

116. It should be pointed out that, owing to the need for interpretation, the hearing of witnesses had to take place in the presence of representatives of the two parties.

Presence of Both Parties at Investigation

117. It should also be mentioned that on their part the Vietnamese People's Volunteers/"Pathet Lao" side accused the Franco-Laotian side of "forced recruitment of young men to gang of pirates".

Vietnamese People's Volunteers "Pathet Lao" Complaint

118. On 15th December, 1954, the International Commission, at the request of the Vietnamese People's Volunteers/"Pathet Lao" Delegation, who wished to have their name cleared of the accusation, decided that its Teams should continue to check the fighting units of the "Pathet Lao" with regard to the allegations of forced recruitment, particularly now in the two northern provinces.

Investigation in Northern Provinces

119. In fact, the International Commission had given direction to its Teams to check and/or interrogate whenever necessary among the troops of the Fighting Units of "Pathet Lao" with regard to complaints of alleged forced recruitment. In the two northern provinces, the International Commission's Teams have standing instructions to investigate into the charge of forced recruitment, simultaneously carrying out investigation into other complaints. Further investigation, elsewhere also, remain to be conducted.

Conclusion

120. In conclusion, it may be stated that the investigation carried out by the International Commission on the subject of forced recruitment was rendered difficult by its inability to check the withdrawal of all Vietnamese People's Volunteers/"Pathet Lao" troops out of Laos or to check entry of "Pathet Lao" troops into Phong Saly and Sam Neua, due to lack of or insufficient notice of withdrawals and routes of withdrawal, due to inadequate transport facilities, and, lastly, due to weather conditions in Laos, which during the monsoon months were most unpredictable. In spite of all these difficulties, it will be evident that the International Commission carried out spot investigation through random selection among the troops practically throughout the whole country.

C. H. A. P. T. E. R.: VIII

DEMOCRATIC FREEDOMS

121. "A protracted civil war is apt to leave deep scars on the body-politic. Danger to life and property, reprisals and discrimination against individuals and organisations for their activities during the hostilities can be real.

Effect of Civil War

122. In its military aspect, the Geneva Agreement (Article 4 e) provides that while the withdrawals and transfers of the forces are proceeding, the two Parties shall not permit any destruction or sabotage of any public property or any attack on the life and property of the local civilian population.

Safeguarding Life and property during movement of Forces