

102. The schedule of release of prisoners of war and civil internees laid down in the Geneva Agreement was not adhered to.

Conclusion

The whole issue of prisoners of war and civil internees has been complicated by the contradictory statements emanating not only from the two Parties but also at times from the same Party. These contradictions, as has been mentioned above, have resulted partly from the different categorisation of the same prisoners of war and civil internees by the two Parties. Sometimes, they have been due to faulty calculation. Discrepancies may also have crept in because of the capture or release of some prisoners of war and civil internees outside Laos.

103. There are other possibilities, not necessarily proven by evidence in specific cases, but common in any warfare of guerilla nature, that may have contributed to the considerable discrepancies evident in this report.

104. Defections and desertions are bound to occur where two factions of one race are in political conflict. It could be assumed that some prisoners of war claimed by either side are not rightly classed as such but were in fact deserters. Others, having been taken prisoner, may have joined the ranks of their former opponents.

105. In jungle warfare the method of handling prisoners of war and internees differs from that in orthodox warfare and permits increased escapes and deaths from exposure, malnutrition and tropical diseases.

C H A P T E R: VII

COMPLAINTS (FORCED RECRUITMENT)

106. While the disengagement and regroupment of troops under the Geneva Agreement was in progress, the Franco-Laotian Delegation complained to the Vietnamese People's Volunteers/"Pathet Lao" Delegation in their letters of 27th August and 3rd September, 1954 regarding forces recruitment alleged to have been carried out by the latter. They maintained that the Vietnamese People's Volunteers/"Pathet Lao" side, taking advantage of their prolonged control over large areas in Laos, due partly to the delays in regrouping, and partly to the delay in the positioning of Joint Groups, had forcibly recruited after 6th August, Laotians in all the provinces of Laos. It was alleged that these recruits were being transferred since 15th August, 1954, by secret routes to Vietnam or to the provinces of Phong Saly and Sam Neua for political indoctrination. After an intensive training, it was further alleged, they were either to be attached to the "Pathet Lao" forces in Phong Saly and Sam Neua or to be sent back to the other provinces of Laos for carrying out political propaganda on behalf of the "Pathet Lao". The Franco-Laotian Delegation expressed their willingness to withdraw the complaint provided the Vietnamese People's Volunteers/"Pathet Lao" side released the recruits and stopped further recruitment of the kind.

Franco-Laotian Allegation

Political Internees and Ordinary Civilian Internees