Staff of the Vietnamese Army. Prime Minister Ngo Dinh Diem appointed to this post one of his supporters, General Le van Ty.

Early in 1955, the sects openly rebelled against Prime Minister Ngo Dinh Diem, and announced that they would unite to form a new anti-communist government. They presented the Prime Minister with a series of ultimatums, demanding that he reshuffle his cabinet or step down from the government. Clashes between the rebel forces and those of the Vietnamese Army broke out in several areas. In April and May, a brief but bloody struggle devastated part of Saigon, and brought the State of Vietnam to the verge of civil war. The troops of the dissident Binh Xuyen and Hoa Hao groups established roadblocks to the west of the city, held key strong points within the city, and attacked governmental positions. A whole quarter of houses, including a refugee camp, went up in flames. As heavy fighting raged in Saigon, Chief of State Bao Dai summoned Prime Minister Ngo Dinh Diem to a conference in France, and delegated his military powers to General Nguyen Van Vy, Inspector-General of the Vietnamese Army. Backed by the United States, the Prime Minister rejected the Chief of State's orders, and decided to use strong countermeasures against the dissident groups. The Binh Xuyen and Hoa Hao units were finally defeated by the Vietnamese Army, which remained loyal to the Prime Minister. Then, Ngo Dinh Diem succeeded in dividing and eliminating the politico-religious sects from the political scene. Many dissident generals and their troops were induced to rally to the national cause, while others were captured or killed. By the spring of 1956, the sects ceased to be important politico-military forces in the State of Vietnam.

As the situation became relatively calm and stable, the government gave increasing attention to eradicating the communist danger. In this respect, William Henderson says as follows:

... All the techniques of political and psychological warfare, as well as pacification campaigns involving extensive military operations, have been brought to bear against the underground. Some of the methods employed, such as anti-Communist denunciation rallies and self-criticism meetings, smack of practices which the Communists themselves perfected long ago, and it is clear that the usual democratic safeguards have not always been upheld. The consensus is that this all-out effort has been reasonably effective.135

An elaborate system of propaganda and control has been set up in the rural areas. It is essentially a cell organization whose lowest unit is composed of the representatives of five families. Each representative assumes the responsibility of performing one particular function—such as, education, security, tax collection, and the like. He reports on his work to a higher unit, which has its own agents to supervise him. It seems that the anti-communist techniques mentioned above have enabled the government to extend its authority over the areas formerly subject to the Viet Minh.

Other achievements of the government include the evacuation of French forces from the country, the release of French advisers and other personnel, the withdrawal of the Vietnamese representation from the High Council of the French Union, and the establishment of the Vietnamese national bank. The training of the Vietnamese Army, formerly administered by the French, has been turned over entirely to the United States. Direct contacts have been made with the outside world regarding trade, cultural activities, and diplomatic representation. Steps have also been taken toward rehabilitating the war-devastated economy, and inflation seems to have been brought under control.

A popular referendum in October 1955 changed the constitutional structure of the government, as it resulted in the deposition of Chief of State Bao Dai and the establishment of a Republic with Ngo Dinh Diem as first President. On March 4, 1956, the Vietnamese within the Republic went to the polls to choose a Constituent Assembly. Commenting on those elections, William Henderson says:

... The Elections of March 4, 1956, have been widely criticized, and certainly many of the practices employed by the government were highly questionable. The whole weight of government support, including its efficient propaganda machine, was thrown behind officially sponsored candidates. Many individual candidacies repugnant to the government were terminated under official pressure. The press remained closely muzzled during the brief campaign period, and opportunities for public rallies and speech-making, especially on the part of non-government candidates, were severely restricted.136

At any rate, a Constituent Assembly was chosen, which drafted a Constitution providing for wide Presidential powers with less emphasis on the Legislature. In July, the draft was submitted to

136 Ibid., p. 292.
President Ngo Dinh Diem, who proposed several modifications to the text, most of which were adopted by the Assembly. The modified document was then resubmitted to the President for final approval and promulgation. On October 26, 1956, it was proclaimed the supreme law of the land.\textsuperscript{137} Ngo Dinh Diem continues as President for a five-year term, while the Constituent Assembly is now the regular Legislature.

At the present time, the government of the Republic of Vietnam appears popular and strong. It is increasingly active in elaborating and implementing programs of economic and social reconstruction, which it is hoped will give the Vietnamese people a higher standard of living. Funds are being provided to farmers to buy farm tools, fertilizers, paddy seeds, and draft cattle. Mechanical plows are being used in experimental preparation for rice cultivation. Land reforms have been adopted to redistribute abandoned land, reduce rents, and promote farmers' cooperatives and agricultural credit agencies. As will be discussed in the next chapter, many new schools have been opened to cope with the ever-growing school population.

During its years of trial, the Republic of Vietnam has received vital help from friendly nations. The United States, in particular, has put forth tremendous efforts to reconstruct the war-devastated Republic and to save it from falling into communist hands. American economic and military aid has been pouring into Vietnam since 1950. Several thousands of refugees from North Vietnam were evacuated by the United States Navy, which took care of them efficiently and devotedly. Together with the International Rescue Committee, the Menonite Central Committee, Church World Services, etc., the United States' Operations Mission helped the Vietnamese government resettle more than 850,000 North Vietnamese in nearly three hundred new villages, extending from the 17th Parallel to the southern-most areas. The International Cooperation Administration in the Republic of Vietnam has made great contributions to the improvement of health and sanitation, education and information, public services, and the like, throughout the country. The United States Military Assistance Advisory Group

is helping to organize, train, and equip the Vietnamese Army consisting of about 150,000 men. The total amount of money allotted to the various American aid programs for Vietnam was 533,700,000 American dollars in the fiscal year 1956.138

In brief, through its own efforts and with the help of friendly nations—particularly, of the United States—the Republic of Vietnam has made marked progress toward consolidating its internal and international position. The government of Ngo Dinh Diem has been able to stabilize the military and political situation in the country. A Western-inspired constitution has been adopted, and a full-fledged army formed and equipped with modern weapons. Significant progress has been made in the carrying out of programs of economic and social reconstruction. Normal commercial and political relationships with the outside world have been broadened. The indefinite postponement of the July 1956 election by Great Britain and the Soviet Union, co-chairmen of the Geneva Conference, can be considered as a great victory of the Republic of Vietnam. In other words, this young Republic has proved itself, and is likely to remain a free nation in the foreseeable future.

Much remains to be done, however, in order that the Republic of Vietnam may stand on its own feet among the democratic nations, and stem the advance of communism from the north. Its economic and social upheaval, resulting from a long war and several sudden crises, demands that the government cope with it continuously and effectively. Among other things, the Vietnamese people aspire for peace and security, for a better standard of living, and for more education as well. Unless the government can successfully meet these fundamental demands, it may in the long run prove to be a failure, in spite of its achievements of political stability and constitutional consolidation. Furthermore, governmental control over legal political activities must be gradually loosened and then terminated. In this connection, William Henderson says:

...There is no significant legal political opposition in South Vietnam today, and probably none would be tolerated. The chief figures in the regime have little comprehension of the indispensable function of a loyal opposition in a democratic political system. Thus the

138 Data related to the various American aid programs to Vietnam are taken mainly from A Symposium On America's Stake in Vietnam, American Friends of Vietnam, 62 West 45th Street, New York 36, New York, September, 1956.
honest oppositionist is left with no alternatives but clandestine activity or political quietism.\textsuperscript{139}

It is also imperative that freedom of the press, which is practically nonexistent, be completely restored so as to provide the people with an essential medium of thought communication and education. Finally, it is hoped that other arbitrary measures have been taken only because of an emergency situation, and that a truly democratic regime will be established in permanence.

\textsuperscript{139} Henderson, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 293.
CHAPTER XI

CONCLUSION

Education in Present-day Vietnam

Since 1945, education in Vietnam has been undergoing a period of tremendous activity, stimulated as it has been by the spirit of independence and the newly restored awareness of national identity. The Vietnamese people are anxious to be independent. But independence would be incomplete without eradicating illiteracy, which is considered as a legacy of the French colonial regime. There is a feverish effort to eliminate ignorance and acquire knowledge. The right to education has been repeatedly proclaimed, new schools have been opened, and the whole population has been urged to cooperate with the government in its struggle against illiteracy and for a wider diffusion of knowledge to all people.

Under the impact of national and international events, the outlook of the Vietnamese educator has been broadened to include new educational concepts. Thus, the new philosophy of education recognizes that

... modern education must respect the freedom and rights of children and that each must be helped develop to maximum capacity in keeping with his native ability. The teacher must not direct but must guide and advice the pupils and encourage them to participate in their own education.140

It seems that the individual and his abilities rather than the school system and its pre-arranged programs are given priority in the Vietnamese educator's thoughts. The teacher is conceived not as a master in his classroom, but a guide and advisor, which is somewhat revolutionary in Vietnam. The aims of education are also quite modernistic and possibly influenced by the concepts adopted in the United States. Indeed, education is aimed at teaching the children

... to observe, seek, think, compare and judge, develop initiative, and a spirit of organization and a sense of command. They must develop the necessary qualities of a good citizen. They must be

trained to face difficulties and overcome obstacles. They must
develop a versatile mind able to express differences and adapt itself
to daily requirements of life. They must be given physical training
to strengthen their bodies. The new school must be an action school
where all methods used include pupil participation.\textsuperscript{141}

While the educational philosophy and aims can be considered
basically adequate for the training of a democratic citizenry, a
survey of present-day education in Vietnam is needed to show the
actual achievements in this field of human endeavor.

\textit{Primary education}.—Involving a five-year studies cycle, it is
offered to children of both sexes at about the age of six. Primary
schools include the complete cycle, while communal schools usually
offer the first three courses. The language of instruction is
Vietnamese. Upon completion of primary studies, a certificate is
awarded, usually at the age of eleven years.

Despite the rather considerable financial support given by
regional and national authorities,\textsuperscript{142} there are not enough schools
for all school-age children. To remedy the situation, intensive
primary courses are offered in communities without a primary
school or communal school. These short courses are open to
pupils from six to eighteen years of age who can neither read nor
write. There is one section for beginners and another one for
those children who have completed the first section or have other­
wise learned to read and write. The time spent in each section is
four months and a half. Upon completion of the intensive courses,
pupils may be admitted to a public primary school to further their
education. It is obvious that the intensive primary courses are less
expensive than the regular primary schools since they take much
less time for completion. Furthermore, they are housed in pagodas,
temples, communal houses, or even in rooms rented from indi­
viduals. Teachers receive a nominal salary and, in many cases,
there are volunteers who teach without pay.

The struggle against illiteracy is not only aimed at teaching
school-age children, but also at giving a basic knowledge to adults
who do not know how to read and write. Adult courses are open

\textsuperscript{141} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 7.
\textsuperscript{142} For the school-year 1955-1956, public expenditures on popular and
primary education amounted to 157,001,000 Vietnamese piastres. The entire
school budget allowed by the government for the same year totaled 402,912,100
Vietnamese piastres.
to persons of both sexes, whose age is eighteen years or over. These courses are operated throughout the Republic of Vietnam. The time spent is four months divided into two courses of two months each.

The primary school program of studies includes the classical subjects—such as, Vietnamese, history, geography, arithmetic, drawing, and the like. There is much attention given to lessons on morals, which consist of interdictions, precepts, maxims, and sayings; examples are taken on the spot, and stories of great men of Vietnam are explained. The moral education program is aimed at imparting to the pupils "basic virtues such as national spirit, feeling for humanity, of universal love (or Buddhist brotherhood), a spirit of union, a spirit of sacrifice to the national Just Cause." Not only lessons on morals are given, but the teacher must also

... constantly watch and control the acts and behavior of his pupils to prevent them from going astray of the line of conduct which has been prescribed for them. He must help them to acquire good habits and prevent them from acquiring bad ones. He must arouse their enthusiasm and a spirit of decision to assist them in all grave circumstances of life.

Closely related to moral education is civic instruction, whose aim is "to give the pupil solid concepts about the nation, to make him acquire the civic virtues by preventing him from developing bad habits which would make him a bad citizen, to correct erroneous ideas widely prevalent in the masses, to teach respect for the interests of one and all." The teacher is required to set up concrete examples in school life and then come to broad generalizations.

One of the most significant aspects of present-day education in Vietnam is the establishment of autonomous school groups, which are somewhat similar to the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. Each group, led by the teacher, is divided into autonomous subgroups, whose members share in the various school and classroom activities.

Another important aspect is the formation of class meetings aimed at changing the school atmosphere by organizing classes into youth

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144 Lavergne and Adams, Jr., *op. cit.*, p. 39.
145 Ibid.
146 Ibid., p. 41.
associations. In these class meetings, students are taught first aid, observation, educational games, and the like, which normally cannot be offered in a regular class. In addition, there are instructional walks and camping, during which observation exercises, documentation, and entertainment are learned.

Physical training is given much attention, but there is no emphasis on sports, as the aim of physical training is "not to transform our pupils into young athletes, but to keep them in good health and to develop their physical suppleness and agility."\textsuperscript{147} To this end, games necessitating an excessive use of strength are avoided.

Secondary education.- The present secondary education system includes seven years of studies. The first four years offer the

\textsuperscript{147} Ibid., p. 65.
student the essential knowledge that will enable him to follow the program of secondary education up to the baccalaureate. Should he be above the normal school age at the end of the fourth class, he will be qualified to enter a vocational or technical school. A single final examination will be given at the end of the first four years, and a certificate of completion will be delivered to successful students.

The last three years of secondary education are devoted to the various specialized subjects which are required for higher learning. These studies will lead to the Vietnamese Baccalaureate, which will be in two parts; the examinations for this diploma will be given at the end of the second and third years.

The various programs of studies\(^1\) include two sections. Section A "classical studies" stresses the study of Vietnamese and Chinese classical literature, whereas Section B "modern languages" gives intensive training in modern foreign languages. In both sections, other instructional courses are of the same general nature, consisting of such classical subjects as arithmetic, physics, chemistry, history, geography, natural sciences, and the like. In the last three years of secondary education, the programs provide for three sections: (A) classical studies, (B) modern languages, and (C) science section. At all levels of instruction, Vietnamese is the vehicle language, while French and English are taught as modern languages.

Higher education.—The Vietnamese higher education is still in its early stages. Up to the summer of 1955, there was the University of Hanoi with its annexes in Saigon. As discussed in previous chapters, it was a French institution of higher learning, whose general curriculum was similar to that of the University of Paris. Most professors graduated from French universities, and the language of instruction was French. There was started in Hanoi, in 1949 and 1950 respectively, a Vietnamese Faculty of Literature and a Secondary School Teachers College, in which teaching was conducted in the Vietnamese language.

In July 1954, the partition of Vietnam into two zones resulted in the disruption of the University of Hanoi, which was left under the control of the Viet Minh. Most professors and about eighty-five per cent of the student body moved to South Vietnam, where

\(^1\) The various programs of studies in the secondary school are tabulated in Lavergne and Sassani, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-13.
they laid the foundations for a Vietnamese university. It was not until the summer of 1955 that this institution of higher learning was fully organized. At the present time, the National University of Vietnam includes the Faculties of Education, Vietnamese Literature, Law, Sciences, and Medicine-Pharmacy-Odontontology, in which French is being replaced by Vietnamese as language of instruction. At the beginning of the school-year 1955-1956, there were 2,841 students of both sexes enrolled in these colleges. The student body has organized the National Students’ Union, whose main purpose is to improve student facilities and provide services relating to cultural and social activities, sports, information, and relations with other nations. About half the students at the National University are scholarship recipients. A few housing projects have been set up to accommodate students who do not live with their families or relatives in Saigon.

The various diplomas awarded by the National University are registered by the Department of National Education. They are
considered as being equivalent to similar diplomas conferred by institutions of higher learning in France and other countries.\textsuperscript{149}

\textit{Vocational and technical education.}—In the past four years, this branch of educational endeavor has been given a strong impetus, for it has been recognized that skilled workers and technicians are indispensable for the reconstruction of the country. The government of The Republic of Vietnam has opened a wide variety of technical schools. These include: Civil Aeronautics, Commerce, Agriculture, Marine Navigation, Medical Assistance, Public Works, and Radio Electricity. The Vietnamese Department of Labor has organized technical training courses in motor mechanics, electrical engineering, dressmaking and tailoring, cabinet making, as well as boot and shoe making. Efforts have been made by other governmental agencies to provide in-service training for their employees either in the country or abroad.

Since August 8, 1955, A National Institute of Public Administration has been functioning in Saigon. It replaces the former National School of Administration, which was established in April, 1952, in Dalat. The new Institute is aimed at training officials to run the whole administrative machinery in Vietnam. Courses dealing with principles of government, economics, and finance are offered. In addition, there are refresher courses for civil servants as well as evening basic courses for people from all walks of life. After three years of study, graduates from the Institute will be appointed to responsible posts in the government—such as, heads of service or chiefs of province.\textsuperscript{150}

Mention is to be made of the technical and vocational schools established under the French. Most of those located in South Vietnam have been expended as the result of government interest. They include the Vocational Schools of Hue and Saigon, the Schools of Applied Arts of Gia Dinh, Bien Hoa, and Thu Dau Mot, as well as the Apprenticeship Center in Saigon. After the partition of Vietnam in 1954, a few technical and vocational schools were moved

\textsuperscript{149} Facts relating to higher education in Vietnam are taken mainly from the current \textit{News from Vietnam}, a Weekly Publication by the Press and Information Office, Embassy of the Republic of Vietnam, Sheridan Circle, Washington, D.C.

from the north to the south. Such are the cases of the Industrial Technical School of Hanoi and the Vocational School of Haiphong. Finally, there is a number of training workshops and private vocational courses operating in Central Vietnam and South Vietnam. At the beginning of the school-year 1955-1956, there were 6,090 students enrolled in the seventy public and private vocational schools in the Republic of Vietnam.

The various technical training centers have been receiving American aid, which amounted to seven and a half million piastres—approximately, U.S. $215,000—for the academic year 1955-1956. Furthermore, the United States Operations Mission has made the necessary funds available for a “Participants Program” aimed at sending Vietnamese students abroad for technical and vocational training. During the last two years, several groups of physicians and nurses, Army and Air Force officers, and secondary school teachers received their in-service education in the United States. Other countries participating in the above program include France, Great Britain, Canada, and Switzerland.

Suggestions for Improving Education in Vietnam

The above survey indicates that the responsible authorities in Vietnam have made sincere efforts to innovate the educational system and spread knowledge among the population. The Vietnamese people have awakened to their right to education and have become aware of the fact that, in a democracy, anyone may and should participate in the government as well as contribute to national progress and peace.

Education in present-day Vietnam, however, is far from adequate, mainly because military and political events have hampered the development of the entire social program of the country. Many school reforms and educational innovations are still needed to enable Vietnam to keep pace with the world of today.

According to Daly C. Lavergne and Samuel C. Adams, Jr., Vietnam needs to:

1. build new schools and additional classrooms for existing schools,
2. train and employ additional teachers,
3. establish schools in communities not now served at all,
4. encourage private education as an auxiliary to supplement public education,
5. encourage the student clubs and associations,
6. and encourage parents to teach their own children if they cannot be admitted to public or private schools.\footnote{152}

To fight effectively against illiteracy, school facilities should be made available to each and every Vietnamese regardless of sex, age, and social status. At the present time, it is financially impossible to achieve this goal, but temporary measures could be taken. There should be two daily shifts of students for each classroom, from 8 a.m. to noon and from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. Educated people should be asked to teach not only their children but also their relatives and household employees. Neighborhood study groups and night classes for adults should be encouraged and, if necessary, subsidized by the government. Only then could Vietnam gradually eradicate illiteracy, extend mass education, and build up real democracy. Indeed, each and every Vietnamese must know how to read and write if he is to make the proper use of his democratic rights as well as to understand and appreciate a national spirit which will help him fulfill his duties towards his fatherland.

The second step in mass education is to help the people acquire basic ideas concerning sanitation, technical and scientific knowledge, politics, economics, and the like. In this atomic age, the people of Vietnam need to become acquainted with the various human endeavors and achievements so as to keep pace with the world. In this connection, mention is to be made of the Popular Politechnic Institute in Saigon and its two branches at \textit{Hue} and \textit{Dalat}.ootnote{153} Created in October 1954, the Institute is aimed at imparting technical and scientific knowledge to the masses as well as at raising their cultural standard. It has enlisted the services of a group of dedicated teachers and have annually trained some three thousand adults from all walks of life. Courses dealing with languages, techincis, sciences, politics, physical education, commerce, and the like, are offered; class periods are arranged so as to fit the daily

\footnote{152} Data taken from Lavergne and Adams, Jr., \textit{op. cit.}, p. 10.
\footnote{153} More details concerning this school can be obtained from Ly Trung Dung, “Popular Politechnic Institute,” \textit{The Times of Viet Nam}, January 21, 1956, p. 9.
work schedules of individual students and teachers. Such a school should be organized in all cities and towns of the Republic of Vietnam, under governmental sponsorship and with the help of private contributions in services and money.

Private schools have been playing an important role in educating a good number of school-age children. Indeed, at the beginning of the school year 1955-1956, there were 117,634 pupils enrolled in 701 private primary schools and 39,579 students studying in 116 private secondary schools. Although these institutions are run by private individuals, they are under the control of the Department of National Education of Vietnam. Since private education is a valuable auxiliary to public education, the Vietnamese government should encourage it by granting financial aid to those children and youths attending non-governmental schools. At least, tuition and textbooks should be taken care of by the communal, provincial, or national administration.

Just as more schools are needed to provide equal educational opportunity to all children and youths, Vietnam must overcome the shortage of teachers on all educational levels. This problem is somewhat acute in primary and secondary schools. For instance, at the beginning of the school year 1955-1956, there were only 9,105 primary-school teachers for 461,362 pupils, and 860 secondary-school teachers for 28,127 students. It is evident that, without an adequate increase in the teaching staff, the opening of new schools will be slowed down. Furthermore, the teacher's load is too heavy for him to assume responsibilities other than classroom duties. The government of the Republic of Vietnam should open more teachers' training centers as well as enlarge the Superior School of Pedagogy at the National University in Saigon.

Not only additional teachers should be trained and employed, but the preparation of teachers should also be revised. Needless to say, the teacher plays a dominant role in any educational institution, since it is through his work with students that all the steps taken to improve a school program will become effective—or ineffective—instruments of education. So far, the teaching staffs of Vietnam have been made up of teachers trained mainly in the academic subjects. This is due partly to the deep-rooted influence of traditional practices and partly to the lack of learning situations which would help the teacher realize and accept the broad role of youth education in a democracy. As a result, the Vietnamese teacher's
task generally begins and ends in the classroom, in spite of all the legislated innovations mentioned early in this chapter.

To achieve improved pre-service teacher training, it is important that all teachers have a general education which assures well-rounded, effective, and responsible living. Each and every prospective teacher must learn to understand the problems and conditions of our times and take positive constructive action in relation to them. He must exemplify in his own living the general qualities of a worthy citizen as well as of a worthy member of his family and community. It is only as a wholesome human being that he can make his teaching meaningful and functional. Secondly, the prospective teacher should have extended, continuous, and varied experiences with youth. This should be done not only through student teaching but also through some direct work with youth both in the school and in the community. The prospective teacher may engage in helping organize student clubs and associations, picnics and camps, and the like. Such activities probably afford a better understanding of youth than classroom teaching. Thirdly, the professional education of prospective teachers should be broadened to include courses in curriculum making, school administration, as well as guidance and counseling. So far, these areas have been neglected in Vietnam, since they have not been regarded as forming a part of the equipment of the classroom teacher. They are, however, very important because they afford a basic understanding of activities which obviously affect teaching to a great extent.

Not only should pre-service teacher training be improved, but school staffs should be provided with extended in-service educational opportunities so as to better the various school programs and to meet the changing needs of the Vietnamese youth. Both school administrators and teachers should work together in defining problems for in-service education and in developing plans for working on them. Varied and regularly scheduled activities should be provided to meet individual needs and foster professional growth. There should be opportunities for staff meetings, group and individual works on special projects, visits to other schools, travels, and the like. In this respect, the government of the Republic of Vietnam has made worthwhile efforts since it has set up summer courses for teachers, organized school conferences, and sent many groups of teachers and school administrators abroad for in-service
training. These activities, however, would be meaningless without exploration and experimentation in school practice. As an integral part of any in-service training program, there should be a way of developing and carrying out procedures for improvement in curricula, teaching methods, textbooks, and the like. If teacher growth is to be fostered, the teaching staffs of Vietnam should be invited to participate in these endeavors.

In summary, it can be said that education in the Republic of Vietnam has made tremendous progress since 1945. Many innovations have been introduced with a view to fighting against illiteracy and improving the educational system. It is evident that the implementation of an adequate program of education for Vietnam is a long-range task, since the country is confronted with varied and numerous problems affecting its entire national life. The difficulties are essentially of an economic character. The standard of living of the population—particularly, of the rural masses—must be raised before plans for better school facilities and more adequate curricula can be carried out effectively. While many reforms are still needed at all educational levels, the most urgent thing is to improve and extend popular and primary education. Indeed, each and every citizen of Vietnam must acquire a minimum knowledge if he expects to appreciate and use his democratic freedom properly. Another urgent thing is to train an adequate body of skilled workers and technicians so that Vietnam may increase its agricultural and industrial production as well as raise the standard of living of its population. In these respects, the government's efforts and the people's initiatives have been crowned with success, which seems to indicate that national reconstruction is well underway.\footnote{Unless otherwise specified, statistical data contained in this chapter are taken from \textit{Situation and Progress of Education in Vietnam During the School Year 1955-1956}, a Report Prepared by the Department of National Education of the Republic of Vietnam for the Nineteenth International Conference on Education, Geneva, 1956.}
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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

The writer of this dissertation was born in Hanoi, Vietnam, on April 19, 1923. He received his elementary education in a Vietnamese school, and his secondary education in a French lycee. In 1943, he obtained the French Baccalaureate in Philosophy, and entered the Faculty of Law at the Indochinese University in Hanoi. From 1945 to 1950, he was a language teacher, first at the Binh Chuan secondary school in Haiphong, then at the Chu Van An secondary school in Hanoi. Upon receiving a Smith-Mundt scholarship, he came to the United States in May 1950, and attended the summer session at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. He continued his studies at the University of Kentucky, where he received his B.A. and M.A. in Education in 1951 and 1952 respectively. He completed his course requirements for his Doctorate in Education in June 1954, and accepted a position with the United States government in the summer of the same year.

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