

DEMOCRATIC FREEDOMS

71. The Commission at its meeting of 17th November, 1954, recommended that the two Parties should give wide publicity to Articles 15, 17 and 25 of the Geneva Agreement together with the relevant part of the Royal Government Declaration at Geneva regarding Democratic Freedoms.
72. On 4th February, 1955, at a meeting of the International Commission with the Joint Commission, the Franco-Laotian Delegation stated that thousands of leaflets in Laotian had been distributed and that adequate publicity had also been given through the "Lao Presse" and other media of information including radio,
73. The Vietnamese People's Volunteers/'Pathet Lao' Delegation said that they had taken no action to implement the Commission's recommendation as no agreed translation had been arrived at. They also said that the responsibility for this work should rest with each Party within the regions under its control.
74. The Commission pointed out that it had not asked for an agreed translation and that it was implied that each Party should take action in the area under its effective control. The Vietnamese People's Volunteers/'Pathet Lao' Delegation then agreed to take suitable action.
75. During the last six months the Commission received a number of complaints, mostly from 'Pathet Lao' authorities (vide 'B' of Appendix 'E') alleging violation of Article 15. The charges ranged from allegations of arrest and assassination of ex-members of the resistance movement to firing by Government troops on gatherings of civilians resulting in deaths and injuries. Complaints were also received that meetings of more than three persons had been banned and freedom of speech restricted.
76. In all twenty-four complaints were received from the 'Pathet Lao' side and eight from the Royal Laotian Government.
77. The Commission asked its Teams to investigate three complaints from the 'Pathet Lao' side and at the same time requested the Royal Laotian Government for reports on most of the other 'Pathet Lao' complaints. The Royal Government denied any breach of Article 15 and stated that in some instances arrests were made in accordance with the existing laws. The Royal Government maintained that the demonstrations against which they took action had all been inspired by foreign "agents"; as an example they cited a woman, reported by the 'Pathet Lao' to have been killed in a demonstration, as a "Vietnamese agent".
78. All the Royal Laotian Government complaints were referred to the 'Pathet Lao' authorities for investigation.