were set up in Thanh Hoa province in autumn 1958, and in 1958 a national conference on mutual aid teams and co-ops was called at Thanh-Hoa. The beginning of the campaign (end 1958-beginning 1959) was thus based on a certain amount of concrete experience. Voluntary joining of the co-operatives was supposed to be supported by three main conditions:

- A nucleus of a mutual aid team which had been working well.
- Good ideological preparation among the peasants, so that they themselves demanded the creation of co-ops.
- Good leading cadres.

At first there were only a few volunteers for the co-ops, and the first year was very difficult. Peasants in co-ops got less than individual peasants. By the second year, however, co-ops were up to the level of individual peasants and soon they were benefiting from increased irrigation and other benefits the state provided. At the same time, the free market was limited. The percentage of peasant families in co-ops increased from 8% in April 1959 to 85% in early 1961. That year the transition to lower-level co-ops was declared completed in the main. A movement to emulate the Dai Phong Co-op was launched as a first co-op improvement campaign. This seemed mainly aimed at the young people, urging them to go clear virgin lands in the mountains and invent improved agricultural machinery. A Campaign with more serious implications for Co-op management was begun in 1963: "Improvement of management". At the beginning of this movement, the management committee and the Party cell had to draw up a detailed balance sheet of the past three years, and cadres sent by the provincial administration checked into the local situation. Criticism of cadres by Co-op members was urged, and cadres were taken to task for such faults as not engaging in field work.
The transition from lower level co-operatives to higher-level ones was achieved by gradually reducing the share of production paid in rent. For example, in Thai Binh province, in 1959 30% of the co-op income was paid in rent, by 1962 this had been reduced to 0.3%, which went to households who lack labor. In 1960 only 12% of peasant households were in higher level co-operatives, this went up to 45.5% in 1964, 71.7% in 1965, 85.5% in 1966 and 94.6% by the end of 1968.

Colonization: In the historical Vietnamese pattern of expansion, sponsored settlement was an established pattern. Overpopulated villagers would send out a group of colonists to unsettled territory and help support them until they became self sufficient. Overpopulated co-operatives revived this pattern, and it received government encouragement.

Consolidation: This began in 1963 (presumably because by that date there were a significant number of higher level co-ops): soil was levelled, old dikes replaced with new ones that follow the level of the ground rather than the old property boundaries. This facilitates irrigation and drainage. The fields are then divided into squares by straight dikes so as to make work easier.

F. Supplementary Measures:

Most co-ops now have their own technical-scientific groups and their own experimental fields. These groups study the pH of the soil, the selection of seeds, fighting insects and plant diseases. There are several agricultural magazines subscribed to by many village co-op members, and newspapers often carry articles on agricultural problems. Education at rural schools is oriented to agricultural needs. Co-ops devote some funds to supporting young members at secondary schools of agriculture; even if it means some temporary sacrifice, the co-ops think it will pay off in the long run.

Crop procurement and Marketing.

Co-ops are obliged to sell the state fixed amounts of grain at fixed prices over a set period of time. By the end of 1960, the State Trade Agency and the buying
and selling cooperatives had gained control of 80% of the retail trade. Cooperativization was accompanied by a decrease in the free market of farm products, and the peasants now sell the greater part of their produce to the State Trade Agency. The form of "purchase by contract" rather than compulsory delivery is being used more and more: at the beginning of the growing season, the state sets production quota, discusses the delivery quotas with the peasants and the aid to be given them (supply of seeds, funds, means of production, food, technical assistance). A contract specifies the commitments of the state, the quantities of products to be delivered by the peasants and the price agreed upon. This is aimed at helping increase production and consolidate the cooperatives.
VI The Effects of Cooperativization.

A. On Land Tenure Structure.

Each phase of cooperativization, lower-level cooperatives and higher-level cooperatives, entailed a change in land tenure structure. In lower-level cooperatives, land was pooled and farmed in common, but individual land ownership was not eliminated, and land owners received rent for the land they had contributed to the cooperative. The amount of rent was reduced and the size of the cooperative expanded to arrive at a higher-level cooperative. In higher-level cooperatives, individual ownership was eliminated, and land owned by the collective.

Cooperatives are intended to change the method of farming from family exploitation of a small property to the more "modern" form of more or less specialized production teams working what is essentially a large farm.

In the last few years, however, a reversion to the old farm management methods has emerged within the socialist cooperatives: a system of "contracting out" land and jobs to cooperative members. Since this system seems to be correlated with high productivity, there is a debate over agricultural policy now going on between those who stress socialism and those who stress production.

B. Production and Productivity.

As was noted in section IV B above, there are some doubts about the reliability of North Vietnamese agricultural production figures. Kaye expressed the belief that figures for 1958-61 were probably inflated.

In a report to the National Assembly in 1964, Pham Van Dong, the Premier, reviewed the progress in the agricultural sector in the last few years. He noted that although the acreage of crop land had been increased substantially, the amount of secondary crops increased rapidly and animal husbandry was on the upgrade, crop yield had increased little. He projected: "On the basis of present outstanding examples it is estimated that in the delta notably the yearly rice yield can be
raised to as much as 5 tons per hectare. (for 2 harvests) At present in many
provinces, the annual average yield per hectare is over 4 tons.\textsuperscript{18} To raise
production, he recommended investing more labor per unit of land and speed-up of
irrigation to eliminate the problems of drought and water-logging.

North Vietnamese authors claim that even under the difficult conditions of
heavy bombing from 1965 to 1968 production increased. In 1965, the campaign for
"5 tons per hectare" (with double cropping) was launched. In 1965 680 cooperatives,
7 districts, 162 communes had attained this objective; in 1966 a whole province
attained the goal of 5 tons, while 69 cooperatives attained 6 tons per hectare
and 4 cooperatives even attained 7 tons. This high rate of increase, claims
this source, continued in 1967. Even granting that people may be motivated to work
much harder under emergency conditions in which the nation is being attacked, it
seems unlikely that such dramatic increases in production could be achieved under
such difficult conditions.

If the problem of low yields described by Pham Van Dong in 1964 is examined,
it seems to have three major causes. One is the lack of capital for improving
the agricultural sector with fertilizer, machines, etc. Another is what Rene
Dumont has described as the "law of diminishing returns": after a certain level
of production, more work and more means of production are needed to produce the same
increase of production. In the 50s North Vietnam was recovering from years of war.
The large increases registered then reflected not only peasant enthusiasm over working
his own land, but recovery from the war and the transition from a regime that
extracted the maximum possible from the agricultural sector to one that invested
in agriculture. Finally, production problems reflected problems in cooperative
management. Such problems as corrupt or dictatorial cadres or incompetent accountants
could have a very bad effect on the management, morale and production of a cooperative.
The relationship between productivity and cooperativization has been a central question in the debate over cooperativization that has been going on for many years now in North Vietnam. Le Duan and Truong Chinh are considered the leaders of factions which disagree over this as well as other issues. I think it fair to say that the debate regards the timing and methods, rather than the desirability, of cooperativization. Le Duan stresses that coops must be made more productive than individual farming for peasants to join them, and that there must be consumer goods available for them as incentive for hard work. Truong Chinh's position is that since in the long run production, and thus the peasant's standard of living, can only be raised through cooperativization and industrialization, ideological methods must be used to convince the peasants of the necessity of delayed gratification. Both men are concerned with increasing production, but the "pragmatic" man is most concerned with short-term considerations, the "ideologue" with long-term ones.

A frequently encountered blanket condemnation of the concept of cooperatives is the argument that since people are primarily motivated by private gain, the best way to increase production is to give farmers a private plot to work. But private gain is not only or necessarily derived from private ownership. For example, an industrial wage earner with job security may have a higher standard of living and more peace of mind than a small owner-operator farmer in constant danger of losing what he has. North Vietnamese writers maintain that job security is the great social advantage of the cooperative system. Incentive to work derives from the "piece work" system in cooperatives of work points according to the difficulty of the task.

Furthermore, motivation per se is of marginal importance in increasing production. The key factors in increasing production are various forms of investment in the agricultural sector (agricultural experimentation and extension services), and capital investment in fertilizer, improved seed, irrigation, drainage, insecticide, etc.
The high yield of the American farm, for example, is not achieved by highly motivated farmers cultivating small plots, but by large-scale, capital intensive farming with the use of agricultural laborers. Despite the fact that American agricultural laborers do not have the motivation of private land ownership, their productivity is extremely high.

One factor in increasing production is entrepreneurial initiative, willingness to experiment and take risks. Although cooperatives have experimental plots and cadres encourage the use of new agricultural techniques, few farmers with only 1/2 hectare to feed the family would dare take many risks, or set aside an experimental plot, or have the funds for improving the land? In North Vietnam the existence of larger farms of a more economically viable size would create great social problems.

C. Rural Employment and underemployment

Until recently, when the situation changed because of the war, North Vietnam had a major problem of surplus manpower in the countryside. Pham Van Dong reported in 1964 that "in general we have not made full use of the people's labouring power, especially in the towns and in densely populated delta regions; meanwhile, in the midland and highland regions, the lack of labor is greatly felt."
D. Income Distribution

The most significant achievement of co-operativization has been to provide the peasant with security. Co-operatives which do not produce enough to provide their basic alimentary needs receive a subsidy from the state. Indigent members of a co-operative are given food supplies by the co-op.\(^{21}\)

Pham Van Dong reported in 1964 that co-op's members income in kind and in money had increased in all regions.\(^{22}\)

Peasant income is derived from two sources:

- Cooperative work, which provides the staple food
- Family work, which brings in most of the cash income, besides farm products to improve the diet.

As a Vietnamese study points out, one cannot deduce from the fact that family work brings in the most cash that the peasant would be better off in an individual-ownership economy.

Without the cooperative, the "race for rice" would make it impossible for him to cultivate his garden, raise pigs and poultry, and he would be at the mercy of speculators and usurers.\(^{23}\)

If low prices for state purchase of food from the commune and the small amount of individually farmed land put a ceiling on the income a peasant can achieve, the co-operative, aided by the state, also puts a floor to his income by assuring subsistence.

E. Improved quality of life in the countryside

The government has made major efforts to improve health and education in the villages. Health measures have concentrated on preventive medicine and training medical auxiliaries. Each co-operative has a health committee and a village medical post with a nurse and maternity unit. Hygienic septic tanks and brick lined wells have been built in most villages. In 1955, there was 1 doctor per 150,000 inhabitants and 1 health officer per 80,000. In 1965 there was 1 doctor per 8,700 inhabitants and 1 health officer per 1,850. Large numbers of medical auxiliaries were given training in the most frequent diseases in the villages.
As a result of this training, the delicate operation for entropion (caused by trachoma), which in 1959 could only be performed in Hanoi (and there were hundreds of thousands of cases of trachoma) was mastered by medical auxiliaries, and now the operation is done on the village level.  

Almost all villages have their own schools and infant classes.

In place of traditional fatalism before the hardships of life and natural disasters, a rational-scientific attitude has been introduced into the villages. Whereas both the traditional and French systems took from the villages without giving anything more in return than the dikes and hydraulic works essential to production, the DRV provides the villages with aid and guidance in establishing social services. The standard of living is still low, the country and people are poor, but by devoting serious efforts and part of its meager resources to the problem of improving village life, the government has achieved results far beyond those that the most careful French student of the Vietnamese peasant thought possible:

It does not seem possible to improve the lot of the Tonkinene peasants; the excessive population is an evil for which no remedy can be found.

Above all, one must take care not to damage the peasant's moral and social stability—this body of traditions and customs that allow him to endure a miserable lot. In this overpopulated country where the land can't give much more to the peasants than it does now, it is not to be hoped that material welfare may reign some day . . . . Only traditional civilization . . . can give a hopelessly wretched people the share of happiness to which they are entitled; outside of this, there would only be chaos and despair.  

When Gourou wrote this pessimistic evaluation, the population density in the Tonkin delta was 400, persons per square kilometer; it is now 700. This is thus a dramatic example of the crucial importance of political will in achieving improvement in rural conditions,
VII. Critique and evaluation.

1. Land reform. Land reform in North Vietnam was essentially a political process. Every possible means was taken to deprive landlords of economic, social and political power. Poor peasants were encouraged to take an active political role and to accuse landlords. The land reform cadre was to be the catalyst in this political process of the stripping of power from landlords by poor peasants.

Non-Communist or non-revolutionary land reform generally aims at changing land ownership patterns without directly attacking existing power relationships. However, when a new law is made on a matter of such pressing economic interest to concerned parties, if no change occurs in power relations, the group with power and wealth is usually able to defend its interests against an inimical law. Tactics can include stalling, bribery of administering officials, and legal evasion. According to the study done by Stanford Research Institute of the effects of the land reform enacted under Diem's administration in South Vietnam, landlords were able to evade the law in such ways as postponing declaration of excess land and signing land over to relatives. A similar process has been reported as undermining land reform in India.

North Vietnamese land reform was more successful than the land reforms in India or South Vietnam in achieving the aim of taking land from landlords and getting it to the working peasants. However, it is clear that there were heavy costs in implementation of land reform in North Vietnam. Many people were imprisoned or executed. Excuses in the implementation of the land reform caused political unrest. The regime seems to have exaggerated the strength of the landlords and as a result overattacked. But perhaps most importantly, the regime does not appear to have taken into account the fact that in the very overpopulated delta, the poor peasants, encouraged to take power, would not observe the legal provisions distinguishing between patriotic landlords and cruel or traitorous landlords or between landlords and rich or middle peasants.
As in South Vietnam, the way land reform was carried out in North Vietnam was as much or more affected by political realities as by the text of the law. Poor peasants, encouraged to step forward and become politically active, acted in terms of their own interest, which was to find many landlords, so that they would have enough land to distribute. In sum, land reform is a law plus the political power balance: if the landlords have the power they can distort the law in their favor; if the poor peasants are given power they can distort the law in their own favor.

In a recent article on Maoist economic policies, English sinologist Jack Grey makes an observation which I feel applies to the evaluation of North Vietnamese cooperativization as well as to China.

Western views of what collectivism is and how it works are, of course, based on the depressing history of Soviet collective agriculture in the Soviet Union itself and in the East European Communist countries...

In the story of the failure of Soviet-type agriculture, the mere fact of collective organization is probably the least of it. Uneconomic levels of procurement, starvation of capital, starvation of talent, lack of consumer goods, direction from outside by an urban based and urban-biased Party—almost any one of these factors is enough to account for the stagnation of agriculture.

Western observers tend to generalize about Communist countries in a way that they would never apply to non-Communist nations. For example, the U.S., West Germany, France, the Philippines and South Vietnam all belong to the "Free World" and all have an office of President, but the power of this office and its role in the national system varies greatly from country to country. Similarly, the Soviet Union, Hungary, China and North Vietnam are all Communist countries and have cooperatives, but their characteristics vary from country to country. For example, whereas in China and North Vietnam cooperatives are run by peasant cadres, in the Soviet Union they are run by urban bureaucrats and technicians. In China and North Vietnam it is expected that agricultural procurement prices should cover production costs and give a profit. Mao is very critical of Soviet procurement policies; he has characterized them as counter-productive, "draining the pond to catch the fish".

Cooperatives are a socio-economic organization designed to keep people
employed in agriculture and provided with the most basic human needs until the industrial and urban sector has grown up enough to provide alternative employment. The cooperative has some of the characteristics of the traditional Vietnamese commune. The cooperative provides basic social security, making sure that everyone in the village has food and housing, even though it may be at a very low standard of living. Inequality of wealth is minimized, and thus the major cause of agrarian unrest is removed.

This system does have serious faults. A great deal depends on the intelligence, diligence, honesty and political skills of the managers of the cooperative. A bad accountant, a corrupt official, a bossy cadre, all can seriously harm the morale of cooperative members, and make them unenthusiastic workers, as well as adversely affecting the standard of living of the coop. But, as I have tried to point out, other systems of landholding also have disadvantages. Small, egalitarian private landholdings tend to be uneconomic and unstable. Large private landholdings cause severe social dislocations in over-populated, non-industrialized countries.

The change from traditional to modern methods of agriculture can cause grave social problems, especially where there is only a very small industrial sector to absorb ex-agricultural labor. In India, the advent of the "green revolution" has been accompanied by landlords getting richer and small peasants and tenants losing their land or use of land. The result of this is a swelling of the poor population of the cities and growing agrarian unrest.
Footnotes.

Section I. Pages 1-4.


Footnotes

Section II, p. 5-21


2. Ibid., p. 25. Section on Paul Doumer is pp 12-43.

3. Ibid., p. 32.


7. Ibid.


11. For an account of the French repression, see Buttinger, op cit, pp. 218-220.


14. Both works cited above.


20. Ibid., p. 375.

Footnotes

Section II, continued.


34. Gourou, Land Utilization, Op Cit.

35. Ibid, p. 77.

36. Goudal, op cit p. 188.

37. Henry, op cit, p. 44.

38. Goudal, op cit, p. 204.


42. Ibid., p. 658.

43. Ibid., p. 659.

44. Gourou, Land Utilization, Op Cit, p. 322.

Footnotes

Section II, continued.


52. Ibid., p.6.


54. Ibid., p 200-201.


57. Ibid., p. 215.

58. Ibid., p. 208-211.

59. Ibid., p. 204.


66. Ibid., p. 37.
Footnotes, section III A. Pages 22-30.


4. Ibid.


13. Doan Trong Truyen and Pham Thanh Vinh, Op. Cit., p. 29. This source also gives the tax rates. There were 40 categories, ranging from the exempt category of less than 60 kg. per person and the lowest tax bracket of 6% on families producing 61-75 kg. per person to a 45% tax on families with an income of over 1,796 kg. of paddy per person.


15. The former argument was one of the reasons given by the Vietminh for beginning land reform in 1953 (see section III C). The latter is a description of the problems encountered in mobilizing peasant support for land reform in 1953, according to Tran Phuong, Op. Cit., p. 86.


Footnotes, section III A continued and III B.

25. Ibid., p. 190.

Section III B. Pages 31-33.
3. "Lay Ruong cue a? Chia Ruong cho a?" Published by Ban Lien Lac Nong Dau Toan Quoc (National Farmers' Liaison Committee), 1954. Translated into English: "From whom are the lands taken? To whom are the lands given?" in Planning for Land Reform; Pamphlets and articles in translation. Honolulu: Research translations, Institute of Advanced Projects, East-West Center, 1967, p. 59. After the passage of the land reform law, there was a tendency of landed peasants and landlords to just plant enough for their own use.
4. Ibid.
Section III C. Pages 34-36.


2. "From whom are the lands taken? To whom are the lands given?", Op. Cit., p. 45.


9. Hoang Van Chi, p. 194.

10. Ibid., p. 221-222.

11. Ibid., p. 225.

Footnotes to section III, continued

Section III D.

1. Le Chau, p. 133.


5. Gittinger, Op. Cit., p. 120.


7. Time, July 1, 1957, p. 13. cited Ibid. Gittinger's figures may be low according to another source the release of 20,000 prisoners was announced in the press. Mende, Op. Cit., p. 941.

8. Gittinger, Op. Cit., p. 120.


21. Nhan Dan, 26 August 1958. Chaliand used these figures, p.41, so they were probably still considered authoritative in North Vietnam in 1967.

Footnotes to section III, continued.


Footnote section III E.


Footnote section III F.

26. Ibid., p. 268.


Footnote section III H.


Footnotes, section IV


8. Ibid.

9. Ibid.


Footnotes, Section V.

2. text of this law available in Agricultural Problems, Vietnamese Studies #2. 1964, pp 165-177.
5. Vietnamese Studies #2, op cit, p. 125.
8. Vietnamese Studies #2, p. 23.
13. Ibid., p. 32.
15. Vietnamese studies #13, p130-154.
21. Many examples of this in Chaliand, Op. Cit
23. Vietnamese Studies, #13,p. 112.
24. Chaliand, op. cit., p. 50-51. Also, Vietnamese studies #6: Health organizations in the DRV.
25. Gourou, in Peasants of the Tonkin Delta, op cit
Footnotes, Section VII.


3. Ibid., p. 135.


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