

HISTORY
OF THE
COMMUNIST PARTY
OF
VIETNAM

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**HISTORY OF THE
COMMUNIST PARTY
OF VIETNAM**

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EDITOR'S NOTE

This book was compiled by the Institute of the History of the Communist Party of Vietnam under the Institute of Marxism-Leninism (directly belonging to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam) on the basis of supplementing and revising the Fifty Years of Activities of the Communist Party of Vietnam (edited by the F.L.P.H., 1980).

In the light of the new experience got from and the recent conclusion reached at the 5th Party Congress (Feb. 1982) and the Plenums of the C.P.V. Central Committee after that the authors have drawn a true picture of the national history during the past fifty years under the leadership of the Communist Party of Vietnam with a creative application of the Marxist-Leninist doctrine to the concrete conditions of the country in charting out the revolutionary lines and methods. The book not only highlights the significant events and the important advances of the Vietnamese revolution but also clearly analyzes the factors of its victories and outlines the experience of leadership of the Party after each stage, each period of activity.

It is hoped that the book would to some extent meet the need of the reader who is interested in the contemporary Vietnamese history in general and the history of the Communist Party of Vietnam in particular.

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PART I

**BIRTH OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY
OF VIETNAM**

**THE CRISIS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY LINE AT
THE BEGINNING OF THE 20th CENTURY**

In 1858, the French colonialists started their invasion of our country. Our people from the South to the North, continuing their age-old tradition of stubborn resistance against the feudal invaders coming from the north, rose up continuously against the invaders and the traitors. Their heroic resistance, however, ended in failure. The ruling Vietnamese feudal class of the time, represented by the Nguyen dynasty, surrendered to the French colonialists. From a feudal society, Vietnam was thus turned into a colonial and semi-feudal society.

With a view to obtaining the biggest possible gains from the exploitation of Vietnam, the French colonialists effected a combination between the capitalist exploiting method and the age-old feudalist one. Since then, Vietnam became a source of cheap labour and rich raw materials, where the French

monopoly capitalists could lend money at exorbitant interests, levy all sorts of taxes, buy agricultural products at dirt-cheap prices, sell industrial products at high prices and exercise monopoly in foreign trade. The French policy thus deprived Vietnam of its ability to develop an independent economy and to build a heavy industry, leaving the country in the state of a crippled light industry and monoculture. As a result, the Vietnamese economy remained deplorably backward and utterly dependent on the "metropolitan" economy and the Vietnamese people were impoverished and decimated.

Politically, the French colonialists carried out a dictatorial policy, typical of old-type colonialism. They took direct control of and held all the key positions in the colonial ruling apparatus, from the post of governor general to various other important posts such as chiefs of provinces, cities and towns, the police force, the penitentiary system, the courts... They turned the feudal class and the local compradores into their docile henchmen. This reactionary policy deprived Vietnam of its independence and the Vietnamese people of all freedom. Besides, by their policy of obscurantism, they aimed at reducing the Vietnamese to ignorant and superstitious people, completely resigned to the exploitation and the rule of the French colonialists and their henchmen.

In the colonial and semi-feudal Vietnamese society, there arose two ever deeper contradictions: the contradiction between our nation and aggressive colonialism and that between our people, mainly the peasants, and the feudal land-owning

class. These two contradictions were interacted. The progress of the Vietnamese society would not be possible without the simultaneous settlement of these two contradictions. Therefore, the elimination of the oppression and exploitation by imperialism should be linked with that by feudalism. The struggle for national independence should be linked with the struggle for democracy and freedom.

Independence and freedom were the fundamental requirements of the Vietnamese society, the ardent aspirations of the entire Vietnamese people under the rule of the imperialists and feudalists.

The economic exploitation and the dictatorial policy of the French imperialists and their henchmen further deepened the above-said contradictions and accelerated the process of revolutionizing the masses. They were bound to give rise to the toiling people's uprisings for the right to live. The capitalist mode of production, brought into Vietnam by the French colonialists, engendered the forming of new classes of which proletariat was the one endowed with the mission of giving leadership to the 'grave-digging' of imperialism.

"The ruthlessness of capitalism having prepared the soil, what socialism has to do is just to sow the seeds of the struggle for liberation." (1)

Before the Vietnamese working class entered the political arena and assumed the leadership of the revolution, our people's struggle for independence and freedom, however valiant, did not succeed

1. Nguyen Ai Quoc, "Indochina", *For Independence and Freedom, for Socialism*, Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1970 p. 18.

Historical realities show that during the first decades of the 20th century, in Vietnam the crisis in the revolutionary lines was the most acute. The failures of the scholars anti-French movement were due to the absence of a correct line of struggle, in conformity with the people's aspiration and with the ever-rising trend of the time and to the shortage of a revolutionary organization capable of leading the people to victories. This crisis was in essence *the crisis as regards the leading role, in the revolution, of the most vanguard class* in society. During the previous centuries, the Vietnamese feudal class played a more or less vanguard role. But from the 16th century, it began to decline and, with its capitulation to the French colonialists, it became a completely reactionary, traitorous class, serving as henchmen for the imperialists to exploit and oppress the people. The Vietnamese bourgeoisie, with its crippled, dependent economic state and its reformist political tendency, was incapable of assuring leadership in the struggle against imperialism and feudalism for independence and freedom. It was capable of joining in the struggle, but under certain conditions. The peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie, though eager for independence and freedom and ardent in fighting imperialism and feudalism, were not capable of working out a correct line of struggle and of assuming the leadership of the revolution. The working class, representative of the advanced mode of production in society and coming into being before the Vietnamese national bourgeoisie, had to bear the three-tier yoke of oppression by imperialism, feudalism and the bourgeoisie. It had a natural bond with the peasantry

and its interests conforming to the essential and long-term interests of the entire nation. In liberating itself, the working class also freed the whole society from all oppression and exploitation. Therefore, only the working class was fully capable of fulfilling the historic mission of leading the revolutionary struggle against imperialism, feudalism, for independence and freedom and took it to a thorough victory. And only the working class was capable of leading the struggle to liberate the whole society perpetually from the exploitation of man by man and to build a civilized, happy life. Prior to the birth of the Vietnam Communist Party, the Vietnamese working class was not in a position to fulfil such a historic mission.

The failure of the patriotic scholars' movement (1) marked the end of a period of struggle guided by feudal thoughts. Having rid themselves of that way, Vietnamese patriots looked abroad for new ways of national liberation to follow: Japan's modernist method, China's nationalist revolution model (1921) or the bourgeois parliamentary road of the Western countries. These ways, though different in forms owing to the concrete conditions of each country, were mainly bourgeois democratic ones. Though

1. The anti-French movements led by patriotic men of letters of feudal origin were: the Huong Son insurrection (Nghe Tinh province) led by Phan Dinh Phung (1885-1895); the Ba Dinh Insurrection (Thanh Hoa province) led by Tong Duy Tan (1885-1892), the Bai Say Insurrection (Hai Hung province) led by Nguyen Thien Thuat (1885-1889)

bourgeois democracy was new to the Vietnamese patriots, it had become outdated and reactionary at the time. "As a vanguard and growing class of the past, the bourgeoisie has become decadent, deteriorating, moribund, reactionary." (1) The dying bourgeoisie is colluding with all the outdated and declining forces." (2)

But, having pinned all their hope on independent and modernist capitalist Japan, Phan Boi Chau and his comrades were disillusioned by the Japanese Imperial Government's collusion with the French colonialists in banishing him and other Vietnamese patriotic students from Japan. Phan Boi Chau and his friends could not understand why China's bourgeois nationalist revolution (1921) failed. Neither could he find the reason why his revolutionary activities met with "a hundred defeats and not even one success." (3)

Similarly, Phan Chu Trinh, Luong Van Can and other patriots, who were full of admiration for bourgeois democracy, were quite at a loss when France, a country well-known for its bourgeois parliament in Europe and its magnificent mottos of "freedom", "equality", "fraternity", ordered the closure of the Dong Kinh Nghia Thuc school and the arrest and deportment to Con Son island of the Vietnamese patriots who advocated the bourgeois parliamentary line.

1. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol.26, in Vietnamese, Progress Publishing House, Moscow, 1980, p.179

2. op. cit., Vol.23, p. 213

3. *Phan Boi Chau Chronicle* Literature, History, Geography Publishing House, Hanoi 1957, page 20.

The failures of Phan Boi Chau, Phan Chu Trinh and Luong Van Can all pointed to a fact: bourgeois democracy was not the way to save the nation from misery and slavery.

The failure of Hoang Hoa Tham's guerrilla warfare (1) which lasted over a decade, also stemmed from the fact that the insurgents, though valiant, perseverant and resourceful, were alone and had not a correct line of struggle.

Historical realities also show that, prior to 1920, no Vietnamese patriots had found out the light of national liberation in the dark night of slavery. In this period, the Vietnamese revolution was faced with a grave crisis as regards the way to national salvation.

NGUYEN AI QUOC

THE FIRST VIETNAMESE PATRIOT TO FIND OUT MARXISM-LENINISM AND TO STRUGGLE FOR THE FOUNDING OF THE PARTY OF THE WORKING CLASS IN VIETNAM

While our people were writhing in slavery and misery and groping in the dark for a way to liberate the country, the Great Russian October Revolution broke out and ended in success. It ushered in a new

1. Hoang Hoa Tham advocated building anti-French guerilla bases (in Yen The district — Ha Bac province) whose main forces consisted of peasants. This insurrection had a local character and was inspired by feudal ideology. Thus the scope of the movement was limited and at last it failed (1887-1913).

era in the history of mankind, the era of transition from capitalism to socialism on the world scale. The revolution of national liberation became part and parcel of the world proletarian revolution. Lenin's resounding combat slogan "Proletarians and oppressed people in all countries, unite!" lighted the way for the revolution of national liberation in the colonial and dependent countries.

In Vietnam, Comrade Nguyen Ai Quoc surpassing the limited outlook of other contemporary patriots, was the first Vietnamese determined to seek a different way, a correct one to liberate the working class, the toiling masses and the entire nation.

Comrade Nguyen Ai Quoc had deep respect for the patriotism manifested by Phan Boi Chau, Phan Chu Trinh, Hoang Hoa Tham, but he disagreed with any of their lines. He considered Phan Chu Trinh's request for reforms by the French "an appeal for the enemy's mercy" and Phan Boi Chau's hope to drive away the French through Japan's help, a case of getting "out of the frying pan into the fire". To him, Hoang Hoa Tham's line was more realistic, but still void of a clear direction.

With these thoughts in mind, Comrade Nguyen Ai Quoc left the country in 1911 to seek the way to save the nation. He studied the experience of the American revolution (1776) and that of the French revolution (1789). The First World War broke out, exposing thoroughly the savagery, ruthlessness, decay and death agony of capitalism. In 1917 Comrade Nguyen Ai Quoc returned to France and founded the Association of Vietnamese Patriots to rally the patriotic residents in France. In 1918, he joined the French Socialist Party, took part in the activities of the French

Workers' movement, studied the experience of the French revolution, sought the approval of the French working class and labouring people for the patriotic struggle of Vietnam and studied the Russian October Revolution. In 1919, after the end of the First World War, the victorious capitalist countries met in Versailles, France, to discuss their shares of the war spoils and of the colonies. In the name of the Vietnamese patriots, Comrade Nguyen Ai Quoc sent to the Versailles conference an eight-point petition asking it to grant the Vietnamese people national freedom, democracy and equality. Though his petition was turned down, it made a big echo awakening the Vietnamese people's patriotism and creating a prerequisite for the gathering of the forces against the French imperialists. From this part, Comrade Nguyen Ai Quoc drew the conclusion that "Wilsonism is just a big hoax" (1).

While studying the Russian October Revolution, Comrade Nguyen Ai Quoc took part in the French Socialist Party's debates on the choice between the Second International (opportunist, reformist International) and Third International (Revolutionary International).

1. In 1918, U.S. President Wilson put forth a fourteen-point programme which was full of sweet words on the national right to self-determination and was aimed at currying favour with the world's people and scrambling for influence and land against other imperialist powers. This conclusion by Nguyen Ai Quoc was an excerpt from his article "on the Resistance Against the French" written after 1920, published in *For Independence and Freedom, for Socialism*, Su that Publishing House, Hanoi, 1976, p. 24.

The final conclusion Comrade Nguyen Ai Quoc could draw from all his inquiries, studies and from this debate was this: *to save the country and liberate the nation, there is no other way than that of the proletarian revolution. Only socialism, communism can liberate the oppressed nations and the toiling people from slavery.*

The conclusion was drawn after he read *Lenin's First Draft of the Theses on the National and Colonial Questions*. (1)

In December 1920, at the 18th Congress of the French Socialist Party in Tours, Comrade Nguyen Ai Quoc voted for the participation in the Communist International and played a part in the founding of the French Communist Party (2).

Comrade Nguyen Ai Quoc's participation in the founding of the French Communist Party marked a turning-point in his life of revolutionary activities, taking him to communism from patriotism and confirming his adherence to the October Revolution, Marxism-Leninism and the Communist International. This event, at the same time, paved the way for a turning-point in the history of the Vietnamese revolution, i.e. the linking of national independence

1. Presented at the Second Congress of the Communist International, taking place from 19 July to 7 August 1920 and published in *l'Humanité* (France) on 16-17 July 1920. Nguyen Ai Quoc read Lenin's theses for the first time in *l'Humanité*.

2. The French Communist Party's 19th Congress in 1970, affirmed: Comrade Ho Chi Minh was one of the founders of the French Communist Party and was the one who helped guide the Party along a clear anti-colonialist direction (*Nhan Dan*, 13 Feb. 1970).

to socialism and the infiltration of Marxism-Leninism in the Vietnamese workers' and patriots' movements.

From 1921 to 1929, Comrade Nguyen Ai Quoc carried out an arduous and persevering struggle in the world as well as in the country, propagated the essentials of Marxism-Leninism among the Vietnamese workers, peasants, labouring people and patriots and, at the same time, made all necessary preparations for the founding of a communist party in Vietnam.

In 1921, in Paris, Comrade Nguyen Ai Quoc took part in the founding of the Union of Colonies, published the paper *Le Paria* in order to assemble the anti-imperialist forces in the French colonies. In 1922, he joined the Section of Colonial Research of the French Communist Party. In 1923, he attended the International Congress of Peasants in Moscow and was elected member of the Presidium of the Peasant International Executive Committee. In 1924, he attended the 5th Congress of the Communist International. At this Congress, he stressed the relationship between the proletarian revolution in the imperialist countries and the revolution of national liberation in the colonial countries. He drew the attention of the communist and worker's parties in the capitalist countries to the indispensable task of collaborating with the national liberation movement in the common struggle against imperialism. On November 11, 1924, as a member of the Eastern Commission of the Communist International Executive Committee, he went to Canton (China) to help give guidance to and to build up the revolutionary movement, the communist movement in the Southeast Asian countries and to

step up preparations for the founding of a communist party in Vietnam. In 1925, he founded the Vietnam Revolutionary Youth Association, published the periodical *Youth* and conducted study courses to train hundreds of activists for the country.

In all his works, articles and lectures, particularly in his books *French Colonialism on Trial* and *The Revolutionary Road*, Comrade Nguyen Ai Quoc made a point of combining the propagation of Marxist-Leninist theories with the introduction of the basic guide-lines for the Vietnamese revolution, thus mapping out for our people the road to independence, freedom and socialism.

Comrade Nguyen Ai Quoc pointed out: "To survive, we must make revolution" (1), "Revolution is the common task for all the people, not just for a few persons" (2), "the workers and the peasants are the base of the revolution" (3), the building of a Marxist-Leninist Party is indispensable, "once the Party is strong, the revolution will succeed, just like a capable helmsman will ensure the smooth sailing of a boat" (4), solidarity with the proletariat and other oppressed nations in the world is vital, "the Vietnamese revolution is part and parcel of the world revolution, whoever is a revolutionary in the world is a comrade of the Vietnamese people," (5) "we should, first of all, help ourselves before expecting others to help us" (6) — French imperialism is like a leech with

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6. Nguyen Ai Quoc, "The Revolutionary Road", *The Predecessors of the Party*, Document, published by the Commission for the Study of the Party's History, 1977, pp. 19, 24, 26, 55, 63.

two suckers, one bleeding the French working class and people and the other bleeding the Vietnamese people and the peoples in the French colonies. That's why French imperialism is the common enemy of the French people and the peoples in the French colonies. The French proletarian revolution and the revolution of national liberation in the colonies are closely related, like the two wings of a bird (1). Comrade Nguyen Ai Quoc always combined genuine patriotism with proletarian internationalism.

The above-said arguments by Comrade Nguyen Ai Quoc were the creative application of Marxism-Leninism to the concrete conditions of Vietnam in the new era. They were the working class line of Vietnamese revolution, the ideological and political base of the Vietnam Revolutionary Youth Association, an organization of the patriotic youth having socialist tendency. The Vietnam Revolutionary Youth Association had the duty to propagate Marxism-Leninism and the working class revolutionary line among the worker and peasant masses and the revolutionary intellectuals, of whom the communist were the core, in preparation for the eventual founding of the communist party.

The Vietnam Revolutionary Youth Association came into being when an acute struggle between the two lines — that of the proletariat and that of the bourgeoisie in Vietnam — was taking place.

1. The original text reads: "This alliance bloc [of the colonial countries—Commission for the Study of the Party's History] is one of the wings of the proletarian revolution." Nguyen Ai Quoc: *French Colonialism on Trial*, Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1976, p. 168.

Following the attempt on Governor General Merlin's life by Pham Hong Thai, a young revolutionary, (1924), the movement of struggle for the release of Phan Boi Chau (1925) and the campaign of mourning for Phan Chu Trinh (1926) spread all over the country. Then came the mushroom of several patriotic organizations: the Association for the Restoration of Vietnam (1925) (1), the Youth Party (1926), the Vietnam Nationalist Party (1927)... Each organization put forth its own political programme to win over the masses. These organizations aimed at struggling for national independence, under various mottos, but they all reflected the viewpoints of the bourgeoisie, and the petty bourgeoisie. Shaken by the influence of the seething revolutionary movement, the French colonialists resorted, on the one hand, to outright repression and, on the other, to deceitful and demagogic manoeuvres, taking advantage of the reformist tendency to sidetrack and to "defuse" the revolutionary movement. The French government sent Varenne member of the French Socialist Party, to Indochina as Governor General, Varenne put forth the policy of "France-Vietnam Harmony" in order to mislead credulous patriots.

The immediate pressing task for the Vietnam Revolutionary Youth Association then was to fight bourgeois reformism and the bourgeois tendency of half-hearted revolution, thus enabling the masses to realize the difference between reformism and revolution,

1. It was later called Hung Nam Association and then Tan Viet Revolutionary Party in 1928.

between half-hearted revolution and genuine, thorough revolution.

Large numbers of activists, imbued with ardent patriotism and a primary consciousness of Marxism-Leninism, were assigned to various industrial centres, urban and rural areas to propagate the Marxist-Leninist viewpoints and the revolutionary line.

The Vietnam Revolutionary Youth Association succeeded in building its bases in several important economic centres. Workers' associations were set up in Ba Son shipyard (Saigon); in the bottle factory, the silk factory, the Ca Rong engineering plant, the dock, the cement plant (Hai Phong) in the Truong Thi locomotive factory (Nghe An), in the textile mill, the power station (Nam Dinh), in the Di An locomotive factory; in the Hon Gai, Mao Khe, Uong Bi coal mines; in the Avia car repair garage, the power station, the IDEO printing house (Hanoi); in the Staca car repair garage (Da Nang), in the FACI factory, the Phu Rieng plantation (Thu Dau Mot) and in several other establishments all over the country. During 1927, 1928, 1929, several strikes were staged, by the workers in the above-mentioned factories and in different industrial branches such as mine, cement, textile, wine, power, transport, plantation, etc. Most typical of these actions was that of the cement, Phu Rieng and Avia workers whose total went up to some thousand. In 1928, the Vietnam Revolutionary Youth Association sent its members to factories, mines and plantations to work and to live there. This policy was known as the campaign of "proletarianization". By 1929, the Association had set up numerous solid bases all over the country and its membership had

come up to 1,700. The "proletarianization" campaign helped accelerate the process of political enlightenment of the working class. Political slogans were closely combined with economic ones and there was collaboration between the enterprises when the workers' strikes broke out. The workers' movement began to bear its own characteristics. "The strikes of 1928-1929... proved the growth of the class struggle in Indochina. What was most noteworthy and important in the revolutionary movement of Indochina was that the struggle of the worker-peasant masses had clearly showed its independent characteristics; it no longer came under the influence of nationalism as before." (1)

The peasants' movement of struggle against land plunder, heavy taxes and corvée and for the distribution of communal land broke out in some provinces of Cochinchina (Southern Vietnam), Central Vietnam and Tonkin (Northern Vietnam), to be followed by strikes by the students and market boycotts by the small traders. As early as 1921, Comrade Nguyen Ai Quoc had foreseen the growth of the revolutionary movement in Indochina and pointed out the duty of the first Vietnamese communists as follows: "The Indochinese are keeping under cover something, constantly seething and thundering, which will explode terribly when the opportunity comes. The advanced section has the duty to accelerate

1 "Political Platform of the Indochinese Communist Party", *Party's Documents*. Vol. I, published by the Commission for the Study of the Party's History, 1977, pp. 66-67.

the coming of this opportunity" (1). In 1929, the seething of the movement came out in the open. All the labouring people's movement of struggle were united into a mighty drive moving in the revolutionary direction shown by the Vietnam Revolutionary Youth Association.

This fact proved that Marxism-Leninism had won the confidence not only of the workers' movement but also the patriots' movement—bourgeois reformism was repelled. The revolutionary view-points of the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie were censured.

From the realities of a strong, rising national and democratic high tide all over the country, a new revolutionary trend appeared, which called for the leadership of a political party truly belonging to the working class. The advanced elements of the Vietnam Revolutionary Youth Association soon realized that a patriotic organization with socialist orientation like their own was no longer capable of leading the revolution. Its historical role had been played out.

The demand for the founding of the communist party resulted in the appearance, late in March 1929, of a communist cell, the first ever in the whole country in Hanoi. The Zone Congress of the Vietnam Revolutionary Youth Association in Tonkin (Northern Vietnam), with the first communist cell as its core, reached unanimous approval of the demand for the founding of the communist party and assigned the Zone representatives to the all-nation Congress of the Association the task of struggling for the Congress's acceptance of the demand.

1. Nguyen Ai Quoc, "Indochina", *For Independence and Freedom, for Socialism*, Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1976, p. 20.

On 1 May 1929, the All-nation Congress of the Vietnam Revolutionary Youth Association was held in Hongkong. The Tonkin delegation, whose outstanding and staunchest member being Ngo Gia Tu, proposed the dissolution of the Association and the founding of the Indochina Communist Party. The proposal was not accepted at the Congress, so the delegation left the conference. On 1 June 1929, the delegation issued a statement explaining the reason why they left the conference and called on the workers, peasants and revolutionary masses to support the founding of the communist party. The statement said: "At present, in Vietnam, there is no party which represents the proletariat... We cannot but propose the founding of such a party, the only one which is capable of solving all the problems concerning the proletariat and of giving leadership to the revolution in Vietnam, i.e. the Communist Party." (1)

On 17 June 1929, the Indochinese Communist Party was founded. It put forward its Political Platform, Manifesto, pointing out its line of making bourgeois, democratic revolution, advancing to socialist revolution and carrying out worker-peasant alliance. The birth of the Indochinese Communist Party had the effect of stepping up the communist movement in the country. In October 1929, the Zone Congress of the Cochinchina Vietnam Revolutionary Youth Association declared the dissolution of the Association and the founding of the Annam Com-

munist Party. In January 1930, the elite members of the Tan Viet Party declared the founding of the Indochinese Communist Federation.

Thus, within half a year, three communist organizations came into being. This fact proved that the founding of the Communist Party was the inevitable outcome of the growth of the workers' movement and the patriotic movement in Vietnam in 1929. However, the interests of the working class, of the labouring masses and the organizational principles of a Marxist-Leninist Party did not permit the fragmentation of forces, the existence of three communist organizations in a country, which would weaken the ideological, political, organization and unity of action of the proletariat and affect the strength of the workers' movement and the patriotic movement. To organize a single party for the working class in Vietnam was, then, the pressing need of the workers' movement and the patriotic movement.

THE BIRTH OF THE VIETNAM COMMUNIST PARTY

Having learned of the existence of three communist organizations in Vietnam, the Communist International sent a letter calling for their unification: "The task of utmost importance and urgency for the Indochinese communists is to found a revolutionary party of the proletariat. This should be a single party, and for Indochina this party was to be the only communist organization. The non-existence of the single Communist Party, while the agitation among the worker and peasant masses is day by

1. *The Predecessors of the Party*, Documents, The Commission for the Study of the Party's History, 1977, p. 147.

day developing, constitutes a great danger for the immediate future of the revolution in Indochina." (i)

In its letter, the Communist International also set out the fundamental principles governing the building of a Marxist-Leninist party and gave guidance as to the unification of these communist organizations. In the name of the Communist International, Comrade Nguyen Ai Quoc held a meeting to unify the communist organizations of Vietnam.

On 3 February 1930, the Unification Conference was held in Kowloon (Hongkong), under the chairmanship of Comrade Nguyen Ai Quoc, with the participation of two representatives from the Indochina Communist Party and two from the Annam Communist Party. The Indochina Communist Federation was unable to send its representatives in time for the Conference. The total number of communist party members in Vietnam at the time was 211.

After 5 days of working in earnest, under secret conditions (from 3 to 7 Feb.), the Conference reached unanimous approval of the unification of the different communist organization, the founding of a single communist party in Vietnam, named the Vietnam Communist Party and adopted the Party's Political Platform, Tactics and the Abridged Constitution of the Party and the Abridged Rules of the mass organizations.

1. "Communist International's Letter to the Communist Groups in Indochina," *Party's Documents* 1930-45, published by the Commission for the Study of the Party's History, 1977, pp. 10-11.

The Political Platform, Tactics of the Party made clear that the Vietnamese revolution was a bourgeois democratic revolution under the leadership of the proletariat, with the aim of overthrowing imperialism and feudalism, restoring the independence of the country, realizing land reform and advancing to a communist society—In this revolution, the Party's line was to unite with the majority of the peasants, to ally with the petty bourgeoisie, the intelligentsia, the middle peasants and to make use of or, at least, to neutralize the rich peasants, the middle and small land-owners and the Vietnamese bourgeois who were not evident counter-revolutionaries. The Party was the vanguard of the proletariat. It must enable the proletariat to give leadership to the people.

The Conference entrusted the delegates, upon returning home, with the task of putting into effect the unification of the different communist organizations, in the name of the Communist International, and of naming the Provisional Executive Central Committee.

The Unification Conference was comparable to a Party founding congress. It brought an end to the fragmentation of the communist movement and unified the different communist organizations into a single communist party in Vietnam, thus greatly enhancing the strength of the leading core of the revolutionary movement.

The Unification Conference's Abridged Political Platform and Tactics were later complemented, developed and accomplished by the Political Thesis. The Political Thesis of 1930 was written by Tran

Phu, the first Secretary General of the Party, and adopted by the Central Committee meeting in October 1950. It pointed out: the Indochinese revolution found itself in a period when world capitalism was suffering from a grave economic crisis, imperialism was feverishly preparing for a new world war for a redivision of markets and the movement of struggle against imperialism in the capitalist and colonial countries was growing strongly: the Indochinese revolution was part of this movement. Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia were the French imperialists' colonies. The essential contradiction in Indochina was that between the workers, peasants, labouring masses and the imperialists, land-owning feudalists and capitalists. The worker-peasant movement had its clear independent characteristic. On the basis of such an analysis, the Thesis affirmed that the Indochinese revolution was a bourgeois democratic revolution under the leadership of the proletariat, a land revolution to abolish all feudal vestiges, to give land to the tillers and an anti-imperialist revolution to overthrow the French imperialists, to win back complete independence for Indochina and to advance to socialism bypassing the stage of capitalist development. The overthrow of imperialism would facilitate feudalism and vice-versa. The main force of the revolution was the workers and peasants led by the working class. The decisive factor for the victory of the revolution was the leadership of the communist Party which had a correct political line and strict discipline, was closely linked with the masses and matured through the realities of the struggle. Then the appropriate conditions for the revolution had not yet existed, the Party's combat watchwords

should, first, concern with the daily interests in order to guide the masses to the revolutionary front, and once these conditions existed, the Party should immediately put up the slogan of armed struggle to seize power for the workers and the peasants. At the same time, it was necessary to unite with the proletariat and the oppressed nations all over the world.

The Central Committee meeting in October 1930 pointed out the Party's immediate urgent task, decided to change the Party's name into Indochina Communist Party and to convene a Party congress.

The Political Thesis was the draft programme of the revolution. Adopted by the Central Committee, it was now awaiting the decision of the Congress. Despite the fact that owing to the imperialists' repressive acts, the Party could not hold its Congress as had been planned, the Political Thesis was of great practical and theoretical significance. The revolutionary line mapped out in the thesis was later complemented and developed by the congresses and the Central Committee meetings. However, its fundamental spirit remained the guiding line for the whole bourgeois democratic revolution in our country: to carry out an anti-imperialist and anti-feudalist revolution for independence under the leadership of the working class, to advance directly to socialism bypassing the stage of capitalist development, the workers and peasants being the main driving force of the revolution, the Party being the decisive factor for every victory and being capable of working out the appropriate method of revolution, to uphold international solidarity.

As soon as it came into being, our Party correctly worked out the strategies and tactics for the revolution.

This constituted a great success. This success was possible for, right from the start, our Party had given due attention to the application of Marxism-Leninism to the concrete conditions of Vietnam in a correct, independent, sovereign and creative way.

In Laos, in April 1930, the first communist cells came into being in Vientiane, Thakhet, Boneng. Early in 1930, in Cambodia, the first Party bases were founded in Phnom Penh and Kom Pong Cham.

The birth of the Vietnam Communist Party (later the Indochina Communist Party) with its correct political line and its solid system of organizations all over the country marked a decisive turning-point in the history of revolution in our country. It put an end to the period in which the revolution in our country found itself in a "total blackout without a way out" and a period of dilemma and crisis as regards revolutionary lines which went on for over two-thirds of the century since our country was invaded by the French imperialists

PART II

THE PARTY'S LEADERSHIP IN THE STRUGGLE FOR POWER—THE AUGUST 1945 REVOLUTION (1930 – 1945)

THE HIGH TIDE OF REVOLUTION 1930- 1931 AND THE NGHE-TINH SOVIETS

The Vietnam Communist Party came into being when the worldwide economic crisis of 1929-1933 was taking place in the capitalist and colonial countries in both the industrial and agricultural fields, causing unprecedented damage. The economy of the capitalist countries was driven back to the level in late 19th century; some 30 million workers were unemployed and tens of millions of peasants went bankrupt. The number of semi-unemployed was even greater. The contradiction between the workers and the capitalists, the peasants and the landlords, the imperialist countries and the colonies, and between different imperialist countries had become critical. The period of temporary stability of capitalism was over. The high tide of revolution among the masses in the capitalist and colonial countries was rising with new vitality.

To alleviate the disaster caused by the economic crisis which afflicted our country, the French imperialists made the Vietnamese people shoulder the whole burden. The workers and the peasants were the victims and had to bear the bulk of the burden. In the meantime, our country was continually visited by natural calamities. The peasants were utterly impoverished. Hunger was rampant. More and more workers were unemployed. Handicraftmen went bankrupt. Small traders closed down their shops. Civil servants got sacked. School-leavers found no jobs. Some national bourgeois and small land-owners were also caught by bankruptcy. The living conditions of various strata of people were seriously affected. The increased exploitation of the colony and the widespread white terror before and after the Yen Bai Insurrection further deepened the contradiction between our people and the French imperialists.

On the night of 9 February 1930, the insurrection led by the Vietnam Nationalist Party (1) broke out in Yen Bai and a few districts of the North. It was, however, quickly suppressed by the imperialists. After this insurrection, the Vietnam Nationalist Party completely disintegrated and its role on the political arena came to an end. Thus, the leadership of the revolution was completely assumed by the proletariat.

1. The party was founded in September 1927, representing the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie, and was led by Nguyen Thai Hoc. The party's aim was to overthrow the French colonialists, to win national independence; it failed to raise the anti-feudal watchword. It resorted to assassinations and adventurous activities.

The Party's immediate task was, then, to lead the people in the struggle against the imperialists and their henchmen, demanding measures to alleviate the consequences of the economic crisis and to improve the living conditions, against terror and for the release of the detained revolutionary fighters.

Following the founding of the Party by the Unification Conference, Comrade Nguyen Ai Quoc issued an appeal on the workers, peasants, soldiers, youth, students and all the oppressed and exploited compatriots. The appeal said, among other things, that the inhuman oppression and exploitation by the French imperialists brought home to our people that revolution was the only way to save their lives. The French imperialists could not suppress the revolution through white terror because the Vietnamese revolution was led by the Vietnam Communist Party, the recently unified revolutionary vanguard, and because the Vietnamese revolution enjoyed the support of the world proletariat and the French proletariat. Comrade Nguyen Ai Quoc called on the people to follow the Party to rise up against the imperialists and their henchmen. He called on the workers to go on strike, the students to stay away from schools, the peasants to demand land, the small traders to close down their shops.

Right after it was founded, the Party assumed the leadership of a nationwide revolutionary movement.

Under the Party's leadership, a nationwide revolutionary movement arose, beginning with the strikes of 5,000 workers of the Phu Rieng plantation (3 Feb. 1930), of 4,000 workers of the Nam Dinh textile mill (25 March 1930), of 400 workers of the match factory and the saw-mill in Ben Thuy (19 Apr. 1930). From

May 1930, the high tide of revolution grew on a nationwide scale. The struggle of the masses broke out from the industrial factories in Hanoi, Hai Phong, Nam Dinh, Hon Gai, Cam Pha, Vinh—Ben Thuy, Saigon, Cho Lon, etc., to such rural areas as Gia Dinh, Cho Lon, Vinh Long, Sa Dec, Ben Tre, Long Xuyen, Can Tho, Tra Vinh, Thu Dau Mot, My Tho in Southern Vietnam, Nghe An, Ha Tinh, Quang Ngai in Central Vietnam, Thai Binh, Ha Nam, Kien An in Northern Vietnam. Taking place all over the country were hundreds of workers' strikes, thousands of peasants' demonstrations, scores of students' meetings and riots and small traders' boycotts. From February 1930 to April 1931, there were 1,236 struggles waged by the workers and peasants against terror, for democracy and better living conditions. In Nghe Tinh alone, from February 1930 to October 1931 there were 439 struggles of workers and peasants with 337,120 participants. Almost all the struggles ended in victory, compelling the imperialists, and their henchmen to release the detainees, to reduce working-hours, to improve the workers, working-conditions and to postpone the peasants' tax collection.

The watchword for democracy and better living conditions was linked with that against the imperialist war and for the Soviet Union and the national liberation movement.

Through the masses' high tide of revolution, thousands of elite workers, peasants and intellectuals joined the Communist Party. When the Central Committee met in March 1931, the Party numbered 2,400 members. The Workers' Association, Peasants' Association, Young Communists' League and Women's Liberation

Association were growing rapidly. In Nghe Tinh alone, in 1931, there were 2,011 Party members, 399 Workers' Association members, 48,464 Peasants' Association members, 8,648 Women's Liberation Association members and 2,356 Young Communists' League members.

From the high tide of revolution in the country, a special situation was seen in some rural areas: the masses became masters in several localities of Nghe An, Ha Tinh, Quang Tri and Quang Ngai. In Nghe An, Ha Tinh, peasants from the districts staged armed demonstrations, advanced to district towns and broke into offices, burning buildings and files, destroying detention camps and freeing political prisoners. In some places, the district heads had to flee or accept the masses' demands. The peasants' association executive committee led by the Party cell, assumed control of the political, economic and social life in the countryside, performing the tasks of the soviet-style people's power. From September 1930 to early 1931, the Soviet power existed and brought into full play the masses' mastery in the countryside. The Soviets resolutely suppressed the counter-revolutionaries, practised dictatorship against the imperialists and their henchmen, renounced the unjust taxes and regulations imposed by the imperialists and their henchmen and put into effect the people's democratic freedoms. They redistributed communal land, compelled the landlords to reduce principal land rent and abolish additional one, urged the peasants to borrow the landlords' rice to appease hunger, to attend alphabetic courses, to read newspapers and books, to renounce drinking, gambling, theft and superstition and to organize mutual aid and cooperation

in face of the difficulties in their life and the revolutionary struggle. Under the Soviet power, there prevailed a constant jubilant atmosphere among the rural toiling masses. The Nghe Tinh soviets left the local people and the people all over the country with profound sentiments and memories. By the actual deeds of the Soviet power, our people clearly realized that to overthrow the imperialists and their henchmen for the seizure of power was the only way for the toiling masses to fulfil the requirements of their lives.

The more the revolutionary movement grew, the more the French imperialists got frightened and they sought, by all means, to repress and liquidate it.

In September 1930, the Party Central Committee instructed the Zone Committee of Central Vietnam to take measures to cope with the enemy's terrorist acts, maintain the movement, consolidate the Soviet power and strengthen the worker-peasant self-defence units. The peasant association had to go underground and the secret section of the Party was built beside the open one. In October, the Party Central Committee informed the entire Party of the establishment of peasant soviets in Nghe An-Ha Tinh, pointing out the task of various Party levels to lead the masses into the struggle while the economic crisis and the imperialists' terrorist acts were underway and to stage a campaign for the defence of red Nghe Tinh while avoiding any premature acts of violence.

Comrade Nguyen Ai Quoc, then living abroad, kept a close watch on the revolutionary movement in the country. He lauded the valiant spirit of struggle of the masses and pointed out that the Party's immediate task was to rally, organize and mobilize the masses to

struggle for their daily interests, but not to lead the masses to rise up for the seizure of power in the localities.

On 11 April 1931, the Communist International Executive Committee recognized the Indochina Communist Party as an independent section which came directly under the Communist International.

The 1930-1931 high tide of revolution and the Nghe Tinh Soviet were of great historic significance. The leadership of the revolution assumed by the working class, whose representative was our Party, was put into effect and affirmed.

The 1930-1931 high tide of revolution gave the peasants a chance to observe, to test through reality and to confirm their confidence in the leading ability and the thorough revolutionary spirit of the working class. At the same time, it enabled the peasants to see clearly and thoroughly the ultra-reactionary nature of the landlords and the compradores, the reformist and compromise character of the national bourgeoisie and the adventurist and wavering character of the petty bourgeoisie. The 1930-1931 high tide of revolution created a firm confidence, among the worker-peasant masses, in the strength of their revolution and brought home to them that the road to liberation of workers and peasants and to national liberation could not be one based on foreign assistance, but was essentially one of relying on oneself for self-liberation.

The Party's two strategic watchwords, i.e. national independence and land to the tillers, became the confidence and the hope of the toiling people.

The high tide of revolution further tempered our Party, which became more mature. From it, our Party drew precious lessons on *the realization of worker-peasant alliance*, the essential condition ensuring the Party's leadership and the basis for the building of a unified national front and the armed forces in subsequent upsurges of revolution, on *the building of the "masses' political army"*, which necessitated an early appreciation of the work of education, organization and encouragement leading the masses into the political struggle, relying on the mass movement to build up the armed forces step by step and preparing for the advent of armed insurrection; on *the art of staging uprisings and building power, on the building of the Party and preserving the characteristics of the working class's Party*.

The French imperialists were able to drown the revolution in blood but they could not negate the victories of strategic significance of the 1930-31 high tide and the Nghe Tinh Soviet. Historical realities proved that:

"*Had it not been for the earthshaking class battles of the years 1930-31, when the workers and peasants displayed extraordinary revolutionary energy, the upsurge of 1936-39 would not have been possible*" (1)

1. Le Duan: *Under the Glorious Banner of the Party, for Independence and Freedom, for Socialism, Let's Go Forward to Win New Victories*, Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1975, p. 39.

THE STRUGGLE AGAINST WHITE TERROR FOR THE RESTORATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE MOVEMENT

(1932 - 1935)

Shaken by the rising mass movement and the ever growing influence of the Party, the French imperialists resorted to extremely ruthless terror, in a hope to suppress the revolutionary movement and to eliminate the Party. Many leading organs of the Party were destroyed. Tens of thousands of cadres, Party members and patriots were arrested, imprisoned or killed.

In Con Dao, from 1930 to 1934, the French imperialists subjected to torture and caused the death of 800 political prisoners. In Cong Tum, more than 300 prisoners were eliminated. On 2 May 1933, the Saigon criminal court tried 120 revolutionaries, of whom 8 were sentenced to death, 19 to life imprisonment and 79 from 5 to 20 years' imprisonment.

In June 1931, the French imperialists, in connivance with the British authorities in Hong Kong, had Comrade Nguyen Ai Quoc arrested on trumped up charges, in an attempt to hand him over to the French authorities in Indochina. Thanks to the help of the world communist and worker's movement, of the progressive democratic personalities, particularly of Lawyer Loseby, and of his own experience in underground activities, Comrade Nguyen Ai Quoc managed to escape from the enemy's claws. In summer 1933, he arrived in the Soviet Union.

The French imperialists' policy of white terror, while doing damage to the revolutionary movement

and depriving our people of their elite sons and outstanding leaders, could not remove the causes which started the revolution. The contradiction between the imperialists and their henchmen and the people remained and further deepened, threatening to explode at any time. The revolutionary movement fizzled out but the people's confidence in the future of the revolution was, in no way, affected. The superb examples of revolutionary heroism, undauntedness at the imperialists' courts, in their security service and detention centres, of the comradely affection and care and of the unity and struggle in prison cells... displayed by the communists, gave rise to our people's profound confidence in and admiration for the vanguard of the revolution. They greatly enhanced the prestige of the revolution in the country and abroad, served as a warning to the bloodthirsty imperialist hangmen and forebode the downfall of their shaky rule in Vietnam. At the imperialists' court, Comrade Tran Phu attacked the enemy's schemes of enticement and intimidation: "If I know many people, it is for the service of my Party and my country, but I will not reveal their names so that you may persecute them." And before his death, he called on his comrades, "to uphold their militant spirit." Comrade Ngo Gia Tu, at the Saigon court, firmly stated: "It is the French imperialists who have invaded Vietnam and enslaved her people. That's what prompts us to make revolution." Accused by the Hanoi Council of Judges, Comrade Nguyen Duc Canh retorted: "It is not a crime to drive away the invaders, to wrest back independence for the country and to seek happiness for the people!"

Young Communists' League member Ly Tu Trong said to the enemy's face: "The youths' road can only be the road of revolution" and sang the *International* as he mounted the guillotine. Tran Phu, Ngo Gia Tu, Nguyen Duc Canh and other communist fighters spent their last days in prison, writing books on the fundamentals of Leninism, the revolutionary line of the Party and the experience in the work of mass agitation. These were highly instructive documents for the training of cadres and Party members inside and outside prison.

The French imperialists tried to use a ruthless penitentiary regime to ruin the revolutionaries bodily and mentally. However, with their indomitable will and by their perseverance and scrupulousness in the organizational work, the communists turned the imperialists' prisons into schools, arenas of revolutionary struggle and training centres of the Party's leading members. Later reviewing the facts, President Ho said: "Making the best of their adverse circumstances, our comrades took advantage of their time in prison to hold conferences and to open theoretical study courses. This, once more, proved that the enemy's extremely barbarous policy of terror could not prevent the advance of the revolution, on the contrary, it became a touchstone further tempering the revolutionaries." (1)

After a temporary lull, the revolutionary movement made a gradual recovery and again developed.

1. Ho Chi Minh, "Opening Speech at the 30th Anniversary of the Founding of the Party", *Selected Works*, Vol. II, Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1968, p. 147.

Thanks to the loyalty and devotion of the Party members and cadres who were safe from the enemy's raids and terror, to the Party members who had escaped or freed from prison, to the protection of the revolutionary masses, numerous Party organizations were rebuilt and continued with their work. Thus, the Party was still able to keep in touch with the masses.

In June 1932, the Party put forth an *Action Programme* defining the Party's immediate task, which was to lead the masses to struggle for democratic rights and better living conditions, against white terror, preparing to engage the masses in more intensive struggles when the occasion arose. The *Action Programme* laid stress on the consolidation of the Party, the building of the Party's organizations "in utmost secrecy and with iron-like discipline", which was the essential conditions for the restoration and development of the movement.

During 1932, 1933, 1934, many workers' strikes broke out to demand an improvement of the living conditions, above all the demonstration against hunger by 2,000 Ha Tien workers and the struggle of 1,000 workers of the Dau Tieng rubber plantation. Some Party cadres managed to take legitimate action, standing for election to the Saigon Municipal Council of legislatures 1933 and 1935 and to the Zone Administrative Council of Cochinchina in 1935. Others used the open press media to expose the imperialists' henchmen, to criticize the bourgeois reactionary political, philosophical, literary and art viewpoints and to present the Party's philosophical, literary and art viewpoints. Several Party organizations resorted to semi-legal measures such as the

formation of rice transplanting associations, reaping associations, music associations, reading associations, football associations... in order to rally the broad masses. The cadres and Party members kept in prisons often led and staged struggles against murder, terror, death sentences, gaoler's cruelties and for the improvement of the penitentiary regime.

During these years of hardship, our Party enjoyed the wholehearted assistance from the Communist International and other brotherly Parties.

In 1934, the overseas leading board of the Party was founded. It had the duty to unify the Party organizations which had been rebuilt in the country, to rehabilitate the organizations destroyed by the enemy, to build new bases, to train and educate cadres and to prepare for the Party congress.

In September 1934, on the basis of the development of the Lao revolutionary movement and of the communist organizations in Laos, the Executive Committee of the Lao Party section was established.

In March 1935, the first nationwide Congress of representatives of the Party was held in Ma Cao (China). Present at the Congress were 15 representatives who came on behalf of all the Party organizations and members of the three Indochinese countries. The Congress outlined three main, immediate tasks of the Party, which were to consolidate and develop the Party, to rally the broad masses and to oppose the imperialist war. It also elected a new Central Executive Committee (1). The first Party

1. The Party Central Committee comprised 9 members with Comrade Le Hong Phong as Secretary General.

Congress strengthened the unification of the Party's organizational system, unified the revolutionary movements under the leadership of the Central Executive Committee, enhanced the confidence of the Party members and the masses and prepared forces to advance to a new revolutionary upsurge. However, the Congress had a shortcoming: it failed to see through the danger of fascism in the world and the possibility of staging an intensive campaign against fascism, war and for freedom, welfare and peace.

Following the Congress, the revolutionary movement continued to recover and to gain in strength. The strikes for better living conditions by drivers at the Thu Dau Mot pottery, Saigon coachmen, rubber plantation workers, and husking mill workers in Cochinchina broke out one after another. Peasants in Cao Bang, Lang Son fought against forced labour. Revolutionary prisoners in Buon Ma Thuot detention centre struggled against terror, repression and torture by the French imperialists. In the fields of press, literature and art and in the people's councils, the legitimate activities carried out by a number of Party members and patriotic intellectuals continued to gain scope.

After 4 years of braving white terror, restoring and developing the movement, our Party not only stood firm but was also further tempered. It had, then, prepared adequate conditions for a new revolutionary upsurge. The years of restoring and developing the movement enabled the Party to draw rich experience *in the ideological work and the organizational work during the period of preserving its forces, in the use of various forms and methods of social*

activities to cover the underground organizations and to rally the masses, and in the preparation to bring the movement to a new height.

THE INDOCHINA DEMOCRATIC FRONT (1936-1939)

The grave consequences of the economic crisis of 1929-1933 and the depression which followed in the imperialist countries further deepened the social contradiction there and facilitated the growth of the revolutionary movement. To cope with the masses' movement of struggle, the monopoly capitalists in some imperialist countries abolished the bourgeois democratic freedoms and pursued a dictatorial fascist policy. The German-Italian-Japanese fascists were linked up into an "axe" of considerable strength. They made frenzied preparations for war to redistribute the world market and for an invasion of the Soviet Union in an attempt to liquidate the bulwark of the world revolution.

In face of this situation, the Seventh Congress of the Communist International (July 1935) instructed that the direct, immediate objective of the working class and the labouring people all over the world at the time was not to struggle to overthrow capitalism and to build socialism, but to struggle against fascism and the fascist war of aggression, for democracy and peace. Therefore, the Communist Parties in all countries should unify the workers' forces and establish a broad popular front which would include all patriotic, democratic, progressive parties and factions, and all strata of the people in order to unify their

action against the principal, immediate enemy — fascism.

Comrade Le Hong Phong, head of our Party's delegation to the Congress, read a speech on the situation of the Indochinese revolution and the activities of the Indochinese Communist Party since it came into being. At this congress Comrade Le Hong Phong was elected alternate member of the Communist International Executive Committee. Comrade Nguyen Ai Quoc, who was then following study courses in Lenin University in Moscow, was also invited to the Congress.

In the drive against fascism, the French Popular Front, the core of which was the French Communist Party, won the general elections in April 1936. In June, the Popular Front government came into power in France. The event directly bore on the political situation in the three Indochinese countries.

As a result of the economic crisis and the French imperialists' policy of repression, our people from all walks of life, including the national bourgeoisie, the small and medium landowners were longing for new democratic changes.

On the basis of the realities in our country and of the Resolution of the Communist International 7th Congress, in July 1936, Comrade Le Hong Phong convened and chaired a conference of the Party's Central Executive Committee in Shanghai (China) with a view to working out the Party's new line. The conference held that the anti-imperialist and anti-feudalist strategic task set forth by our Party at its foundation remained unchanged, but the direct, immediate objective of the revolution now was not

to overthrow the French imperialists' rule and to carry out land revolution, but to struggle against the colonial reactionaries, instruments of fascism, for democratic freedoms, welfare and peace. To realize the objective, the Conference advocated founding the Indochina Anti-imperialist Popular Front, later changed into Indochina Unified Democratic Front and shortened to Indochina Democratic Front, including all social classes, parties, nationalities, organizations and political groups which were for democratic reforms and progress. Concerning the forms and methods of struggle, the Party Central Committee advocated exploiting thoroughly the possibilities of legal and semi-legal activities to make propaganda among and to organize the masses, at the same time consolidating and developing the Party's underground organizations, combining legal and semi-legal activities with illegal ones to develop the Party's organization and the Democratic Front, and stepping up the masses' movement of struggle.

To turn the Party's new line, into the masses' revolutionary movement, the Central Committee's meetings in March 1937 and September 1937 had a thorough discussion on the Party's organizational work during the period of Democratic Front. These meetings decided to establish the Anti-imperialist Youths' Union in replacement of the Young Communists' League, the Workers' Association in replacement of the Workers' Red Association, the Peasants' Association in replacement of the Peasants' Red Association and the Popular Relief organization in replacement of the Red Relief organization. The open, semi-open and simple activities were stepped up to rally the broad

masses, such as the establishment of friendship associations, mutual aid associations, reading groups, evening class courses, sports groups, music bands, cooperatives, social function associations, etc. A number of cadres of the Party and the Front were sent to work in various reformist and reactionary organizations in order to denounce the crimes of the imperialists and their henchmen, to expose the reactionary leaders and to win the masses over to the revolutionary side. The guiding principles for the building of the Party at the time were: "It is better to have a smaller Party membership which is pure than a bigger one which is not wholly reliable", "concerning the mass organizations, quantity is the key point, but for the Party organization, quality is essential"; to stage an unrelenting struggle against the trotskyists, the provocateurs and the anti-Party elements. These correct principles regarding the organizational work ensured a speedy and complete realization of the Party's new political line. Besides, the Party leadership was further strengthened by a large number of cadres who had been freed from prisons.

In October 1938, after a course of study at the Institute for National and Colonial Questions in the Soviet Union, Comrade Nguyen Ai Quoc returned to the country with the unanimous consent of the Communist International. While trying by every means to return home he paid much attention to the activities of the revolutionary movement in the country. He regularly sent to our Party the right instructions. He pointed out: the main task of the revolution at this time was to struggle for democratic freedoms, the Front organization should be broad, embracing

people from all walks of life, the national bourgeoisie and the progressive personalities in Indochina included; no compromise at all with the trotskyists; relentless struggle against sectarianism, and preservation of a close relationship with the French Communist Party and the French Popular Front.

The Party's line of struggling for freedom, welfare and peace constituted the right answer to the pressing demand of the revolution and the people's aspiration at the time. A new high tide of revolution surged up all over the country. It started with a movement of struggle for the convening of an *Indochinese Congress*. The preparatory committee for the Indochinese Congress was set up, consisting of representatives of the workers, peasants, intellectuals, women, journalists and bourgeois. Within a short time, in various factories, mines, plantations, cities and towns and in the countryside, Action Committees were formed to rally the masses and to elect representatives to the Indochinese Congress. In southern Vietnam alone, there were 600 action committees. Under the pressure of the masses, the French Government had to free a large number of political prisoners, issue a decree for the eight-hour working day and for the ten day annual paid leave. Soon after that, the French ordered a ban on the Indochinese Congress. However, the democratic movement all over the country never ceased to grow up. In 1937, there were over 400 struggles by workers, with 120,000 participants for better living conditions, freedom to organize workers' associations and friendship associations and over 150 struggles by the peasants, with more than 30,000 participants, demanding redistribution of communal land, reduction of tax and

statutory labour, election of local dignitaries, rural reform, and protesting against "excessive collection and unjust obligation"—On the occasion of the visit by Justin Godard, envoy of the French Popular Front, who came to investigate the Indochinese situation, and the visit by Brévié, who came to take up his post as governor general, tens of thousands of people from all walks of life joined in the struggle for a general amnesty to political prisoners, for the abolition of poll tax, freedom of speech and freedom of association. In 1937 and 1938, our Party won great victory in the elections to the Central Vietnam People's Council and the Tonkin People's Council. Candidates from the Party and the Democratic Front were elected with the highest percentage of votes.

On the Party's initiative, the Association for the Propagation of National Script was established. Large numbers of dailies and periodicals were openly published by the Party and the Democratic Front in Vietnamese and French in north, central and south Vietnam: *Dan Chung* (Public), *Lao Dong* (Labour), *Thoi Bao* (Time), *Ban Dan* (People's Friend), *Thoi The* (Situation), *Tin Tuc* (News), *Doi Nay* (Present Time), *Tieng noi cua chung ta* (Our Voice) *Nhanh Lua* (Paddy Twig), *Kinh Te* (Economy), *Tan Van* (Review), *Dan Moi* (New People), *Pho Thong* (Universal). The Party's papers campaigned for the Party's lines and policies, propagated Marxism-Leninism and, at the same time, rallied and organized the masses. Large numbers of books were written openly introducing socialism, communism and giving information on the Soviet Union and literary works of critical realism were published

May Day was, for the first time in our country, celebrated openly in Hanoi, Saigon and other cities and towns in 1938-1939 with tens of thousands of participants. The May Day mass rally in 1938 was held in Hanoi with 25,000 persons taking part. This was one of the occasions to rally the masses and to display the great strength of the democratic movement.

Early in 1938, when Daladier came into power, the French government went more and more to the right. Under the pretext of defending France and Indochina, the Daladier government put forth several reactionary policies: tax increase, compulsory state bonds, closure of the *Dan Chung* and persecution of the participants in the struggle.

The Party Central Committee meeting in March 1938 affirmed the victories already achieved. The meeting criticized such "leftist" deviations as isolationism, narrow-mindedness, failure to make full use of the legal and semi-legal methods to step up the movement and such "rightist" deviations as overconfidence in the legal method, complacency in partial victories leading to negligence in the consolidation of the Party's underground organizations, lack of vigilance against the trotskyist peril and unprincipled cooperation with the trotskyist elements, overestimating the persuasion work as regards the bourgeoisie and the landowning class, underestimating the need to consolidate and to develop the workers' and peasants' revolutionary forces and underestimating the importance of the worker-peasant alliance. The meeting decided to consolidate the Party's organizations and to combine closely the open activities with the underground activities. The meeting

also elected Comrade Nguyen Van Cu as Secretary-General of the Party.

In March 1939, our Party issued a *Manifesto* pointing out the coming peril of fascism and the French Government's suppression of democratic freedoms, intensified exploitation of the French people and the colonial peoples and preparations for war. The Manifesto called on all strata of the people to unify their action in struggling for democratic freedoms, against the war danger, to discard the trotskysts and to vote for the candidates of the Democratic Front.

In July 1939, Comrade Nguyen Van Cu wrote and allowed publication of the booklet "Self-criticism" in which he drew experience in the campaign for election of the Cochinchina Zone Administrative Council, analysed the experience in giving leadership to the Democratic Front and criticized the tendencies running counter to the Party's line, thus contributing to enhancing the unity of will and action within the Party.

It was a rare case that in such a colonial and semi-feudal country as ours there was a period when the working class's revolutionary Party was able to make full use of legal and semi-legal activities closely combined with underground, illegal activities in order to mobilize and educate millions of people intensively. With the forces and the terrain chiefly created in 1930-31 and restored in 1932 through 1935, millions of workers, peasants and other people from different walks of life were now educated and reorganized in accordance with the Party's revolutionary line. A new contingent of revolutionary

cadres was formed during the great upsurge of the democratic movement. Once more, our Party was tempered and, to a great extent, matured. Having had a firm grasp of the strategic line and experience in handling the method of revolution, our Party became well-versed in both strategy and tactic. Through the realities of the three years of struggle for democracy, our Party was armed with rich experience in *defining the principal, immediate enemy and the direct, immediate objective of the revolution, in organizing a broad unified front on the basis of worker-peasant alliance, in combining legal and illegal activities and in linking the democratic and national requirements during the period of democratic reforms*. Thus, the victories of the Democratic Front had, in effect, prepared the forces and the terrain for the subsequent upsurge of a broad struggle for national salvation in the years 1939-45.

UPSURGE OF NATIONAL SALVATION (1930-1945) AND THE AUGUST REVOLUTION

In September 1939, the Second World War broke out. In Indochina, the French colonialists ruthlessly repressed the revolutionary movement led by our Party and at the same time, issued the order of general mobilization, seeking by all means to obtain manpower and wealth here to provide for their imperialist war. The war put our country in a new conjuncture. The imperialists' policy of pillage, extortion and fascist terror in the war would speed up the process of revolutionizing the people and swiftly give rise to a situation in which both the exploiting

and the exploited classes could no longer lead the same life as before. Because of the war, the task of overthrowing the imperialists' and their henchmen's power was now the direct, immediate task of the revolution. Legal struggle (1) for democracy and better living conditions was no longer possible and no longer the direct objective of the revolution. The Party gave timely instructions to its organs and cadres, engaged in legal and semi-legal activities, to go fast underground, to shift the centre of work to the countryside, and to rely on the countryside to carry on with their work and to strongly enhance the revolutionary forces in both the countryside and the towns.

In November 1939, the Party Central Committee met in Ba Diem (Hoc Mon, Gia Dinh) with the participation of Comrades Nguyen Van Cu, Le Duan, Phan Dang Luu, Vo Van Tan, etc. The conference laid stress on *national liberation as the primary task of the Indochinese revolution* "The anti-imperialist revolution and the land revolution are the keys of the bourgeois democratic revolution. The land revolution could not succeed without a successful anti-imperialist revolution and vice-versa. This principle would never change but it should be cleverly applied in such a way as to successfully perform the essential task of the revolution, i.e. to overthrow

1. It was no longer possible to carry on the legal struggle for democratic freedoms and a better life: all public communist groups responsible for the papers "News" in Hanoi and "The Masses" in Saigon were arrested. Progressive literature was forbidden or confiscated. Friendship associations were closed and their properties confiscated.

imperialism" (1). On the basis of this new orientation of strategic line, the conference advocated shelving temporarily the watchword of the land revolution; meanwhile, it put forth the policy of opposing high land rent, exorbitant money interest and of confiscating the land of the imperialists and the landlords who betrayed the national cause to distribute to the tillers. To gather forces for the overthrow of the imperialists' and their henchmen's power, the conference advocated establishing the Indochina anti-imperialist unified national Front. The main force of the Front was the workers and peasants and it was the Front's policy to ally with or to neutralize the local bourgeoisie and the middle and small land owners, under the leadership of the proletariat. The conference pointed out that the imperialist war would create the opportunity for the Indochinese revolution to break out and the Party's task was to get prepared for a violent action to seize power when the opportunity arose. The conference stressed the unity of mind and action within the entire Party and made clear that this unity should be based on Marxist-Leninist theory, a correct political line and the principle of democratic centralism, while maintaining a close relationship with the masses and fostering the determination, the readiness to sacrifice and the devotion to the revolutionary cause of all Party members. The conference resolution drew attention to the task of building Party and revolutionary bases in Laos and Kampuchea.

1. *Party's Documents 1930-45*, Vol. III, published by the Commission for the Study of the Party's History, 1977, p. 58

The 1939 conference of the Party Central Committee gave the right answer to the questions of strategy and method of revolution in overthrowing the imperialists' and their henchmen's power. Thus, it met the pressing requirements of the wartime and the revolution and, at the same time, contributed to the treasure of experience in carrying out a national democratic revolution under the leadership of the Party.

In June 1940, the Hitlerite fascists occupied France. Taking advantage of this, the Japanese fascists invaded Indochina. The French colonialists surrendered to the Japanese but the indomitable Vietnamese people rose up against both the Japanese and the French. In September 1940, the Bac Son uprising broke out, followed by the Nam Ky uprising in November 1940. In January 1941, there was an army mutiny in Do Luong. These events signalled the advent of a new period in our country: the period of the entire people rising up in arms to overthrow the invaders and the traitors, to win independence and freedom, the period of partial insurrections likely to break out in anticipation of a nationwide general insurrection. (1)

In November 1940, the Party Central Committee met in Dinh Bang (Bac Ninh province), with the participation of Comrades Truong Chinh, Phan Dang

1. The two insurrections of Bac Son (27 September 1940) and Nam Ky (23 November 1940) were led by the Indochinese Communist Party. The Do Luong mutiny was started by sergeant Nguyen Van Cung. It was not led by the Indochinese Communist Party and failed to enlist the support of the masses.

Luu, Hoang Van Thu, Hoang Quoc Viet. The conference pointed out the danger of a double yoke faced by the Indochinese peoples, the oppression of Indochina by the Japanese and French imperialists who were the principal enemies of the Indochinese peoples, at the time. Therefore, the Party's immediate task was to lead the Indochinese peoples to prepare for armed insurrection to overthrow the Japanese and French fascists and to seize power for the people. The conference decided to maintain the armed force of the Bac Son uprising, the first revolutionary armed detachment led by our Party, as the core for the building of the political base and the revolutionary base. The conference decided to suspend the Cochinchina uprising for lack of appropriate conditions. But because of difficulties in the liaison work, the Party Central Committee's decision did not come in time and the uprising broke out. The conference appointed a provisional Central Executive Committee to continue with the work of leadership, in replacement of the 1939 Committee which was broken by the imperialists. Comrade Truong Chinh was made acting secretary of the Party Central Executive Committee.

A sense of urgency was felt in the situation of the world and the country when the French colonialists, the incumbent rulers of Indochina, surrendered to the German and Japanese fascists. Within two months, the Bac Son and the Cochinchina uprisings broke out. New opportunities were arising for the Indochinese revolution.

Comrade Nguyen Ai Quoc decided to return to the country to give direct leadership to the revolution.

He arrived in the homeland on 8 February 1941 and took secret residence in Pac Bo (Ha Quang, Cao Bang). His first task was to work out the general lines for the founding of the Viet Minh and to prepare for a conference of the Party Central Committee

In May 1941, the conference of the Party Central Committee, convened and chaired by Comrade Nguyen Ai Quoc, representative of the Communist International, took place in Pac Bo. Present at the conference were Comrades Truong Chinh, Hoang Van Thu, Phung Chi Kien, Hoang Quoc Viet, delegates from the zone Party Committees of Tonkin and Central Vietnam and delegates working abroad.

At this juncture, the German fascists were going to attack the Soviet Union. The conference held that if the Germans attack the Soviet Union, they would be annihilated, revolutions in several countries would succeed and numerous socialist countries would come into being. Having made a thorough analysis of the situation in the country and the world, the conference concluded that the immediate revolution was the *revolution of national liberation*, that the revolutionary forces of the country should be spearheaded against the Japanese-German fascist aggressors, because "...at this juncture, if the question of national liberation could not be solved and independence, freedom could not be won for the entire nation, our nation and our people would have to go on living in slavery and the people's

rights and the class interests would never be secured"(1).

The conference developed and perfected the resolutions of the 1939 conference and the 1940 conference of the Central Committee on the question of national liberation, the policy of solving the national question within the framework of each country of Indochina, the founding of the Front for the Independence of Vietnam (shortened to Viet Minh) which embraced the national salvation associations of the people from all walks of life (the Workers' National Salvation Association, the Peasants' Association for National Salvation, the Youth Association for National Salvation, the Women's Association for National Salvation, the Aged People's Association for National Salvation, the Military Association for National Salvation, the Buddhist believers' Association for National Salvation, the Overseas Vietnamese Association for National Salvation) and applied a highly flexible tactic to differentiate the enemies and to win over as many forces as possible with a view to saving the country and liberating the nation. The conference deemed it necessary that the Alliance for the Independence of Vietnam should help the Lao people to set up the Alliance for the Independence of Laos and the Kampuchean people to set up the Alliance for the Independence of Kampuchea, advancing to the founding of the All-Indochina Unified Front in order to drive out their common enemies, i. e the Japanese and French, and to win independence for each country.

1. "Resolution of the Central Committee Conference in May 1941" *Party's documents 1939-45* Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1969, p. 194.

After driving away the Japanese and French imperialists, a Vietnam Democratic Republic would be founded, with a golden-star red flag as its national flag.

The conference pointed out that the central task of our Party and people at this stage was to prepare for insurrections. Based on the experience of the Nghe Tinh Soviets and the Bac Son, Cochinchina insurrections, the conference held that when the opportunity arose "with our available forces, we can lead a partial insurrection in the localities the success of which will pave the way for a great general insurrection" (1). The conference paid particular attention to the training of cadres, the increase of the worker proportion in the Party's membership, the agitation work among the workers combined with that among the peasants and the enemy's soldiers. The conference appointed an official central executive committee and elected Comrade Truong Chinh as the Party's Secretary General.

The resolution of the Central Committee's conference of May 1941 and Comrade Nguyen Ai Quoc's Appeal to the fellowcountrymen after the conference greatly inspired the entire Party and people.

The Central Committee's conference of 1941 was of particular historic significance. Taking a firm grasp of the objective of national liberation as the central task the conference defined the directions and the measures for rallying the anti-imperialist forces in an appropriate national unified front, the Viet

1. "Resolution of the Party Central Committee's Conference in May 1941" *Party's Documents 1930-1945*, Vol. III, published by the Commission for the Study of the Party's History, 1977, pp. 216-217.

Minh, and advocated waging partial insurrections in preparation for a general insurrection. These were "great initiatives put forward by the Party and president Ho Chi Minh in the high tide of national salvation of 1940 through 1945 and they were one of the essential factors ensuring the success of the August Revolution" (1).

The resolution of the Central Committee in 1941 was, later, complemented and made concrete by the resolutions of the meetings of the Party Central Standing Committee and by the important directives of the Central Committee.

In December 1941, the Central Committee issued Directive on Organizational Work, defining the guide-lines to enable the Party to give effective leadership to the masses' revolutionary movement and the struggle against the enemy's terrorist acts, thus making it possible for the mass organizations to enlist large numbers of participants. In the same month, the Central Committee issued a communiqué on the *War in the Pacific and the Party's Urgent Task*. The Communiqué made it clear that wherever the Allied forces came, the people there should rise up to establish the local provisional revolutionary power and get into contact with them under the name of the local government.

The *Viet Minh Programme* was in conformity with the people's aspiration for independence and freedom. All the Vietnamese patriots gave a warm

1. Le Duan, "The Vietnam Workers' Party, the Leader and the Organiser of All the Successes of the Vietnamese Revolution". *Socialist Revolution in Vietnam, Selected Works*, Vol II, Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1976, p. 649.

welcome to the Programme and made their best to put it into effect. That was why *Viet Minh* developed very quickly despite the enemy's ruthless terrorism.

From 1943, the great victories of the Soviet Union in Stalingrad and other fronts brought the second world war to an essential turning-point. The fate of the German — Italian — Japanese fascists was coming to a close. Favourable conditions for the oppressed peoples to rise up were being created. To be able to seize the historic opportunity, in February 1943, the Central Standing Committee Conference decided that measures should be taken to bring about a speedy upsurge in the revolutionary movement throughout the country. The conference assessed that while the movement of national salvation was quite strong in the countryside, it remained weak in the urban areas, above all, the big cities, where the Party and the Viet Minh Front had not been able to encourage the movement of young students and intellectuals. The conference advocated widening the Viet Minh Front and strongly stepping up the movement in cities and towns. In 1943 the Party put forth the *Vietnam Cultural Thesis* to rally writers and artists and intellectuals into the *Cultural Association for National Salvation*, a branch of the Viet Minh Front. The clandestine publications of the Party and the Viet Minh Front laid bare the pro-Japan thoughts, the vain hope for Japanese assistance and the illusion of seizing power through peaceful negotiation with the Japanese and struggled against the trotskyist provocateurs and saboteurs and the

A.B. (1), against the divisionist and factionist lines in order to consolidate solidarity, single-mindedness of the Party and the Front and to enhance the Party's leadership vis-à-vis the Vietnamese revolution.

Based on the lines adopted by the Conference of 1943, in June 1944, our Party helped the patriotic intellectuals to found the Vietnam Democratic Party with a view to rallying the large numbers of intellectuals and national bourgeois.

In September 1943, as soon as he was freed from Liao Zhou prison, Comrade Ho Chi Minh made contact with the Association for the Liberation of Vietnam. As a result of his activities in March 1944 the conference of representatives of parties and patriotic mass organizations of Vietnamese residents in China was held. The aim of the conference was to discuss how to mobilize overseas Vietnamese and people within the country to drive away the Japanese and the French, and win back national independence. The Chiang Kai-shek government attempted to take advantage of the conference and to use organizations of Vietnamese henchmen as a tool to carry out their hegemonist scheme vis-à-vis our country. At this conference Comrade Ho Chi Minh in his capacity as a representative of the Vietnam section of the International Congress against aggression delivered an important report. He laid stress on lessons of historic significance of the Vietnamese revolution drawn

1. A.B. (Anti-Bolshevik) were the anti-communist provocateurs who worked under the name of communism. It was an organization set up by the French imperialists. They got into the Party, seeking to sow discord within the Party and to undermine the Indochinese revolutionary movement.

from 40 years of heroic struggle against the invaders: "If there are no unified forces in the whole country and strong aid from outside, the movement for national salvation can hardly be successful". (1) Comrade Ho Chi Minh pointed out that between the two factors, namely internal unity and foreign aid, the first one was a fundamental one. "If we have no force to base ourselves on there can be no question of foreign aid." (2) "To unite the entire people there should be a large organization." (3) This front rallies all patriotic organizations and individuals irrespective of their ages, sexes, religion, occupation, classes and political parties. It is the anti-Japanese and anti-French national united front. To achieve broad unity the front should hold up principles and work style: to take national salvations as a basis on which to unite parties; the common affairs of the country should be discussed and agreed upon by all members; they should not talk about political parties and attack one another but cooperate with one another, "those who have money can offer money, those who have manpower can offer manpower". (4)

At the Conference manipulated by the representative of the Chiang Kai-shek government, and composed of disparate elements, Comrade Ho Chi Minh put forth slogans on unity and did not hesitate to stress the role of the Communist Party: "Of all political parties, the most famous is the Communist

1, 2, 3, 4: Ho Chi Minh, *Report of the Vietnam Section under the International Congress Against Aggression at the Conference on the Vietnamese Revolution Overseas*, Liao Zhou, March 1944. Documents deposited at the Institute for the Study of the Party's History.

Party of Vietnam." (1) He pointed out: "The Vietnamese people are not afraid of communism, because it is the ideological current of the era, the humanist ideology and the world community." (2) In this difficult situation, Comrade Ho Chi Minh did not slack the principles of struggle but stood for suitable methods of struggle. He exposed the divisive and disruptive plots of the reactionary henchmen of the Chinese Kuomintang. He pointed that their allegations were 'empty talk of idle people.' (3) and "are not worth discussing. And we should let the spring wind disperse them and the future assert itself by the truth." (4) He pointed out: "Only hardships, difficulties and danger await us in the performance of our present tasks. There is no room for personal considerations, boasting and social positions." (5)

In August 1944, in accordance with the Party's line, the Viet Minh Central organ issued an appeal and staged a campaign for "acquiring arms to drive away the enemy". The campaign of building the armed forces, establishing revolutionary bases and preparing for armed insurrection was stepped up in the mountainous and midland regions, in combination with the masses' political struggle in the plains, the countryside and the towns. By this time, the National Salvation Army detachment had extended its armed propaganda activities from the Bac Son-Vu Nhay bases to Tuyen Quang, Vinh Yen and, at the same time, opened the way north-ward to link with the Cao Bang base. With the masses' movement of political struggle highly developed, armed and

1, 2, 3, 4, 5. op. cit.,

semi-armed revolutionary organizations were founded and a system of interacted bases was established from Cao Bang to Ha Giang, Bac Can and Lang Son. The two large bases in the North (Cao Bang and Bac Son - Vu Nhai) were linked together in preparation for the setting up of the liberation zone later on. The whole country was seething with revolutionary zeal. In some localities, particularly the bases, the masses were anxious for action, but the Party pointed out that the opportunity for an all-nation insurrection was yet to come.

In October 1944, after a period of work abroad, Comrade Ho Chi Minh (1) returned and ordered the postponement of the Cao Bang, Bac Can, Lang Son (2) insurrections. Comrade Ho Chi Minh explained the characteristics of the time saying "the stage of peacefully developed revolution has passed but the stage of general insurrection by the entire people hasn't come". It was necessary to find an appropriate way to step up the masses' political struggle and, at the same time, to prepare for armed struggle. Comrade Ho Chi Minh gave the instruction to found the

1. From August 1942 to October 1944, Comrade Nguyen Ai Quoc worked in China and assumed the name of Ho Chi Minh. From 29 August 1942 to 10 September 1943, Comrade Ho Chi Minh was illegally detained by the Chang Kai-shek administration.

2. Except for the provinces of Cao Bang, Bac Can, Lang Son, conditions were not yet ripe to start a nationwide insurrection. Thus if insurrections broke out in these provinces, they would be suppressed by the French troops.

Vietnam Propaganda Liberation Army detachment. (1)

The instruction pointed out that our revolution was the revolution of the entire people, so it is necessary to mobilize the entire people and to arm the entire people. While building a concentrated army detachment, it was necessary to maintain the armed forces in the localities. The regular army detachment had the duty to give guidance, training and help to the local armed forces. The guide-line for the activities of the Vietnam Propaganda Liberation Army detachment was to rely on the people, to *combine military action with political one, the former taking precedence over the latter*, and to conduct a guerrilla war based on speed, secrecy and surprise. The Vietnam Propaganda Liberation Army detachment was small at first, but it was "the starting point of the liberation army, it can go from the North to the South, everywhere in our country Vietnam". On 22 December 1944, the Vietnam Propaganda Liberation Army detachment was founded in Cao Bang with Comrade Vo Nguyen Giap as the organizer and the commander. The Vietnam Propaganda Liberation Army detachment, together with the *National Salvation Army units* (2), stepped up the political struggle combined

1. As President Ho Chi Minh had instructed the Vietnam Propaganda Liberation Army stress must be laid on political rather than military matters. Skilful propaganda methods should be used to organize the masses and convince them to rise up against the enemy.

2. Following the Bac Son insurrection (17 September 1940) the insurrectionists were organized into concentrated guerilla groups which bore the name of "National Salvation Troops" and were placed under the leadership of the Indochinese Communist Party. In a short time these groups had been developed into 3 platoons.

with the armed struggle, leading to the movement of fighting the French and driving away the Japanese all over the country. By this time, the Central Standing Committee had already amended its plan for the untimely armed struggle in the Vu Nhai-Dinh Ca (November 1944) and moved the struggle into a correct direction.

From 1944 to early 1945, on the European front, the Soviet army won decisive victories through a series of strategic counter-offensives, bringing the war to the gate of the German fascists' lair. The end of the German fascists had been tolled. The Japanese fascists' fate in the East was being shaken to the root. To avert the risk of a French sudden attack when the Allied forces advanced to Indochina, the Japanese staged a coup de force, removing the French and seizing Indochina. On the night of 9 March 1945, the armed conflict between the Japanese and the French broke out. Within one day, the French colonialists surrendered to the Japanese in the whole of Indochina.

Our Party had long since foreseen a Japanese coup against the French, "The Japanese are making fast preparations to deprive the French of their power" (1), "both the Japanese and French... are heading for a fatal showdown" (2).

From 9 to 12 March 1945, the Central Standing Committee held an enlarged conference to assess the

1. "Exposing the Japanese Imperialists' Dark Schemes", *Liberation Banner*, No. 3, 15 Feb, 1944, Su That Publishing House, 1955, p. 21.

2. "The ulcer should break", *Liberation Banner*, No. 7, 28 Sept. 1944, Su That Publishing House, 1955, p. 46.

developments following the coup and to work out the revolutionary lines for the new stage. The conference was of the opinion that the coup would give rise to a profound political crisis which speedily ripened the conditions for the general insurrection. The conference decided to replace the slogan "Drive away the Japanese and the French" by "Drive away the Japanese fascists" and to *launch a powerful campaign against the Japanese for national salvation, advancing swiftly to general insurrection to seize power. Wherever favourable conditions existed, guerilla warfare should be waged to take over the local government.* To accelerate the upsurge of national salvation, the conference decided to take up more intensive and bolder forms and methods of struggle such as "propaganda work with revolutionary guards' escort", "shock brigades", show-of-strength processions and demonstrations, open mass gatherings, establishment of people's revolutionary committees, building and expanding military zones and revolutionary bases. The key measure to intensify the revolutionary movement then was to instigate the people "to break open the rice stores to avert famine", with a view to rallying a mass political army in preparation for the general insurrection. The assessments and resolutions of the conference were reflected in the historic directive "The Japanese French Clash and Our Action" issued by the Central Standing Committee on 12 March 1945, which gave timely guidance to and brought into full play the independent, creative spirit of the local Party organs.

Since late March, the Vietnamese revolution had grown into an upsurge and partial insurrections

broken out one after another in several localities. (1) Revolutionary bases were set up. (2) The Vietnam Propaganda Liberation Army detachment and the National Salvation Army detachment, in combination with the people's uprisings, liberated numerous cantons, districts and villages of the Cao Bang, Bac Can, Lang Son, Thai Nguyen, Tuyen Quang, Bac Giang provinces. In Quang Ngai, on 11 March 1945, the Ba To insurrection broke out. The Ba To guerrilla detachment, the first revolutionary armed detachment of the southern central Vietnam, came into being. Following the Party's line, political prisoners in Nghia Lo, Son La, Buon Me Thuot, Hoa Lo (Hanoi) and other prisons seized the favourable opportunities to rise up, compelling the enemy to release them or breaking away or organizing escapes from the detention centres. This was a source of supply for the Party's need of activists and an important factor contributing to the intensification

1. Partial insurrections broke out in many localities such as in Ban Yen Nhan (Hai Hung province), in the provinces of Bac Giang, Hoa Binh, Nghia Lo, Son La, Quang Ngai Buon Me Thuot.

2. Besides the main bases that had been established in such provinces as Cao Bang, Bac Can, Lang Son, Thai Nguyen, Tuyen Quang some new bases were set up at some places in June 1945 as in Hien Luong (Vinh Phu province), in Van Hoi (Hoang Lien Son province), in Quynh Luu (Ha Nam Ninh province), in the 4th revolutionary base areas (Dong Trieu and Chi Linh districts — Hai Hung province), in Ba To (March 1945), in Vinh Son, Dai Son (May 1945) and in Quang Ngai province. The revolutionary base areas in the deltas were Kim Son, Kien Thuy, Kien An, Ha Than (in the districts of Van Lam, Yen My, My Hao — Hai Hung province).

of the movement of national salvation in the localities. In August 1945, the Party's total membership was about 5,000.

Urgent preparations for the general insurrection were being made at the time. In April 1945, the Central Standing Committee convened the Tonkin revolutionary military conference (1). This conference decided to unify all the armed forces into the *Vietnam Liberation Army*, to develop the armed self defence units and combat self-defence units, to conduct short training courses for military and political cadres and to build up seven big military zones (four in the North, two in central Vietnam and one in the South). In May 1945, Comrade Nguyen Ai Quoc shifted his headquarters to Tan Trao (Tuyen Quang) to give guidance to the preparation for the general insurrection and for a People's Congress. Having received reports on all the preparations for the general insurrections and the Tonkin revolutionary military conference, Comrade Ho Chi Minh gave instructions for the setting up of the Viet Bac Liberation zone. On 4 June 1945, the Liberation Zone was established, covering six provinces of Viet-Bac, i.e. Cao Bang, Bac Can, Lang Son, Thai Nguyen, Tuyen Quang, Ha Giang, and some localities of Bac Giang, Phu Tho, Yen Bai Vinh Yen

1. This conference was held in Hiep Hoa district (Ha Bac province) on April 15th-20th, 1945. It was presided over by Comrade Truong Chinh who was then Secretary-General. It comprised members of the base areas of Hoa Binh, Ninh Binh and Thanh Hoa. This was the first major military conference of our Party.

provinces in the Tonkin midland. People's revolutionary Committees of the Zone and of lower levels were set up. The ten big policies of the Viet Minh on the building of an independent and free Democratic Republic of Vietnam, engaged in fighting foreign invasion, and on the exercise of the people's democratic rights began to take effect in the Liberation Zone. The Viet Bac Liberation Zone became the revolutionary base of the whole country and was the germ of the subsequent Democratic Republic of Vietnam. Together with the establishment of the Viet Bac Liberation Zone, in most provinces of the North and Central Vietnam and in some provinces of the South, revolutionary base areas were taking shape.

The liberation areas served as a great stimulus for creating an upsurge of national salvation. In these areas, the people exercised their full right of mastery in every field. The people's right to mastery was more and more enhanced and step by step realized in numerous localities while the anti-Japanese upsurge for national salvation was expanding all over the country, the fascists' and their henchmen's rule was increasingly paralysed and partial insurrections and guerilla warfare were spreading widely. Before the revolution won victory throughout the country, in numerous mountain, rural and plain regions, there had existed a state of *dual power*: the Japanese fascists' and their henchmen's rule on the one hand, and on the other, the people's administration performed in varied forms and to differing degrees.

While our people were making urgent preparations for the general insurrection, a terrible famine

occurred in the North and northern central Vietnam. Two million compatriots of ours died as a result. This was the most tragic consequence of the Japanese fascists' and the French exploitation and their warlike policy. The Party's slogan "Break open the rice stores to avert famine" met the most urgent aspiration of the masses, fanned up the flame of struggle among the people, bringing about an anti-Japanese upsurge for national salvation which spread all over the country. This upsurge attracted not only the workers, peasants, small traders, small proprietors, students, civil servants but also the national bourgeois and a number of middle and small landowners. National salvation organizations, self-defence units developed in almost all villages and even in big cities and towns. The whole country was seething in an atmosphere of insurrection.

The world war was coming to its last stage. Having destroyed the German fascists, on August 8, 1945 the Soviet Union declared war to the Japanese fascists. Within a few days, the Soviet army completely wiped out the Japanese elite army column stationed in the three eastern provinces of China. (1) On 15 August 1945, Japan unconditionally surrendered to the Soviet Union and the Allied countries.

The Japanese army in Indochina were demoralized, confused and disintegrated. The puppet Tran Trong Kim Government was completely paralysed. However, the Japanese fascists and their henchmen were not willing to give up their rule. The Japanese still attempted to hold on to their gain, coming

1. These were Liaoning, Jilin, Heilongjiang.

to the rescue of the moribund colonial regime by handing over "independence" to their henchmen, and these, in their turn, sought the assistance of the American, British and French imperialists. But, all the schemes of the imperialists and their henchmen were smashed by our people's upsurge of national salvation.

The news of the Japanese capitulation, spreading throughout the country, fanned up the revolutionary flame among all strata of people, taking the revolutionary movement to an unprecedented peak. The middle-of-the-road persons made a clean shift to the revolutionary side. The Viet Minh Front enlisted millions of members from all walks of life and nationalities. The upsurge of national salvation encouraged the entire people to rise up, million as one, to make use of whatever could serve as weapons in order to overthrow the invaders and the traitors for the right to be masters of the country. The Indochinese Communist Party, the revolutionary vanguard of the people, had made sufficient preparations, politically, ideologically and organizationally, for the general insurrection. The objective and subjective conditions for the general insurrection in our country had fully ripened. The opportunity "which occurs only once in a thousand year" for the revolution had come: "We can't afford to dally." (1)

1. Nguyen Ai Quoc, "Letter to Fellowcountrymen Calling for General Insurrection in August, 1945," *Party's Documents 1930-1945*, published by Commission for the Study of the History of the Party, 1977, Vol. III, p. 405.

Our Party's historic mission at the time was to lead the people to raise the strategic opportunity to rise up and wrest back power from the Japanese fascists and their henchmen before the armies of the British imperialists and the Chiang Kai-shek reactionaries entered Indochina, and before the French colonialists had time to rally their army remnants and to bring their expeditionary corps for a second invasion of our country. From mid-August 1945, the British army were making haste on their way to our country from the South and the Chiang army were hurrying here from the north. This last-stage historic race between our people, on the one hand, and the imperialists and reactionaries, on the other, for the control of the country required from our people a swift action to secure victory.

And as the leader of our people, the Party remarkably fulfilled its historic mission.

On 13 August 1945, the All-Nation Conference of the Party, held in Tan Trao, (1) concluded that the opportunity for our people to win independence had come and the conditions for an Indochinese insurrection had ripened. The conference decided to lead the entire people to wage a general insurrection at the right time for the seizure of power. The conference defined the lines on internal and external affairs of the revolution in the new situation, worked out the key foreign policies which were *to make more friends and less enemies*, to oppose all acts of

1. The Party's national congress convened by the Party Central Committee and presided over by Comrade Ho Chi Minh from 13th to 15th August 1945.

aggression, to avoid armed conflicts with the British, Americans and Chiang, to take advantage of the contradictions between the British-French bloc and the American-Chiang bloc in their scramble for bigger gains in Indochina, to avoid being driven to a solitary confrontation with several imperialist forces and to get ready to deal with a concession made by the British, Americans and Chiang to the French, allowing the French to come back to Indochina. The conference laid stress on the guiding principle for the conduct of foreign affairs: only our own strength could determine the victory in the struggle between us and imperialism. To unify the leadership vis-à-vis the general insurrection, the conference decided to set up the All-Nation Insurrection Committee.

Following the All-Nation Party Conference, the People's Congress, held in Tan Trao on August 16, 1945, adopted the *Ten Big Policies of Viet Minh*, the *Order of General Insurrection*, the national golden-star red flag, the Tien Quan Ca as the national anthem and elected the National Liberation Central Committee which was the Provisional Government with Comrade Ho Chi Minh as President. At this historic Congress, our Party put forward an absolutely correct line, i. e. *to lead the masses to rise up to disarm the Japanese before the arrival of the Allied forces in Indochina, to seize power from the Japanese, to overthrow the puppet rulers, henchmen of the Japanese and to act as masters of the country in receiving the Allied forces which came to disarm the Japanese army in Indochina.*

Right after the All-Nation Party Conference and the Tan Trao People's Congress, the Indochina

Communist Party and President Ho Chi Minh issued appeals on the compatriots and the fighters throughout the country, urging them to rise up to seize power. President Ho Chi Minh urged: "The decisive hour for the destiny of our nation has come. Compatriots all over the country, stand up and rely on our own strength to liberate ourselves!"

On the night of 13 August 1945, the All-Nation Insurrection Committee sent *Military Order No. 1* to the compatriots and the fighters throughout the country, urging them to swiftly rise up to win independence.

From 14 to 18 August, the general insurrection succeeded in the plain rural area of the North, most of Central Vietnam, part of the South and in Bac Giang, Hai Duong, Ha Tinh, Hoi An (Quang Nam) towns.

On 19 August, the general insurrection won splendid success in Hanoi. Hundreds of thousands of people from the city and its suburbs went down on the streets in a show-of-strength demonstration, shouting such slogans as "Down with the Tran Trong Kim puppet Government", "Set up the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam". "Vietnam, a completely independent country"... The masses overran the Imperial Envoy's Palace, the Municipal Administrative Committee, the Civil Guards' Camp, the City Police Headquarters and other organs of the puppet government.

The success of the general insurrection in Hanoi further paralysed the entire puppet administration and greatly encouraged the people in other localities to rise up quickly. From 19 to 22 August, the

general insurrection succeeded in the towns of Yen Bai, Thai Binh, Phuoc Yen, Thanh Hoa, Khanh Hoa, Bac Ninh, Ninh Binh, Thai Nguyen, Cao Bang, Tuyen Quang, Bac Can, Son Tay, Nghe An, Ninh Thuan, Nam Dinh, Hung Yen, Kien An, Quang Yen.

On August 23, the general insurrection succeeded in Hue, capital of the Nguyen dynasty. One hundred and fifty thousand people of Hue — Thua Thien rose up compelling the puppet administration to capitulate and forcing King Bao Dai to abdicate and to surrender the imperial seal and sword to the revolution, thus wiping out the royal regime in Vietnam.

Together with the success of the insurrection in Hanoi and the provinces of the North, the success of the insurrection in Hue and the provinces of central Vietnam dealt a telling blow on the puppet ruling apparatus in the country.

From 23 to 25 August, the general insurrection succeeded in Hai Phong city and the towns of Ha Dong, Hoa Binh, Quang Tri, Quang Binh, Binh Dinh, Lam Vien, Gia Lai, Tan An, Bac Lieu, Ha Nam, Dac Lac, Phu Yen, Binh Thuan, Go Cong, My Tho, Lang Son, Phu Tho, Cong Tum.

On 25 August, over a million people from Saigon city and adjacent provinces went down on the streets in a show-of-strength demonstration and overran the Police Headquarters, the Railway station, the Post Office, the Power station, the Catinat Security Service... overthrowing the puppet administration and setting up the people's revolutionary power. The success of the insurrection in Saigon had

a decisive impact on the insurrection in the provinces of South Vietnam.

From 25 to 28 August, the general insurrection won complete success in the provinces of Quang Ngai, Gia Dinh, Soc Trang, Long Xuyen, Vinh Long, Ba Ria, Thu Dau Mot, Chau Doc, Tra Vinh, Tay Ninh, Bien Hoa, Ben Tre, Sa Dec, Hon Gai, Son La, Can Tho, Rach Gia, Ha Tien, Dong Nai Thuong.

Thus, except for such towns as had been occupied by the Chiang Kai-shek reactionaries and their henchmen before, i. e. Ha Giang, Lao Cai, Mong Cai, Lai Chau, Vinh Yen, the August 1945 general insurrection succeeded all over the country within half a month.

On 25 August 1945, President Ho Chi Minh returned to Hanoi. He proposed the broadening of the Provisional Government with a view to uniting widely people of various strata of the patriotic parties and the progressive personalities.

On 2 September 1945, at Ba Dinh Square (Hanoi), in a mass gathering of nearly a million people, President Ho Chi Minh, on behalf of the Provisional Government, read the Declaration of Independence, announcing to the people of Vietnam and the world the birth of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

In Laos, from August to October 1945, taking advantage of the favourable opportunity brought about by the Japanese fascists' surrender to the Allied forces, the successful August 1945 general insurrection in Vietnam and the growing revolutionary movement throughout Laos, the Lao Party Committee took timely action, leading the people to rise up to

eliminate the puppet ruling apparatus, to set up the people's power in Vientiane, other cities and towns and to form the independent Lao Government.

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The August 1945 revolution was the prototype of *a people's national democratic revolution* in a colonial, semi-feudal country, led by the working class. It smashed the bondage which had been imposed by the French colonialists for nearly a hundred years, knocked down the feudal throne which had existed for thousands of years in our country and created the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, an independent and democratic State of our people, the first worker-peasant State in Southeast Asia.

The success of the August Revolution ushered in a new era in our country: *the era of independence, freedom and socialism*. For the first time in their history, our people emerged from slavery to become masters of their own country and their own destiny. Our Party, starting as an illegal Party, became the ruling Party all over the country. And our country, a colonial and semi-feudal country, became an independent and democratic country.

The August Revolution materialized President Ho's teachings, i.e. *to rely on one's own strength to liberate oneself*, not to stand with folded arms and wait for the success of the proletarian revolution in France or Japan, nor to bank on any assistance from outside. The August Revolution broke the colonial system of imperialism at the weakest link, greatly

contributing to accelerating the disintegration of colonialism in the world.

Assessing the historic significance of the August Revolution, President Ho Chi Minh wrote: "Not only the working toiling classes and the people of Vietnam but also the toiling classes and the oppressed people in other parts of the world can take pride in the fact that this was the first time in the history of revolution of the colonial and semi-colonial nations, *a Party of no more than fifteen years of age led a successful revolution and held power in the whole country*" (1)

The August Revolution owed its success to our people's heroic and staunch struggle for fifteen years under the Party's leadership, to the process of fostering and preparing the revolutionary forces from a lower to a higher level and the process of winning victories step by step and waging partial insurrections, advancing to a general insurrection to win complete victory throughout the country. The three revolutionary upsurges of 1930-31, 1936-39 and 1939-45 brought home to our people and enhanced their confidence in the necessary way to escape from misery and slavery, i.e. the uprising by the entire people to smash the imperialists' and their henchmen's rule to seize power. These upsurges were really the general rehearsals in preparation for the August 1945 general insurrection. Through these upsurges, our Party accumulated infinitely rich experience

1. Ho Chi Minh, "Political Report at the Party's Second Congress", *For Independence, and Freedom, for Socialism* Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1970, p. 101.

in many fields, particularly in the science and the art of seizing power. The success of the August Revolution was the success of the line of holding high the working class's national, democratic banner and of correctly combining the anti-imperialist and anti-feudalist tasks. That was the success of the line of rallying all the patriotic forces on the basis of the worker-peasant alliance, advancing to *a simultaneous uprising of the entire people*, above all the uprising of the key forces of the revolution, i.e. the workers and the peasants. That was *the success of the line of resolutely and skilfully using various forms of revolutionary violence closely combining political struggle with armed struggle, the rural areas with the urban areas, economic struggle with political struggle and legal struggle with illegal struggle, starting from a lower to a higher level and from partial insurrections to a general insurrection*. This brought about a change in the balance of forces between us and the enemy, creating an overwhelming superiority for us to smash the ruling apparatus of the imperialists and their henchmen. That was *the success of the art of insurrection and the choice of the appropriate opportunity*. With the high spirit of revolutionary offensive, we concentrated our forces to strike on the enemy's leading organs paralysing all his will to resist. That was *the success of the policy of dividing the enemy to the utmost*, neutralizing and rallying all the forces that could be neutralized and rallied in order to spearhead the struggle against the immediate direct enemy. That was *the success of building a Marxist-Leninist Party in the conditions of underground activities*, ensuring the Party's correct line at all times, the thorough propagation of that line among the people during

the preparations for and the staging of the insurrection for the seizure of power and the high quality, compactness, purity, cohesion and solid foundation, among the masses, of the Party's organization.

The August Revolution left behind an invaluable treasure of experience for the wars of resistance against the French colonialist's invasion and the US aggression for national salvation later on.

PART III

**THE WAR OF RESISTANCE AGAINST
FRENCH COLONIALISM
(1945-1954)**

**THE FIRST YEAR OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC
OF VIETNAM
(1945-1946)**

As soon as it was established, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam faced tremendous difficulties. After a terrible famine which was the sequel of the policy of exploitation of the French colonialists and Japanese fascists, there was a big flood in the North followed by a drought, and the land was left uncultivated. Production came to a standstill, goods were scarce, the state stores left by the Japanese were empty. Colonialism and feudalism left a most heavy cultural heritage. Over 90 % of the population were illiterate. Though much reduced after the August Revolution, such social scourges as opium addiction, drinking, gambling, theft, superstitions were still a big problem.

Meanwhile two hundred thousand Chiang Kai-shek troops were treading on the North under the pretext

of disarming the Japanese, in fact they executed the Americans' perfidious policy to annihilate our Party and the Viet Minh front, overthrow the people's power and rig up a puppet administration at their beck and call. (1)

The British troops landed in the South also on the plea of disarming the Japanese, in fact they prepared the ground for a comeback of the French colonialists who opened fire on September 23, 1945 and, with the help of the British troops, occupied Saigon and expanded the war to Nam Bo (South Vietnam), south central Vietnam, and Kampuchea in an attempt to lay hands on the whole of Indochina.

While the imperialists and Chiang Kai-shek reactionary clique were leaving no stone unturned to attack the revolutionary power, their henchmen, the Vietnamese traitors, indulged in all kinds of lies and provocations to split the rank of the revolution and instigate rebellion.

Right after the war ended, the De Gaulle government entrusted Leclerc and Thierry d'Argenlieu with staging a comeback in Indochina. D'Argenlieu was appointed French Governor General under the new name of High Commissioner in Indochina, and Leclerc, Commander-in-chief of the Expeditionary Corps which was hastily set up. On August 24, from Chandernagor, a French concession in India, d'Argenlieu

1. The Vietnam Nationalist Party led by Nguyen Tuong Tam and Vu Hong Khanh and the Vietnam Revolutionary Alliance headed by Nguyen Hai Than had gone with Chiang Kai-shek troops to China. They relied on their help to occupy Viet Tri, Phu Tho, Vinh Yen, Yen Bai, Lao Cai, Quang Yen, Hon Gai, Mong Cai provinces.

and Leclerc worked out a plan aimed at taking advantage of the British forces to occupy the area south of the 16th parallel as the first step.

In November 1945, from Yunnan two French battalions attacked and occupied Lai Chau town and a few months later they occupied the whole Lai Chau province.

At the time the total number of foreign troops stationed in Vietnam amounted to 300,000 men.

These seemingly insuperable difficulties landed our country in a most serious situation. The fate of our nation was hanging on a thread. But under the leadership of our Party, our heroic people, united as one man resolutely lived up to the oath taken in the declaration of independence to "sacrifice our lives and property in order to preserve this independence and freedom."

Soon after the triumph of the revolution, at the first meeting of the Government Council held on 3 September 1945, President Ho Chi Minh, on behalf of the Party Central Committee put forth six urgent tasks to consolidate the new revolutionary power. These tasks were: to fight famine; to fight illiteracy; to hold general elections; to build a new life; to abolish poll tax, market tax and toll; to ensure freedom of belief. Then he summed them up in three major tasks: elimination of famine, illiteracy and foreign aggression.

To tighten the solidarity between the Lao and Vietnamese peoples with a view to fighting the common enemy, the French aggressor, on 16 October 1945 the delegation of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and that of the provisional independent government

of Laos held talks in Vientiane and signed a Friendship and Cooperation Treaty. The conference declared that the two countries would stand united and cooperate in all fields in order to oppose the French colonialists for national independence. Right after the talks, representatives of the two governments agreed to set up the Lao-Viet joint forces.

On 25 November 1945, the Party Central Committee issued an instruction on the *war of resistance and national construction* pointing out that the revolution in Indochina still remained a national liberation revolution: "As the task of national salvation of the proletariat is not completed and our main enemy is the French colonialists, we must concentrate our efforts to fight them." As the French, British and American imperialists and Chiang Kai-shek reactionary clique worked hand in glove with one another to invade our country, we displayed the slogan "The Fatherland above all!" and our task was to wage the war of resistance. On the other hand, as our people controlled a large part of the country, our main task at that time was to consolidate it: "We were resolved to wrest back *independence, freedom and happiness* for our people, that is to secure political independence, apply the democratic republican system and improve the people's life." The urgent task set forth in the instruction was to consolidate the revolutionary power. To secure this power, it was necessary to foil all schemes of the imperialists and their henchmen, bring the people's life to normal and strengthen the revolutionary power. Resistance and national construction could not be taken apart.

At the suggestion of President Ho Chi Minh, the government decided to launch a movement to increase

production and fight famine. In a short time, tens of thousands of tons of rice were collected. Rice crops and subsidiary crops were grown everywhere. High yields were obtained from maize, sweet potatoes, manioc and other crops. The areas under rice were restored. Famine was rapidly stamped out.

Other measures were also taken to improve the living conditions of the people such as: confiscation of the lands belonging to the French colonialists and Vietnamese traitors for distribution to poor peasants; fair redistribution of communal land to all citizens (men and women); reduction of land rent by 25% for the peasants, application of 8 hour work day, protection of the workers' interests in their dispute with the employers. To overcome financial difficulties, apart from encouraging the people to make their contribution, following the Party' policy, on 31 January 1946, the Government took a decree for the issue of Vietnamese currency which was enthusiastically welcomed by the entire people.

Great attention was paid to cultural, educational and medical work, chiefly the elimination of illiteracy. At the end of 1946, over two million people knew how to read and write.

To defeat all reactionary forces and overcome all difficulties, it was necessary to develop the right to mastery of the people. At the suggestion of the Party and President Ho Chi Minh it was decided to hold general elections for the National Assembly and form an official government.

On 6 January 1946, general elections were held throughout the country when the South was invaded by the French colonialists and in the North the Chiang Kai-shek troops went out of their way to

sabotage the elections and overthrow the people's power. Therefore, in our country, these first elections bore the character of a fierce class and national struggle. In the South, 42 cadres died heroically in the election campaign. Local elections were also organized to appoint people's representatives to people's councils at various levels. These councils elected official administrative committees in replacement of the provisional ones set up in the first days of the general insurrection.

With the great victory of the elections for the National Assembly and the People's Councils at all levels our State really became the state of the people, for the people and by the people which has its full legal character and reflects the invincible strength of our entire people's unity and their iron-like determination to decide their own destiny.

Simultaneously with the general elections a Committee headed by President Ho Chi Minh was set up on 20 September 1945 to draft the constitution. On 9 November 1946 the National Assembly sanctioned the first constitution of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, a revolutionary constitution which consecrated the right to mastery and democratic liberties of the Vietnamese people. The Viet Minh front was consolidated and developed. In May 1946, the Hoi Lien Hiep Quoc Dan Viet Nam (or Lien Viet for short) (Vietnamese People's Alliance) was set up composed of political parties and personalities who for one reason or another had not taken part in the Viet Minh front. The unity of the entire people on the basis of the worker-peasant alliance, the

cornerstone of the people's power, was more and more strengthened.

On September 23, 1945, in face of the offensive by the French colonialists supported by the British imperialists, the Nam Bo Party Committee held an emergency enlarged session at Cay Mai (Cho Lon) with the participation of Comrade Hoang Quoc Viet, standing committee member of the Party Central Committee. After analyzing the French colonialists' schemes to reconquer our country the meeting advocated motivating the people to wage an anti-French war of resistance and made an appeal to the Nam Bo population to rise up. It decided to set up Resistance Committees at all levels, to start a general strike and the destruction of all communication lines to encircle the enemy. On the same day, the Nam Bo Party Committee also received the instruction of the Party Standing Committee on starting the war of resistance.

The Party paid particular attention to the war of resistance in the South against the French colonialists. In December 1945, the Southern Vietnam Resistance Committee was set up by a decision of the Government and President Ho Chi Minh. The Party, the government and President Ho Chi Minh closely followed its development. In many letters sent to the South and in his reports on the war, President Ho Chi Minh stressed that it would surely end in victory. He commended the determination of our people to fight for independence and reunification of the country and pointed out that the war must be waged by the entire people and for a long time. Parallel to increasing the number of responsible cadres and strengthening the armed forces

in the South, the Viet Minh front launched a nationwide movement in support of the resistance in the South. Adhoc committees were set up everywhere.

In a short period of time many contingents from northern provinces went southwards to fight the enemy. (1) In face of the aggression by the enemy our Party paid great attention to the task of building the armed forces and consolidating national defence. On 15 September President Ho Chi Minh signed a decree on the building of the armament branch and in October 1945 he signed another decree on the building of military zones. (2)

On 23 September 1945, in response to President Ho Chi Minh's call, our compatriots fought heroically and thwarted the enemy's scheme to win a quick victory. Though armed with modern weapons and helped by mercenaries, the aggressors met with a fierce resistance from our people. The difficulties created on the first days by the French were gradually overcome. Everywhere, the enemy was repelled. Guerilla warfare spread from the plains to the mountain areas of Tay Nguyen (Central Highlands). Puppet committees were disrupted chunk by chunk, many base areas were set up, the liberated zones were

1. At that time there were 8 detachments, 7 companies and a platoon who volunteered to go to fight in eastern Nam Bo and southern Central Vietnam. Each detachment was equivalent to a regiment, each company equivalent to a battalion and each platoon to a company at present.

2. The military zones were: Military Zone I, II, III, IV, V and VI. Hanoi was a special zone under the Central Government. All the military zones were set up in Nam Bo (formerly Cochinchina) by November 1945.

enlarged. The people's power was re-established. Up to late 1946 Resistance committees and organizations for national salvation were set up in 1,100 out of 1,230 Communes of Nam Bo. In Tay Nguyen we managed to build 5 armed propaganda units composed of local cadres and a number of main force units to support the restoration and development of bases. The Dong Thap Muoi, U Minh and D base areas became strong base areas for the resistance in Nam Bo. Our resistance in south Vietnam and southern part of Central Vietnam has shown that "no army, no weapon could get the better of the sacrifice of our entire people" (1). In February 1946, President Ho Chi Minh conferred on our southern compatriots the title "Brass wall of the Fatherland."

While the French colonialists were invading the South, in the North, the Chiang Kai-shek reactionary clique and its henchmen attempted to overthrow the people's power (2). In face of this critical situation, our Party adopted the policy of making the best use of the revolutionary forces and applying most flexible tactics to split up the enemy's rank. This policy was to compromise with Chiang Kai-shek in order

1. President Ho Chi Minh's appeal to our southern compatriots dated 29 October 1945. "President Ho Chi Minh's Appeals" book I, Su That Publishing House, Hanoi 1958, p. 44.

2. Chiang troops demanded the Vietnam Democratic Republic Government to give 80 seats in the National Assembly to the Vietnam Nationalist Party and the Vietnam Revolutionary Alliance; they demanded that communist ministers be expelled from the government and replaced them by Chiang's henchmen. At the same time they were stepping up preparations to overthrow the revolutionary government.

to direct our spearhead on the most dangerous enemy — the French colonialists. When the French colonialists occupied Lai Chau and Son La, the first armed units were sent to the North West Front area by our Party and State to help the population fight back the enemy. On the one hand, the Party launched among the population the movement to contain the Chiang Kai-shek troops; on the other, it made concessions to them to secure the people's power. The Party must resort to all means to survive in order to lead the revolution secretly but efficiently and to have time to consolidate the people's power and the Lien Viet Front.

At that time, the Party could not waver, as wavering means failure. It must make quick decisions and take measures — though traumatic — to "restore the situation" (1). On 11 November 1945, it declared its 'dissolution'; in fact it disappeared for the time being to engage in underground activities but still led the revolutionary power and went on consolidating its ranks.

In face of the determination of our people and the correct line of our Party and government, the provocative scheme of the Chiang Kai-shek clique fizzled out and the traitorous acts of its henchmen were duly punished.

On 28 February 1946, bowing to the American imperialists' injunction, Chiang Kai-shek signed with the French a treaty enabling French troops to replace

1. Ho Chi Minh: "Political Report at the Second National Congress of the Vietnam Workers' Party" — February 1951 *Selected Works*, Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1980, Vol. 1, page 471.

the Chiang Kai-shek army in Northern Vietnam. This laid bare the imperialists' scheme to arrange for the comeback of the French colonialists, and their compromise to pursue their global strategy (1).

Even before the triumph of the August 1945 Revolution our Party had foreseen the possibility of the British and American imperialists and Chiang Kai-shek clique colluding with the French to allow the latter to return to Indochina. The Sino-French treaty was part of the global strategy they pursued in Asia to divide their zones of influence after the war and to counter the three revolutionary torrents in the world.

In face of the perfidious schemes of the imperialist and reactionary clique, on 24 February 1946 the Standing Committee of the Party Central Committee met in time to make an assessment of the situation and decide on a number of concrete policies. The

1. The following report by Leclerc, the then acting high commissioner and concurrently commander-in-chief of the French Expeditionary Corps, to the Felix Gouin government in January 1946, gave evidence to France's scheme:

"It is my intention to try by every means to set foot on the North when the opportunity comes...

I set three targets:

— First, we should set foot on a number of important cities to create for the French Government a superiority in conducting negotiations and imposing our conditions.

— Second, we should try by every means to release all French nationals.

— Third, we should try by every means to have the Chiang troops withdrawn from this country"...

Secret dossier in Indochina.

— Claude Daill, p.69

meeting made an accurate analysis of the insidious manoeuvres of the imperialists and their henchmen and pointed out that the signing of the Sino-French Agreement was part of a plan conceived by the imperialist camp. However, frightened by the Vietnamese people's determination and monolithic unity, both Chiang Kai-shek and the French government wanted to negotiate with us in their own interests. Chiang went out of his way to pressurize us into reshuffling the government, with a view to planting their henchmen, preventing us from conducting separate negotiations with France and forcing us to accept the Sino-French Agreement. As for France, as from early February 1946 the French representative had contacted our Government's representative many times in a bid to reach an agreement with us and get rid of the Chinese as soon as possible.

The reactionary Viet Cach (Vietnam Revolutionary Party) and Viet Quoc (Vietnam Nationalist Party) tried to fool the people into believing that they were the most revolutionary and patriotic people. They put up such slogans as: "No Negotiations" and "Victory or Death", in an attempt to torpedo the negotiations between us and the French government, to isolate us and to set up a puppet government in case the war broke out between us and the French forces. They would urge the imperialists to use it as a pretext to accuse us of defying the treaty signed by the Allied and plotting a rebellion, and then to order Chiang troops to stay on in Indochina.

On 3 March 1946, the Party Standing Bureau issued a directive which read: "In face of this situation, are we resolved to fight or to compromise? We

can say straight out that : if the French advocate the policy of granting autonomy to Indochina in accordance with the 24 March 1945 (1) declaration we shall surely fight and fight for a long time by guerilla warfare. However, if they recognize the sovereignty of Indochina, our policy was to compromise to frustrate the scheme of the Chiang Kai-shek clique, the Vietnamese reactionaries and the fascists among the French, who were contemplating to drive us into a state of isolation and compel us to fight various foes at the same time in order to wear out our forces."

At its session held early in March 1946, the Party Central Committee agreed with the Standing Bureau and President Ho Chi Minh on the policy of compromising with the French to thwart the enemy's perfidious scheme to place us in a dilemma - to fight simultaneously three opponents : the Chiang Kai-shek troops, the French colonialists and the Vietnamese reactionaries who were doing their utmost to topple the people's power and rig up a puppet administration. The policy to compromise with the French was also aimed at exploiting

1. The contents of the 24 March 1945 statement advocating the setting up of Autonomous Indochina and the establishment of the Indochinese Federation comprising five separate zones of Bac Ky, Trung Ky, Nam Ky, Laos and Kampuchea led by a governor general and a government comprising the French and the natives who were responsible before the governor general. Besides a joint parliament will be elected in which the natives will occupy only 50 percent of the seats. The rights of this parliament were reduced only adopting the budgets and the draft laws that the French government had put forth.

the contradictions existing between the French and Chiang Kai-shek clique to speed up the withdrawal of the latter and to work against time to consolidate and develop our forces and to prepare a new fight for complete independence

On 6 March 1946, our government signed with the French the preliminary accord by which France recognized Vietnam as a free state having its own government, parliament, army and finances.

The signing of this agreement was a very sound policy of our Party and President Ho Chi Minh. Thanks to it, we were able to get rid of a wicked enemy master-minded by the American imperialists to concentrate our force on the French colonialists, the sworn enemy of our people. Meanwhile we bought time to restore and develop our resistance bases in the South, build up our forces and make preparations for a long war of resistance.

However, hardly had the ink on the preliminary accord dried up when the French colonialists refused to honour their commitments. Owing to our hard struggle, the official talks between our government delegation headed by comrade Pham Van Dong and the French government delegation were held on 6 July 1946 at Fontainebleau. Our Government's correct and firm stand won the support and sympathy of the French people and progressive public opinion in the world. But no result was obtained, because the French colonialists wanted at any cost to put their yoke on us once again. The threat of a long fierce nationwide war was looming large. To gain time to make preparations for the war, President Ho

Chi Minh signed with the French government a modus vivendi on 14 September 1946. (1)

When the French invaded southern Vietnam, our Party saw that the war of aggression would spread all over the country and then our people's nationwide resistance to the French war of aggression would be inevitable. The fact that France scrapped the Preliminary Agreement and sabotaged the negotiations proved the correctness of the assessment. In its directive "To maintain peace in order to advance" issued on 9 March 1946, our Party pointed out that "it is necessary to be prepared for a long resistance". Therefore our Party and government set great store by building the armed forces and resistance bases and made necessary preparations for the war. At the end of 1946, we were able to put on foot a 8,000-strong regular army assisted by millions of guerillas and militiamen. On the average there was one platoon or one company of self-defence forces in every district, and one company of self-defence forces in every province. The mountain area of Viet Bac was built into a firm base area for the long struggle. Machines were removed and transferred from cities to base areas for the building of armament workshops. Apart from the military workshops in zones and provinces, the armament branch managed to build 20 weapon-producing workshops with 2,500 workers. Party's organizations were set up in the Army which was commanded by officers from the Party and Viet Minh front.

1. The 14 September 1946 Modus Vivendi stipulated for some matters related to currency, culture, the economy and ceasefire in Nam Bo.

The people's power was consolidated when a group of counter-revolutionaries was repressed and a plot against the government was uncovered in On Nhu Hau street in Hanoi. (1).

As from April 1946, the revolutionary armed forces successively drove the counter-revolutionary elements from the towns and townships of a number of northern frontier provinces. On 12 April 1946 they had to withdraw from Hon Gai. In May reactionaries at Bach Hac and Viet Tri were wiped out. In June, Vu Hong Khanh, Nguyen Tuong Tam and the like had to withdraw to Yen Bai, Lao Cai then to China. On 14 July reactionaries had to withdraw from Nghia Lo. In July we liberated Lang Son town and Dong Mo. In August we liberated Yen Bai and Vinh Yen towns. In November we liberated Lao Cai town, the last town occupied by the Vietnam Nationalist Party forces. Mass organizations were enlarged and consolidated. The Party membership was 20,000 people. The revolution of our country, under the leadership

1. In July 1946, our security men discovered a counter-revolutionary ring engaged in kidnapping, blackmail and murder, at the H Q. of the Viet Nam Quoc Dan Dang (Vietnam Nationalist Party), in On Nhu Hau street (now Nguyen Gia Thieu street). They plotted to overthrow the government on 14 July 1946.

— The Vietnam Nationalist Party and the Vietnam Revolutionary Alliance planned to open fire and to throw grenades at the parade of the French military forces which would be held on 14 July 1946 and created a pretext under which the French military forces could attack the Revolutionary government. But on 12 July 1946, the Revolutionary government arrested all the counter-revolutionary ringleaders, and at the same time forbade the French to organize a military parade.

of the Party, headed by President Ho Chi Minh, managed to weather all the difficulties, and was prepared to face the war of aggression by the French colonialists. In late March 1946 the French colonialists occupied a number of areas in Son La province and prepared for the setting up of an "Autonomous Thai Country". Between March and September 1946 they attacked Vientiane and a number of large cities and towns of independent Laos. On 20 July they occupied Dong Dang (Lang Son province). In the same month they occupied Mong Cai and Hon Gai. In his instruction "Our urgent tasks at present" issued early in November 1946, President Ho Chi Minh foretold that our resistance would be very difficult but it would be victorious.

On 20 November 1946 the French colonialists occupied Hai Phong and Lang Son, and landed thousands of troops in Da Nang. On 16 December French colonialists' chieftains held a meeting in Hai Phong to discuss the plan of invading the Vietnamese territory north of the 16th parallel. On 15 December 1946 President Ho Chi Minh sent a message to the French prime minister, Mr Leon Blum, in which he reiterated the Vietnamese correct stand and set a number of concrete conditions for improving Vietnam-French relations. But there was no reply from the French Government. On 17 and 18 December the French started many provocations in Hanoi. French troops opened fire on the headquarters of our self-defence forces, committed the extremely barbarous massacre in Hang Bun street and Yen Ninh impasse.

On the afternoon of 18 December, the French side sent us their first ultimatum demanding the removal

by our side of all fortifications and barricades and claiming for the right to occupy the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Public Works and Communications. On the afternoon of 18 December a second ultimatum was sent by the French claiming for the right to maintain law and order in Hanoi and stipulated: "If on the morning of 20 December these conditions were not met French troops would move into action." On the morning of 19 December, another ultimatum was sent by the French demanding the disarming of our self-defence forces and the cessation by our side of all preparations for the war of resistance and the handing over to the French side of the maintenance of order in Hanoi. Our Government proposed that the two sides should meet to find a negotiated settlement of the situation, but the French representative rejected our proposal at noon December 19 (1).

1. The French scheme to invade the whole territory of our country was laid bare:

— In his public order No. 2115/35 on 25 December 1946 General Valluy, Commander-in-Chief of the French Expeditionary Corps, instructed General Morliere, commander of French forces in northern Indochina: "In order to occupy Hanoi, you should not hesitate to use artillery and bombs. We should launch an attack of quick decision and show the enemy our overwhelming superiority in war means." Reports by Louis Morliere between August and December 1946. Excerpts from a letter by George Chaffar, p. 56

— On 23 November 1946, at an inter-ministerial meeting on the Indochinese problem, a high-ranking official in the Ministry of Colonies admitted: Admiral d'Argenlieu, the French High Commissioner in Indochina, received from French Prime Minister Bidault the unique order: "Fire the cannon", George Chaffar's Letters, pp. 46-47.

So the French shut the door to negotiation, compelling our people to stand up in arms. As the enemy deliberately kindled the war, our resistance would spread throughout the country.

In 16 months (September 1945 – December 1946) we were able to build up our strength, and our Party gained rich experience. This was our experience to secure *leadership of strategy and tactics, when, in the conditions of a newly won revolution, we had not enough strength to frustrate all the schemes of the aggressors and to secure control of the whole country*, it was an experience to *differentiate between the main enemy at that time and the dangerous enemy whose presence was not yet conspicuous*; it was our experience on the *organization of the revolutionary forces, on the exploitation of peace time to make preparations for war*.

THE FIRST YEARS OF THE RESISTANCE

(1947–1950)

With the occupation of Haiphong and Lang Son and the attack on our garrison in Hanoi, the French tore to shreds the 6 March 1946 preliminary agreement and began to invade the whole of our country.

We were on the horns of a dilemma – either to remain idle and live under the yoke of the enemy, or to fight to the end for independence and freedom.

The Standing Bureau of the Party Central Committee held an enlarged session on 18 and 19 December 1946 at Van Phuc (Ha Dong province). Reflecting the aspirations of the entire people, it advocated

waging the war throughout the country and outlined the fundamental trend of the resistance.

On the afternoon of 19 December 1946, the Party Central Committee Standing Commission sent all the zones and provinces the following cable: “The French side has sent an ultimatum demanding the disarming of our army, self-defence forces and security forces. Our Government has turned down the ultimatum. So, within 24 hours at the latest the enemy will certainly open fire. Everyone must be ready!”

At 18.00 hours on 19 December, Comrade Vo Nguyen Giap, Minister of National Defence and Commander-in-Chief of the Vietnam National Army, ordered all the armed forces to be ready to fight. On 19 December, President Ho Chi Minh made an appeal for nationwide resistance:

“As we desire peace we have made concessions. But the more concessions we make, the more the French colonialists press on, for they are bent on reconquering our country

“No! We would rather sacrifice all than lose our country. Never shall we be enslaved! (1) Be they men or women, old or young, regardless of creed, political affiliation and nationality, all Vietnamese shall rise up and fight the French colonialists to save the country.” (2)

On 21 December President Ho Chi Minh once again made an appeal to the Vietnamese people,

1, 2. Ho Chi Minh “Appeal for nationwide resistance” *For Independence, Freedom and Socialism*” Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1970, p. 67.

the French people and the peoples of the allied countries, condemning the French colonialists for breaking the agreement and conducting barbarous acts of aggression, and pointing out the aim of our people's just cause.

On 22 December 1946, the Party Central Committee issued an instruction calling on "the entire people to put up the resistance", pointing that our goal was to wrest back independence and reunify the country, the fundamental principles were to wage a long all-sided and all-nation war of resistance with our own force. The slogans displayed were "Each Street Block a Front, Each Village a Fortress", "wage the resistance while building the country," "strictly apply the tactics of guerilla warfare and mobile warfare". The war of resistance should go through the three stages of defensive, equilibrium and general counter-offensive.

Early in 1947, Comrade Truong Chinh wrote *The Resistance Will Win* to expound the Party's line and policies. The book made it clear that we waged the resistance for national independence, democratic liberties and world peace. It made a scientific analysis of our fortes and foibles and those of the enemy: "Our fortes are like the roots of the tree while those of the enemy are shaky like its top." Therefore, going on fighting we would become stronger and stronger and the enemy would become weaker and weaker, then we would be equal in force with the enemy and finally stronger than he, and would win final victory. That was why we had to wage a long war and rely only on our own strength before the others came to our assistance. If we were

weak, no force outside could bring us independence and freedom. So our principle was to wage the long resistance thoroughly by the effort of our entire people. For this purpose we had to unite all our 25 million people and mobilize all their physical and moral strength to secure victory. We had to wage the war on all fronts—military, political, economic and cultural – and in three stages as cited above. The core of this resistance was the armed forces composed of many kinds and later called three categories of arms: the regular army, the regional troops and guerilla and militia units.

In response to President Ho Chi Minh's appeal, all our people rose up and fought the enemy. Breaking out in Hanoi on 19 December 1946, the war spread to all the cities and provinces: Nam Dinh, Hai Duong, Vinh, Hue, Da Nang... After wiping out part of the enemy's live forces our armed forces evacuated the towns and cities to wage a long war, leaving a small contingent to make guerilla warfare in the enemy-occupied areas. Applying the "scorched earth" tactics, the population evacuated their houses, destroyed those which could fall into the enemy's hand and built fighting villages.

At the meeting of the cadres of the central government held in April 1947 to review the situation of the resistance in its early months, we came to the conclusion that though armed with modern weapons, the enemy could not wipe out our regular forces. He had to pay a high price for the occupation of some urban centres. Guerilla warfare kept on developing. The three arms of our armed forces took shape. Our people were most heroic, they feared no sacrifice and quickly adapted themselves to the new situation

(fighting while engaging in productive labour). As the war dragged on, the enemy met with greater difficulties, compelling him to get out of the scrape as early as possible. On the one hand, he made preparations for a big offensive to annihilate our regular forces and leading organs. On the other, he rigged up a puppet government and forced us to lay down our arms and surrender.

In October 1947, the French colonialists mustered 20,000 troops and launched a large-scale attack on Viet Bac to destroy the "resistance base of the whole country." This large-scale offensive was code-named "Operation Leard" and was put under the command of General Salan. In the same period, in support of Operation Leard, French troops occupied Nghia Lo Yen Bai, Phong Tho and Lao Cai and attacked Dong Trieu, Quang Yen and Yen The (Bac Giang). In its instruction "What is Bollaert telling, what have we to do?" released in September 1947, the Party pointed out "All our national forces should be mobilized to foil the French colonialists' scheme of "pitting Vietnamese against Vietnamese" and to counter the enemy's big attacks in the months to come. On 15 October 1947, the Party Central Committee released the instruction "Let's repel the French aggressors' winter offensive", in which it was pointed out: "We must cause heavy damage to the enemy so that he cannot stand on his feet after this winter campaign." Executing this instruction, our troops on all battlefields in close coordination with those in Viet Bac, fought heroically and won brilliant victories. After two months of engagement they put over 7,000 enemy troops out of action. The French aggressors were compelled to withdraw from Viet Bac. Their scheme of attacking

our bases was rapidly foiled, and their offensive repulsed. Far from being wiped out, our armed forces were tempered in the crucible of the war. Our leading organs and resistance bases were maintained and developed.

The Viet Bac victory gave our people greater confidence in the final success of the long war of resistance.

Reviewing one year of nationwide resistance President Ho Chi Minh re-affirmed that, though long and difficult, the resistance would surely be victorious. He rejected the French colonialist's claim that in three weeks at the soonest or in three months at the latest they would defeat us. He commended our armed forces "as powerful as a waterfall or a big fire, and knowing only to advance and never to retreat", and spoke of the enemy's forces as "a setting sun, haughty but on the wane" (1).

After the setback of the French aggressors in Viet Bac, a change was wrought in the situation of the war. The enemy realized that he could not wipe out our regular forces by big operations and rapidly win the war by his own forces. That is why in 1948, he changed his strategy: instead of enlarging the territory under his control, he strengthened it, instead of attacking the North, he consolidated the South, instead of launching big operations, he carried out small operations, instead of wiping out our regular forces, he undermined our economy and destroyed.

1. "One Year's Nationwide Resistance". *President Ho Chi Minh's Appeals*, Vol 1, Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1958, p. 228.

our footholds among the population, at the same time he strengthened the puppet administration, recruited puppet troops, touted for American aid, implemented the policy of "feeding the war by the war", "pitting the Vietnamese against the Vietnamese."

On 13 May 1949 the French Government sent - General Revers, Chief-of-Staff of the French Army, and six deputies of the French National Assembly to Indochina to study the situation. In June 1949 the Qucuille Government adopted the "Revers Plan". The key point of the plan was to enlarge the occupied areas in the plains and midlands of the North. Revers was later demobbed but the plan of expanding the occupied areas remained in effect. The French Government's decision to withdraw from Cao Bang, which was supported by the Council of chiefs-of-staff, was bitterly opposed by many colonialist-minded military commanders in Indochina and US imperialism.

With American aid and with fresh reinforcements, between July 1949 and May 1950, the French successfully launched 8 campaigns in an attempt to expand the occupied areas in the plains and midlands of northern Vietnam. Though they succeeded in expanding the occupied areas in the plains, the French colonialists again were caught in a prolonged crisis of which they had been victim: while expanding the occupied areas they had to spread thin their forces and were more easily attacked by our forces. But if they concentrated their troops in order to build strategic mobile units they would not be able to attain the objective of occupying the territory.

The Party Central Committee enlarged session of January 1948 and 4th meeting (May 1948), 5th meeting (August 1948) and 6th meeting (January 1949) of responsible cadres advocated that:

In the *military* field, we must counter all the enemy's attacks against our bases, wage guerilla warfare with independent companies armed propaganda units and volunteers' organizations. Our principle at that time was to use guerrilla warfare as main striking force and mobile warfare as secondary force with an eye to developing mobile warfare and paving the way for the building of the people's armed forces comprising the regular army, regional units and guerilla and militia.

In the *political* field, we shall consolidate unity among the population, broaden the national united front, strengthen the people's power, wreck the puppet administration, step up the agitation among puppet soldiers, and secure the support of the socialist countries, and progressive and peace-loving forces in the world.

In the *economic and financial* field, we shall improve the material and spiritual life of the people so that they could carry on a long war, we shall develop the economy on the basis of new democracy, expand state enterprises, prepare conditions for the planning of the state economic sector, organize foreign trade, carry out the Party's land policy in order to replenish the force of the peasantry, develop agricultural production and undermine the economy in the enemy-held regions.

In the *cultural* field we shall urge the cultural workers to take part in the resistance and to eliminate

illiteracy, reform education, build up a new culture along the national, scientific, popular line, speed up the movement to build a new life, to do away with bad customs and habits, to care for the people's health.

In March 1948, at President Ho Chi Minh's suggestion a patriotic emulation movement was launched in the Party and army and among the population for the enhancement of patriotism and creativeness. This movement spread throughout the liberated areas and even behind the enemy's line. Implementing the policy of turning the enemy's rear into our front, the regional Party committees sent many cadres back to their bases in the enemy-controlled areas to organize the populations, wage guerilla warfare and destroy the puppet organizations. Two-thirds of our armed forces were turned into independent companies and armed propaganda units to operate there. The rest was built into concentrated battalions and regiments and trained for mobile warfare.

In 1948 and 1949, in the enemy-controlled areas in Bac Bo, Binh Tri Thien and southernmost part of Trung Bo, our people practised guerilla warfare to restore their political and military bases. There they regained part of their right to mastery, the disputed areas and guerilla bases were expanded, forming a contiguous region. The inhabitants in the enemy-held areas fought for democracy and their vital rights. In January 1950, 3,000 schoolchildren in Saigon struck; they were supported by those in Hanoi. In the liberated areas (1), the movement to increase production and

1. The free zones were the zones completely controlled by the Vietnam Democratic Republic Government of resistance.

to make contribution to the front line, and the movement to "fill the rice-saving jar to rear the troops" were most seething. The inhabitants in the 5th Interzone (1) could find for themselves in foods, clothes, writing paper. The worker-peasant alliance was consolidated as the result of the implementation of the policy of reduction of land rent, of temporary distribution of land belonging to the French planters and Vietnamese traitors, of allotment of communal land to the peasants. The national unity was strengthened through the struggle against rightist deviations in the National United Front. In 1950 there were ten provinces in which illiteracy was completely liquidated.

The crucible of the war has tempered a great number of workers, peasants, revolutionary intellectuals and other toiling people, they swelled the ranks of the Party which counted 700,000 members in 1949. Party cells were set up in almost all grassroots organizations, army companies and State enterprises with cadres steeled by the war, and the Party apparatus, from the highest level to the grassroots, worked regularly as a Party leading the State and the war of resistance. However, during the growth of the Party there were cases in which its nature as a Party of the working class and the criteria of Party members were forsaken and the education of communism was neglected.

That is why, to be equal to its task of leading the war of resistance, the Party always paid attention

1. The 5th Interzone comprised the provinces of Quang Nam, Quang Ngai, Binh Dinh, Gia Lai, Kon Tum and Dak Lac.

to its consolidation and the intensification of education of its members. In 1947, President Ho Chi Minh sent letters to comrades in northern and central Vietnam and wrote the booklet "Let Us Change the Style of Work" in which he stressed the necessity to instil into the Party members communist ethics, public spiritedness, industry, thrift, integrity and uprightness and the method of leading the revolution, and warned them against bureaucracy, commandism, subjectivism, megalomania, selfishness, narrow-mindedness, divorce from the masses. The Party recommended its members to base themselves on these documents to carry out regularly criticism and self-criticism.

The victories won by our people went together with the success of the revolutionary movement in the world. From 1948, the proletarian dictatorial regime has been firmly established in the people's democratic countries in Eastern Europe and steadily embarked on socialism. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea was founded on 9 September 1948, and the German Democratic Republic on October 1949. The Soviet Union carried out the Five-year plan for its post-war economic restoration (1945-49) and recorded great achievements in the development of a modern national defence. The socialist system exerted a great influence on the development of human society. In October 1949, the People's Republic of China was established. In January 1950, the Soviet Union, China and other people's democratic republics recognized the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and established diplomatic relations with our government.

At that time, there was in the Party a wrong interpretation of the nature of the long war of

resistance and self-reliance, and of the policy of "preparation for counter-offensive". In the summer of 1950, this idea was corrected and the people could understand better why it was necessary to make a long war and to rely mainly on our own power.

On the strength of the victories won in 1948 and 1949 and the important diplomatic success, in summer 1950 the Standing Bureau of the Party Central Committee advocated the policy of launching the Frontier Campaign that aimed at wiping out an important contingent of enemy's force, broadening the Viet Bac resistance bases, and liberating the regions along our northern border. In July 1950, on order from the Party Central Committee and the Army High Command, the command and Party committee of the Frontier Campaign were set up. They were headed by Comrade Vo Nguyen Giap, member of the Standing Bureau of the Party Central Committee. The Dong Khe battle was fought as a curtain raiser. In an instruction sent on 12 August 1950 by the Standing Bureau of the Party Central Committee to the Party cadres at all levels it pointed out that the Frontier Campaign (1) was an important battle directly commanded by the Party Central Committee, President Ho Chi Minh and the High Command to secure a decisive victory. The instruction advised the cadres throughout the country to combine their efforts to contain the enemy, wear out his force and to prevent his reinforcements. In his message to the fighters at the front, President Ho Chi Minh urged them to fight valiantly, "to win and not to accept defeat".

1. The Frontier Campaign was codenamed "Campaign 40" in the instruction.

President Ho Chi Minh was present at the front throughout the campaign to encourage our fighters.

After 28 days of fighting (from 16 September to 14 October 1950, we won a big victory: we wiped out 8,000 enemy troops, or half his mobile forces in northern Indochina, liberated 350,000 inhabitants, 4 500sq. km., 5 towns, 13 townlets and a 750km. long borderline.

After this campaign, the Viet Bac resistance base area was extended, part of our territory was liberated and we could raise the imperialists' blockade of our country.

The victory at the frontier marks a rapid development of our people's fighting force and the skill of our Party in the direction of the war. For the first time in the history of the war against the French colonialists we launched a large-scale offensive to destroy their defence system on the border. (1) French realized that they could not win the war, we regained the initiative of operations and made large-scale attacks, while the enemy was landed more and more

1. After the French defeat at the Border Front, there was an argument among the French ruling circles about whether to end or continue the war. Early in 1951, the French Government and the Council of Chiefs-of-Staff rejected De Lattre de Tassigny's proposal on additional reinforcements and on maintaining the occupation of the Hai Phong area and south of the 16th parallel. Later, though with American aid De Lattre received another 40,000 men as reinforcements for an attack on Hoa Binh, his plan failed. There was a growing tendency among the French ruling class to disbelieve in a military victory and to believe in a negotiated settlement of the war.

to the defensive. After this victory the French realized that they could not win the war, while we could strengthen the confidence of our people in final victory and do away with the pessimism of the waverers. In the first years of the war, many people would like to compare our resistance to a "battle between a grasshopper and an elephant". But this victory shows that we "are the grasshopper who can rip up the bowels of the French colonialists, and that our soldiers have become most powerful tigers". (1)

Parallel to this victorious campaign, the Kampuchean and Lao people also won important victories.

In Kampuchea, a section of the Indochinese Communist Party was set up in the early days of the war and led the Kampuchean people in their struggle to liberate numerous regions and broaden the revolutionary bases. In April 1950, according to the policy of the leading committee of the Party section, then called All-Kampuchean Party Working Committee, the National Conference of Free Kampuchea set up the National United Front Committee (called Issarak Front) and the Central National Liberation Committee headed by Comrade Son Ngoc Minh. At the end of 1950, the Issarak Front accounted for 200,000 members. The Kampuchean Party section was organized in many regions down to *phum* and *srok*.

In Laos, from January 1949 to August 1950, the Party section in Laos led the population to win a

1. Ho Chi Minh, "Political Report Read at the Second Party Congress", *For Independence and Freedom, for Socialism*, Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1970, p. 106.

success of strategic significance: this is the birth of the Lao Liberation Army of the Issala Front and the formation of the Lao resistance government.

SECOND NATIONAL CONGRESS OF THE PARTY
ALL OUT PREPARATIONS TO WIN BIG VICTORIES
(1951 - 1953)

While our armed forces were growing swiftly the French colonialists were bogged down in a quagmire caused by the prolongation of their war of aggression in Indochina. Militarily speaking, they were beaten everywhere; though their armed forces swelled out of proportion, their shortage of troops was most serious because of increased military operations. In the political field, their unjust war was more and more strongly opposed by the French people and progressive opinion in the world. The rank of the French colonialist was torn by deep contradictions; many French governments succeeded one another. In the economic field, France was more and more dependent on the US, her financial situation was deteriorating. The French colonialists realized that they could not win this war if it was conducted only with their own forces. (1) However, by their reactionary nature, they

1. H. Navarre admitted: "The greatest danger caused by American aid is on the political plane... American aid is interfering deeply into our affairs... We have fallen into an opposite circumstance, that is, owing to the fact that we receive American aid, we are almost certain to lose Indochina even though that aid helps us to win victory in the war".

H. Navarre, *Indochina at the Throes of Death*, Librairie Plon, Paris, 1956, p. 28

continued this "dirty war" with American aid and with human and material resources grabbed in our country.

In December 1950, General de Lattre de Tassigny was sent to Indochina to carry out this perfidious scheme. He strengthened his mobile forces, set up a "white belt", built a system of bunkers in the Red River delta and made a clean sweep of the areas under his control, in preparation for a counter-offensive to regain the initiative on the battlefield.

On our side, everything went swimmingly. In the new period, the war of resistance posed lots of problems: reorganizing the rear in order to mobilize big contingents of troops for large-scale operations, raising the fighting spirit of our soldiers, strengthening the Party's leadership and building up the Party to suit the new situation. Many strategic and tactical problems arising after the August 1945 Revolution were solved at the second national Congress of the Party.

This congress held at Tuyen Quang (Viet Bac) from 11 to 19 February 1951 was attended by 158 delegates and 53 alternate delegates representing 760,000 members of the Party sections in Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea.

After the opening speech by Comrade Ton Duc Thang, the Congress heard the Political Report read by President Ho Chi Minh, the report on the Vietnamese revolution by Comrade Truong Chinh, and approved the Declaration, Thesis and Constitution of the Party.

In his political report President Ho Chi Minh summed up the revolutionary movement in the world

and in Vietnam in the first half of the twentieth century, and assessed that the political line followed by the Party was correct and the cadres and Party members were most zealous and disinterested and had close relations with the masses. The main task of the revolution was to secure complete victory for the war of resistance. It was time "we had a Party working legally and organized in accordance with the development of the situation in the world and in the country so as to lead the struggle of our people to victory. This Party is called Vietnam Workers' Party" (1).

In the report on the "Vietnamese Revolution", Comrade Truong Chinh expounded the lines of the national people's democratic revolution in Vietnam.

In the report he analysed the social character and objectives of the revolution, the motive forces of the Vietnamese revolution and the leadership over it... It set the immediate task of the national people's democratic revolution in Vietnam: to drive the French imperialists out of the country and wipe out the feudal forces, their henchmen, in order to win national independence, carry out people's democracy, then to make the socialist revolution and build socialism, bypassing the stage of capitalist development. It pointed out: "Led by the working class, with the toiling people as the motive force, this revolution not only fulfils its anti-imperialist and anti-feudalist task but develops vigorously the people's democratic

1. Ho Chi Minh, "Political Report Read at the Second Congress", *Documents of the Second Party National Congress*, Commission for the Study of the Party's History, published in 1965, Hanoi, p. 45.

system, sows the seeds of socialism, and paves the way for socialist construction (1).

This report was summed up in the Thesis of the Vietnam Workers' Party and approved by the Congress which decided that the Party worked legally under the name of Vietnam Workers' Party. The Congress approved the Party's constitution, elected its Central Committee and appointed its Political Bureau and Secretariat. Comrade Ho Chi Minh was the President of the Party and Comrade Truong-Chinh, its Secretary General.

With regard to Laos and Kampuchea, the Congress decided to organize two separate revolutionary parties to suit the characteristic features of each country. Implementing this resolution, in June 1951, the Kampuchean communists set up a committee of mobilization for the establishment of the Kampuchean Revolutionary People's Party. On 22 March 1955, the Lao People's Party (2) was founded with Comrade Kaysone Phomvihane as Secretary General.

The Second Congress marked a big leap forward of our Party. It was the first time since its foundation that it convened a congress attended by delegates democratically chosen by Party committees from the grassroots to the highest level. The correct policy of the Congress was the basis on which to unite the entire people and to bring the revolution to success.

1. Truong-Chinh, "The Vietnamese Revolution" (Report at the Second Party National Congress, February 1951), *Documents of the Second Party National Congress*, Commission for the Study of the Party's History, Hanoi 1965, p. 101.

2. In 1972, it changed its name to Lao People's Revolutionary Party.

As President Ho Chi Minh pointed out, this congress "secures victory for the war of resistance and establishes the Vietnam Workers' Party" (1).

The mistake of the Congress was that, though it put forward the problem of carrying out the land policy step by step, it however did not advocate the policy of carrying out land reform during the war of resistance when this policy was required.

On 3 March 1951, a unified congress was convened by the Viet Minh Front and Lien Viet Front, to strengthen the worker-peasant alliance led by the working class. On 11 March 1951, the conference of the Vietnam, Laos, Kampuchea alliance successfully ended with the consolidation of the solidarity between the three brother peoples fighting against the common foes — the French colonialists and American interventionists—for their common cause: national independence.

Implementing the resolution of the second national congress in its first plenum (March 1951), second plenum (October 1951) and third plenum (April 1952), the Party Central Committee decided on measures to step up the popular struggle behind the enemy's lines, on the building of the economy and finances in the liberated areas and on the building of the armed forces and the Party, to meet the new requirements of the war.

After our victories at Hoa Binh and in the enemy's rear in February 1952, we liberated two million

1. "President Ho Chi Minh's Letter to the Eaucus", *Documents of the Second Party's National Congress*, published by the Commission for the Study of the Party's History, Hanoi, 1965, p. 8.

inhabitants, broadened the liberated areas, linking the provinces in the delta and mid land of northern Vietnam and thwarted De Lattre de Tassigny's scheme to recapture the initiative on the battlefields in the North.

In our offensive in the North west in autumn 1952, we wiped out 6,000 enemy troops, liberated almost all the Northwestern region, foiled the enemy's plot to "set up the Thai autonomous region". In spring 1953, in coordination with the Vietnamese volunteers, the Lao liberation troops liberated the whole province of Sam Neua, part of Xieng Khoang and Luang Prabang provinces, linking upper Laos to the Northwest of Vietnam, opening a new situation for the liberation of Laos.

Paralled with our political and military successes since 1951, we had obtained good results in the economic field. The production movement was accelerated. An economy appropriate to the war conditions was worked out. Great attention was paid to the manufacture of weapons. Factories for the production of hand grenades, mines, bombs, mortars, bazookas, recoilless guns were set up.

During the war, the Party carried out the policy of reduction of land rents and interest rate in order partially to improve the peasants' living conditions. But with the development of the war, these measures were not sufficient to replenish the peasants' force and raise the strength of the resistance. At its 4th plenum held in January 1953 the Party Central Committee reviewed the implementation of the land policy since after the August Revolution and

advocated the carrying out of land reform to give land to the tillers during the resistance war.

The fifth plenum of the Party Central Committee in November 1953 approved the land programme, the general line of the Party in the countryside, the principle of land reform, the policy of confiscation, requisition and compulsory purchase of land in order to abolish the right of land ownership of the landlord class and to allot land to the toiling peasants. That land reform policy was unanimously approved by the Lien Viet Front, and passed by the National Assembly. From April 1953 to July 1954, the Party led the peasants in five land reform drives in the liberated areas. As it responded to the aspirations of the peasants and the population at large, and met the urgent requirements of war of resistance, land reform obtained a great success in 1953-1954. This success in fact contributed greatly to the victories of the winter 1953-spring 1954 campaign and the Dien Bien Phu campaign. It testifies to the correct thesis put forward by President Ho Chi Minh at the plenum of the Party Central Committee in January 1953: "Our force lies in tens of millions of toiling peasants who wait for the Party's and government's leadership to rise up to break the chains of feudal and colonial bondage. Skilfully organized and led, it will bring about earth-shaking changes and overthrow the colonialists and feudalists, however great their number may be."

STRATEGIC OFFENSIVE IN 1953-1954

THE DIEN BIEN PHU VICTORY

The victories in the campaigns of Hoa Binh and the Northwest and in other battlefields in the

country, coupled with the victories won by our Lao friends in Upper Laos brought about an important change in the balance of forces between the enemy and us. On our side, our armed forces grew in number and quality, and were capable of making big offensives while countering the attacks by the enemy crack forces behind their lines. The guerilla warfare areas kept expanding, covering two-thirds of the rural region under the enemy's control. Our rear was consolidated after the success of the drive of land rent reduction and land reform. We had more favourable conditions to win bigger victories.

On the French side, their troops strength reached the highest figure in the war—500,000 men—but they had a low fighting spirit because their morale was sagging, they lacked commanding officers, their logistic supply was long in coming, the percentage of puppet troops was high, and their mobility was low. As the war dragged on, the French economy was sinking and unable to cover the expenditure of a costly war. The French rulers were on the horns of a dilemma: if they continued the war, they did not have enough strength and had no chance to win, if they ended the war in a weak position, they would lose face. Finally the Laniel-Bidault government found a way out by relying on American aid despite the harsh conditions imposed by the Americans in the hope of winning some victory to serve as a basis for negotiations on a position of strength and to find an honourable way out.

After their defeat in Korea, the American imperialists interfered more and more deeply in Indochina, they granted aid to the French, gradually

laid hold of the puppet administration, seized the command of the Indochina war, and actively prepared to oust the French colonialists.

In May 1953, with the agreement of the Americans, the French government sent General Navarre to Indochina with a scheme—called the “Navarre plan”—to win within 18 months a number of victories compelling us to negotiate on their terms, otherwise they would continue the war to liquidate our forces.

After carefully analysing the situation on the battlefields throughout Indochina, in September 1953, the Political Bureau of the Party Central Committee set forth the following principles for the Winter 1953 - Spring 1954 Campaign: to muster our forces and attack the strategic points in which the enemy's forces were weak, to force the enemy to spread thin his forces to cope with our assaults, to create favourable conditions to wipe out the enemy parts by parts, to liberate more territory. Meanwhile we stepped up guerilla warfare in the enemy's rear, defended the liberated areas, helped our regular forces so that they could have free hand to beat the enemy in the regions we had chosen: the Northwest of North Vietnam. On 10 December 1953, our troops wiped out and summoned to surrender thousands of bandits. (1)

1. The enemy admitted that a commando unit in Lai Chau composed of 2,101 men, of whom 37 were French, had withdrawn to Dien Bien Phu and when they arrived there remained only 175 puppet troops and 10 French soldiers. *Armed Forces of the Republic of Vietnam, Military History* 4, 1972, p. 154.

Implementing this policy, in December 1953, we liberated Lai Chau: the enemy was compelled to spread thin his forces to reinforce Dien Bien Phu (in mid-November 1953 his paratroops had also landed on Dien Bien Phu).

At the same time, the Lao liberation troops and Vietnamese volunteers liberated Thakhet and vast areas in Central Laos and Lower Laos including Attopu town and the Boloven Plateau, compelling the enemy to withdraw his troops from the Bac Bo delta to reinforce Seno (Lower Laos). Meanwhile in Kampuchea the Issarak liberation army and the Vietnamese volunteers liberated wide areas in the northeast of the country, linking it to the liberated zone of Lower Laos.

On 26 January 1954, the Laos liberation troops and Vietnamese volunteers completely liberated Phongsalay province, expanded the liberated areas in Upper Laos, compelling the enemy to send his forces to strengthen Luang Prabang.

On 5 February 1954, we entirely liberated Kon Tum province and attacked Pleiku town, forcing the enemy to give up his attack in the Fifth Interzone and to send his forces from Nam Bo and Binh Tri Thien to rescue Pleiku.

After the powerful attacks of our forces, of the liberation armies in Laos and Kampuchea, Navarre's plan to concentrate his mobile forces in the Bac Bo delta ended in complete failure. This was a good opportunity for our troops to wipe out the enemy forces and to develop guerilla warfare behind the enemy's lines. In Nam Bo our guerillas captured or destroyed thousands of posts and watch towers, the

guerilla warfare areas in the north of Thua Thien and Quang Tri were expanded. In the Bac Bo delta, the enemy's defence line along the Day River was destroyed, our resistance bases along the Luoc River were broadened. On 4 March 1954, we attacked Gia Lam airfield (Hanoi), destroying 18 warplanes. On 7 March 1954, we attacked Cat Bi airfield (Haiphong), destroying 60 enemy planes.

To get a firm foothold in the Northwest of Vietnam and in Upper Laos and set up an important stronghold in a strategic region of Southeast Asia, the French and American imperialists built Dien Bien Phu into a very strong system of fortified positions in Indochina (1). Dien Bien Phu thus became the central point in the Navarre Plan; only by wiping out the Dien Bien Phu garrison could we destroy this plan and foil the enemy's scheme to broaden and prolong the war.

As early as December 1953, the Political Bureau of the Party Central Committee decided to make an attack on Dien Bien Phu. In his letter of December 1953 to Comrade Vo Nguyen Giap, President Ho Chi Minh said: "This campaign is most important not only in the military field but also in the political field, not only in the country but also in the international arena. So we must do our best to bring it to victory."

1. Dien Bien Phu was defended by 16,200 troops of 17 crack battalions, one armoured company and 12 war planes; it had 3 sub-sectors and 49 points d'appui. Almost all French and American commanding officers believed that Dien Bien Phu was an "impregnable fortress", a Verdun in Southeast Asia.

The Political Bureau also decided to set up the military command and Party committee for the campaign headed by Comrade Vo Nguyen Giap, member of the Political Bureau, Supreme Commander of the Vietnam People's Army. The government set up a logistic council headed by Comrade Pham Van Dong, member of the Political Bureau, Vice-Prime Minister.

The Political Bureau, President Ho Chi Minh and the High Command followed up the campaign and urged our men to fight heroically to wipe out the enemy at Dien Bien Phu. This decision was rapidly turned into action by our troops. By rudimentary means our troops built hundreds of kilometres of roads through mountains and forests to haul ordnance pieces in position and hundreds of kilometres of communication trenches under the enemy's artillery fire.

Under the slogan "Everything for the front, everything for victory!" over 200,000 patriotic workers were mobilized and devoted 3 million work-days to the Dien Bien Phu front. In cooperation with engineering units, tens of thousands of vanguard youths worked relentlessly to build roads and de-activate delayed action bombs. Tens of thousands of bicycles, carts and boats were mobilized to carry hundreds of thousands of tons of foods and ammunition to the front.

In three waves of fierce attacks lasting 55 days, on 7 May 1954, we completely annihilated the Dien Bien Phu entrenched camp, and put out of action or captured 16,000 enemy soldiers. All the French

command headed by General de Castries was taken prisoner (1).

The Winter 1953 — Spring 1954 Campaign, climaxed by Dien Bien Phu, ended victoriously. 112,000 enemy troops, or a quarter of the total effectives of the French expeditionary forces in Indochina were wiped out. Vast areas of strategic importance were liberated. Three quarters of the territory fell under our control. The puppet administration was aghast, the puppet army disbanded. Our victory landed the French army in a dangerous spot. General Navarre was called back to France and was replaced by General Ely to withdraw French troops from the south of the Bac Bo delta and make préparations for their withdrawal. If necessary they were to be withdrawn to south of the 18th parallel to save the French expeditionary corps from annihilation.

The wars waged by the Lao and Kampuchean people were also victorious: in Laos, over half the territory and half of the population were liberated. In Kampuchea, the Issarak liberation troops liberated nearly two-thirds of the territory, including vast rural areas and many towns in the eastern part of the country. As a result of these victories, the Resistance government was set up on 19 June 1954.

The Dien Bien Phu victory was the greatest victory won by our people in their long resistance to the French colonialists and American interventionists.

1. On 7 May 1954, French Prime Minister Laniel informed the French National Assembly that the French forces at Dien Bien Phu had received order to surrender to the Vietnam People's Army

The Dien Bien Phu battle was one of the greatest battles in the history of struggle of the oppressed people against a seasoned army of the colonialists. "It will go down in national history as a Bach Dang, a Chi Lang, a Dong Da in the 20th century" (1).

The Winter 1953 — Spring 1954 Campaign and Dien Bien Phu victory foiled the Navarre plan, restored peace in Indochina, completely liberated the North, paved the way for the success of the agrarian revolution in half of our country and created conditions for the liberation of southern Vietnam. They brought French old colonialism in Indochina to an end, and marked the beginning of the collapse of old colonialism throughout the world, encouraged the people in colonial and semi-colonial countries

1. Le Duan, "Under the Glorious Banner of the Party, for Independence, Freedom, and Socialism Let Us Advance to Win New Victories". Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1970, p. 50.

* — In the years 938, Ngo Quyen planted big stakes in the Bach Dang River and defeated the Southern Han troops. On the same river in 1288, in the fight against the Yuan, Tran Hung Dao made use with imagination of tactics and routed all the enemy fleet.

— In the year 1427 the Lam Son insurrectionists led by Le Loi and Nguyen Trai won a great victory over one hundred thousand Ming troops. They killed the commanding general Lieu Thang and forced the Ming to negotiate to withdraw their troops from Vietnam. Thus Vietnam won back her independence.

— On 5 January 1789, King Quang Trung defeated 500,000 Ching invaders at Ngoc Hoi (Dong Da—the Hanoi suburb) regained national independence and reunification.

living under the yoke of old and new colonialism to rise up and fight for independence and freedom.

While we were preparing to make the third attack to decide the fate of the enemy at Dien Bien Phu, the Conference on Indochina started in Geneva. Our government delegation headed by Comrade Pham Van Dong attended the Conference in the position of a victor.

The Geneva agreements on Indochina were signed on 20 July 1954. As a peace-loving country advocating the policy of settling all disputes through negotiations and in the condition of the Chinese rulers compromising the France (1) we accepted the solution that France and all countries participating in the Conference shall undertake to respect the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea, carry out the cease-fire order in Vietnam and the whole of Indochina, France shall withdraw her troops, the 17th parallel shall be regarded as a provisional military demarcation line, free general elections shall

1. The Chinese policy at the 1954 Geneva Conference on Indochina was to keep the French in Indochina, create a buffer zone south of China, avoid a direct confrontation with the US, while permanently partitioning our country in order to weaken and annex the three Indochinese countries, prepare the ground for Chinese expansionism to Southeast Asia. Taking advantage of their international position and their relations with us at that time, from April to June 1954, the Chinese rulers many times made bargains with the French to find a solution advantageous to both China and France, and check the victories of the Vietnamese and Lao peoples and to completely sacrifice the interests of Kampuchea.

be held throughout the country for national reunification.

At the 6th session in July 1954, the Party Central Committee advocated the policy "to consolidate peace, achieve reunification, complete independence and democracy throughout the country, to strengthen the armed forces, build a powerful people's army to meet the requirements of the new situation, continue to implement the policy: land to the tillers, restore production and prepare the conditions for national construction." (1)

After nearly nine years of hard but heroic struggle, we defeated the war of aggression of French old-colonialism. Nearly half a million enemy troops were put out of action, the war expenditure amounted in the French to 2,688 billion Francs and 2.6 billion dollars (of US aid); the French government was overthrown 20 times; eight French commanders licked the dust in Indochina.

During our resistance to French aggression, we had to cope not only with French colonialism but also with the scheme of aggression by imperialism headed by the US, who wanted to annihilate our Party and suppress the revolutionary movement in our country and in the world. With our determination to bring our resistance to success we not only discharged our national duty but fulfilled our obligations to the world revolution.

1. Resolution of the 6th plenum (enlarged) of the Party Central Committee (2nd legislature) held from 15 to 18 July 1954.

Speaking of our war of resistance against the French colonialists, President Ho Chi Minh wrote in an article published on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the founding of our Party: "For the first time in history a small colonial country has clobbered a big colonial power. This is a glorious victory of the Vietnamese people and also of the forces of peace, democracy and socialism in the world" (1)

Successfully leading the resistance to the French colonialists, our Party has been once again tempered in the crucible of the war and developed the science of conducting revolutionary war in a small country against a big colonialist power.

The victory of the war against the French colonialists was due to the fact that ours is a Marxist-Leninist party having a correct war policy, a tight organization, a strict discipline, a close link with the masses, that we are a heroic people tightly knit in a united front set up on the basis of the worker-peasant alliance, that we have a valiant people's army and a people's democratic power which constantly cares for the material and spiritual life of the people and encourages them to fight, that this victory was made possible thanks to the unity of the Vietnamese, Lao and Kampuchean peoples, to the support of the socialist countries, of the communist and workers' movement and of the progressive democratic and peace-loving people in the world.

1. Ho Chi Minh, "Thirty Years of Activities of the Party", *Selected Works*, Vol. II. Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1980, p. 157

In the process of leading the war, our Party applied Marxism-Leninism to the concrete conditions in the country and set forth a correct independent line. This line was *to conduct a popular war, all-round and protracted with reliance mainly on our own forces, to combine the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal task, to combine war activities with national construction, to coordinate political forces with armed forces, political actions with armed struggle, economic activities with diplomatic activities, to develop guerilla warfare into regular warfare, to combine these two methods of warfare, to coordinate three categories of arms, to solidly build the Party so that it can successfully lead the resistance* and guide the policy of resistance, guide strategy, skilfully organize combat while raising its level of leadership of the war and firmly grasping the armed forces and political forces, the Party must have close relations with the masses with the bases of resistance and production, constantly enhance its determination to fight and to win under any circumstances and strengthen and swell its ranks in the course of fighting.

PART IV

PARTY'S LEADERSHIP OVER TWO STRATEGIES: SOCIALIST REVOLUTION IN THE NORTH AND NATIONAL PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION IN THE SOUTH

(1954 — 1975)

COMPLETION OF LAND REFORM AND RESTORATION OF THE NATIONAL ECONOMY

(1954 — 1957)

The success of nine years of war against the French colonialists has brought the revolution in our country to a new period. In the completely liberated North, we have completed the national people's democratic revolution in the main and begun to tackle the socialist revolution. In the South under the rule of the US imperialists and their henchmen, our people have had to carry on the national people's democratic revolution.

Each zone in our country had its own revolutionary task. But these tasks were closely related to each other. The task of the socialist revolution in the North was not only to secure a happy life for our

people in the North but also to liberate the South. The task of the national people's democratic revolution in the South was not only to liberate the South but also to defend the North. The common goal of our entire people was to complete the national democratic revolution and achieve the peaceful reunification of the country.

In his appeal to the nation of 22 July 1954 (after the Geneva Conference) President Ho Chi Minh said, "To consolidate peace and achieve national unification, independence and democracy is also a long and hard struggle".

At its September 1954 session, the Political Bureau of the Party Central Committee set forth concrete tasks for the new revolutionary stage as follows: "In a given period, the task of our Party is to unite and lead the people to get the agreement implemented, to be ready to thwart all schemes of sabotage of this agreement in order to consolidate peace, to complete land reform, restore and increase production, step up the building of the people's army in order to consolidate the North; to intensify the political struggle of the southern people for peace, unification, independence and democracy." The Party reminded its members to heighten their vigilance to sharpen their fighting spirit and that it is necessary to do away with such erroneous thinkings as relaxation, hedonism; and to be cautious not to fall a prey to bourgeois' temptations when taking over urban centres

Forced to leave the North, the French colonialists connived with the American imperialists to sabotage the reunification of our country, renounce the

political provision of the Geneva agreements and permanently partition our country. They enticed and forced nearly one million of our compatriots in the North to go south, carried away or destroyed thousands of tons of machinery, implements and public property in order to cripple us and create difficulties for our work of taking over the newly-liberated region. We fought stubbornly, frustrated their plots and rapidly took possession of the new areas.

On 1 January 1955, a big rally was held in Ba Dinh square to welcome the return of President Ho Chi Minh, the Party Central Committee and the government to the capital after nearly nine years of hard but heroic fighting. This historic event of great political significance made a deep impression on our people throughout the country.

On 16 May 1955, we liberated all the Haiphong region. As the last French soldier left the North, half of our country was completely liberated. This was a resounding victory of our people.

In its document *Some Problems on the Revolutionary Lines in Vietnam*, released in January 1956, the Political Bureau pointed out: "After the restoration of peace, the North of our country has shifted to the socialist revolution. We are confronted with many difficulties but have fundamental advantages. Our biggest obstacle is that our most backward economy has been destroyed by 15 years of warfare and our country remains temporarily divided into two zones. Our advantages are that our Party secures the leadership of the revolution and its prestige is raised, we have a people's democratic state which

begins to fulfil the task of proletarian dictatorship; we are rich in natural resources, our people are united, patriotic and painstaking, we enjoy the staunch support from the socialist countries.

Under the leadership of the Party, our people have done their utmost to develop their advantages and overcome their difficulties, to complete land reform, restore the national economy and bring the North to the stage of socialist revolution.

At that time, only a small part of land reform was achieved. As it was the fundamental task of the national people's democratic revolution, the requirement of the socialist revolution was to complete it radically. Our Party mustered tens of thousands of cadres and urgently launched a widespread mobilization campaign for land reform. In summer 1956, this campaign was completed in the delta and midland of North Vietnam. In the mountainous regions it continued through the "mobilization for agricultural cooperation and development of production in coordination with the completion of democratic reforms", this was to abolish the feudal ownership of land, to implement the watchword "Land to the Tillers" and the peasants' right to be masters of the countryside in the highlands and to strengthen solidarity among the various nationalities.

Land reforms and democratic reforms were crowned with great success: the feudal landlord class, a target of the national people's democratic revolution in the North, was definitely abolished, the feudal right of land ownership disappeared for

good, 810,000 hectares of land owned by the landlords were distributed to landless or land-hungry peasants, the watchword "Land to the Tillers" got implemented, the peasants were completely freed from the feudal yoke existing for thousands of years in our country, the peasantry in the North gained its right to mastery of the countryside, politically and economically, the worker-peasant alliance, the firm basis of the national united front and the people's democratic power was strengthened.

The 10th plenum of the Party Central Committee held in September 1956 confirmed the success of land reform as fundamental and having a strategic character. However it also reviewed the serious mistakes committed and took energetic measures to correct them.

Parallel with land reform the Party led the population in the restoration of the national economy. Thanks to the great efforts of our people and to the wholehearted assistance of the socialist countries, this task was completed in the main at the end of 1957. The total industrial and agricultural output approximately reached the 1939 level. Food production was over 4 million tonnes, exceeding by far the pre-war level. The state sector was strengthened. The imperialists' economic privileges and others were suppressed. The economic life in the country became normal. As a result, we were able to lessen our difficulties and initially raise our people's living standard and prepare ourselves to shift to the period of socialist transformation and construction.

In the period of economic restoration our Party set forth correct policies aimed at consolidating the dictatorship of the proletariat and strengthening the

Party's leadership. The Congress of the national united front convened in Hanoi on 5 September 1955 decided to broaden and consolidate this unity of our people, to found the Vietnam Fatherland Front and elect its Central Committee headed by Comrade Ton Duc Thang. The people's democratic state which fulfilled the historical task of proletarian dictatorship was strengthened. At the 5th session of the First National Assembly held on 5-20 September 1955, Comrade Pham Van Dong was appointed Prime Minister. In its resolution adopted at the 12th (enlarged) plenum (March 1957), the Party Central Committee charted the line of strengthening national defence, and gradually building the people's army into a modern regular army.

SOCIALIST TRANSFORMATION INITIAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE ECONOMY AND CULTURE

After the success of land reform and economic restoration, important changes were brought about in the North. But, generally speaking, our economy was most heterogeneous, in which the individual economy of the peasants, artisans, small traders and small manufacturers accounted for the largest part. The workers in private enterprises were not yet freed from capitalist exploitation. This situation called for socialist transformation on a large scale as a necessary step to take the North to socialism.

At its 13th plenum held in December 1957 the Party Central Committee (2nd term) pointed out that after the restoration of peace and complete

liberation of the North we embarked on the period of transition to socialism. However our cadres and Party members did not have a clear understanding of this irresistible development of the revolution. The Party Central Committee took many important measures to instil socialist thinking into them so that they could differentiate between the socialist path and capitalist path, and realize that the North should inevitably develop along the socialist line and fight all tendency to allow capitalism develop freely for a time before advancing to socialism. The Party also removed from the mind of some people who had hazy notions about the symbiotic relations between the socialist revolution in the North and the liberation of the South; these people feared that the advance of the North to socialism would be an obstacle to the struggle for national reunification. It pointed out that it was precisely to create favourable conditions for the liberation of the South and national reunification that the North ought to advance rapidly, vigorously and steadily to socialism.

In the particular conditions when the North was just freed from the yoke of colonialism and feudalism, bypassed the stage of capitalist development and advanced directly to socialism, and when the country was temporarily partitioned in two zones, the method, form and rate of development of socialism were most urgent problems confronting our people. The 14th plenum of the Party Central Committee (November 1958) advocated the policy to "step up the socialist transformation of the private economic sector of the peasants and artisans and of the private capitalist sector and to develop the state economic sector as the leading force of the national

economy." The main point was the transformation and development of agriculture.

At its 16th plenum held in April 1959, the Party Central Committee adopted two important resolutions: one regarding agricultural cooperation, the other on the transformation of private capitalist industry and trade in the North.

The Party's line of socialist transformation of agriculture was to take the individual peasants step by step from work-exchange teams (having the seed of socialism) to low level agricultural cooperation (semi-socialist) then to high level cooperation (socialist). This was the line of carrying out cooperation before mechanization and cooperation simultaneously with irrigation and reorganization of the labour force. Agricultural cooperation would impel industrialization, would create conditions for the strengthening and development of agricultural cooperation.

With regard to the artisans, the Party organized them in handicraft cooperatives, supplied them with equipment and raw materials, helped them to improve their technique and raise their labour efficiency and the quality of their goods and to contribute to the fulfilment of the State plan.

The private capitalist manufacturers and traders were peacefully transformed. In the economic field, the means of production of the national capitalists were not confiscated but redeemed by the State, in the political field. These capitalists were still regarded as members of the Vietnam Fatherland Front.

Regarding the small traders, they were re-educated and helped to take the collective path, and most of them were shifted to the productive sector.

The Party and government policies on the socialist transformation of agriculture, handicrafts, private capitalist industry and trade and small trade were approved by various sections of the population. In the countryside from 1959, the movement for agricultural cooperation had been most seething. The struggle between the socialist path and capitalist path, between the collective path and private path was very hard.

In face of this situation, the Party must show its unity, oneness of mind, and strength. In a September 1957 statement, President Ho Chi Minh said: "In the period of socialist revolution, the Party should be stronger than ever. Socialist transformation would not be possible if the Party members do not transform themselves and raise their knowledge. Socialist revolution requires that they should have a very firm class stand and a high socialist awareness, that they get rid of all influence of the exploiting class and of individualism and have the spirit of collectivism" (1).

Educated by the Party and President Ho Chi Minh, the majority of cadres and Party members in the new stage of the revolution have done their utmost to urge the masses to successfully carry out the Party's line of socialist transformation. In three

1. Ho Chi Minh: "Opening Address at the First Course on Marxist-Leninist Theory at Nguyen Ai Quoc Party Higher School", *Selected Works*, Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1980, Vol II, p. 70

years ending in 1960, agricultural cooperation at low level was completed in the main in northern Vietnam. Over 85% of peasant households joined the cooperatives with 68.06% of lands, 11.8% of these households were organized in high level cooperatives. In the towns, 783 households of capitalist manufacturers (or 100%), 826 households of capitalist traders (97.1%), and 319 households of owners of mechanized transport (99%) subjected to transformation have taken the socialist path. Tens of thousands of workers were freed from the exploitation of capitalists. The transformation of artisans and small traders has yielded substantial results. Over 260,000 artisans have joined the cooperatives, or 87.9% of those submitted to transformation, over 150,000 small traders were brought under cooperation, accounting for 45.1% of the total number of traders under transformation. Nearly 50,000 others were shifted to the productive sector, chiefly agriculture and handicrafts.

Parallel with the success of transformation of relations of production, the targets of the three-year plan for the development of agriculture, industry, culture, education and public health were also fulfilled. Unemployment and social diseases left by the old regime were basically liquidated.

The great success of the three-year plan of socialist transformation, and initial development of the economy and culture was the *establishment of the socialist relations of production*, abolition of the regime of exploitation of man by man in the North and the transformation of a multisector economy into a homogeneous economy having a socialist and semi-socialist character.

The far-reaching change in North Vietnam's society was reflected in the 1959 Constitution. After the victory of the war against French colonialism, the North, completely liberated, embarked on the period of socialist revolution while the South was still living under the rule of imperialism and feudalism. The 1946 Constitution, out of date, should be amended to be up to the new situation. That is why, on 23 January 1957, the National Assembly of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam decided to rivamp it and to set up a committee of amendment headed by President Ho Chi Minh. After nearly three years of work, this committee fulfilled its mission and presented to the National Assembly the draft of the amended constitution. This first socialist constitution of our country reflects the aspirations of our people to resolutely build socialism in the North and fight for national unification and to build Vietnam into a peaceful, unified, independent, democratic, strong and prosperous country.

MAINTENANCE OF REVOLUTIONARY FORCES IN THE SOUTH—THE MOVEMENT OF CONCERTED UPRISINGS (1954 — 1960)

During the war against the French, our Party had already seen through the perfidious scheme of the US imperialists. At its 6th plenum held in July 1954, the Party Central Committee pointed out: the American imperialists were the main obstacle to the restoration of peace in Indochina. They frantically stepped up the establishment of an aggressive bloc in Southeast Asia, using Indochina as a spring board

to expand their war of aggression over this region. They were thus the main foe of peace-loving people in the world and were becoming the direct threat of the Indochinese people.

Capitalizing on the critical situation caused to the French by their defeat at Dien Bien Phu, in June 1954, the Americans rigged up the Ngo Dinh Diem administration and feverishly prepared to oust the French. They plotted to turn South Vietnam into a new-type colony and military base and sabotaged the Geneva agreements. On the one hand, they overcame the French, then kicked the latter out of South Vietnam; on the other, they sought every means to restore the position of the landlords and comprador bourgeois discarded by the revolution, and created a new class of pro-US landlords and compradores and used them as tools to implement their neo-colonialist policy in the South. They did not set up a direct administrative apparatus like the French but made use of quislings, a network of American advisers and military and economic aids to rule South Vietnam. In the military field, they built, trained, equipped and commanded the puppet army. In the economic field, they gradually turned the South into an outlet for their dumpings and those of their allies; they grabbed huge economic resources of the country. In the cultural field, they poisoned the South Vietnam people, chiefly the youth with their corrupt way of life. They used Ngo Dinh Diem, a feudalism who had served the French and Japanese, to rig up a regime which they varnished with such words as "independent" and "republican" to hoodwink the population.

In fact a most fascist dictatorial regime was imposed on the South Vietnam people. But US neo-colonialism there was dealt a stunning blow, because it had no ground on which to develop. After the August 1945 Revolution our compatriots in the South had enjoyed a short period of independence and freedom and thus had realized the superiority of the people's democratic regime, they unmasked the ugly face of the American aggressors. A comparison between socialism in the North and US neo-colonialism in the South would definitely show the superiority of the former over the latter.

As early as the end of 1954, Ngo Dinh Diem committed heinous murders at Ngan Son, Chi Thanh, Cho Duoc, Mo Cay, Binh Thanh, etc. He launched many "denounce communist" drives, cracked down on the struggle of our compatriots in the South in a most maniacal and class revengeful manner. On 1 December 1958 he poisoned to death thousands of our revolutionary fighters and compatriots detained at Phu Loi camp. In May 1959, he issued Law 10/59 to kill the patriots. From 1954 to 1959 there were 466,000 communists and patriots arrested, 400,000 jailed and 68,000 killed.

In September 1954, the Political Bureau of the Party Central Committee took a resolution defining the tasks of the revolution in the South in the new stage. The slogan displayed was peace, unification, independence, democracy, shifting from armed struggle to political actions for the implementation of the cease fire order, consolidation of peace, achievement of democratic liberties, improvement of living conditions, fighting for national unification and against terror,

protection of the people's rights wrested during the war of resistance, legal and semi-legal actions, combination of lawful and unlawful activities. The Party left in the South many cadres to engage in secret work. In October 1954, the Nam Bo Party Committee was set up to lead the revolutionary movement there. The Party Committees in districts and provinces were reorganized to suit the new situation.

In June 1956, the Political Bureau issued a resolution pointing out that though political struggle was waged throughout the country, armed struggle was also used in definite circumstances. The Political Bureau stressed that it was necessary to strengthen our armed and semi-armed forces, set up resistance bases and secure a strong popular support, which were primordial conditions to maintain and develop the armed forces.

In August 1956, Comrade Le Duan, member of the Political Bureau of the Party Central Committee, in charge of the Nam Bo Party Committee, wrote the book, "*Revolutionary Road in South Vietnam*", pointing out that the liberation of the South was a revolutionary road.

The central and immediate task of South Vietnam at that time was to preserve the revolutionary forces. The Party and mass organizations and cadres and Party members should rapidly disappear to work underground. The revolutionary bases in the Central Highlands, U Minh, Dong Thap plain and in other regions were maintained. Legal and semi-legal forms (such as watch against banditry, digging anti-shell trenches, setting up a double-agent puppet administration, using religious sects in armed struggle) were

used as a screen for illegal activities. The first armed propaganda units and self-defence groups made their appearance. Tens of thousands of fire-arms were hidden in many regions in Nam Bo and the Fifth Interzone.

Implementing these policies, the Party led our people in the South to fight against the terrorist acts of the puppet authorities. It also led them in the struggle for the holding of Consultative conferences paving the way to the general elections for the reunification of the country, against faked referendums, rubber stamp parliament, and for democratic liberties and improvement of living conditions. These movements involved millions of people from Quang Tri in the North to Ca Mau in the South, including various religious sects: Cao Dai, Hoa Hao, the Catholics ethnic minorities, the northern people forced to go south, who waged a concerted struggle in the town and countryside in various forms. They fought against the reprisals of the puppet authorities, against former resistance members, against "denounce communist" drives and against land grabbing. Revolutionary heroism, and the indomitable spirit of the masses had a vantage ground to develop. Examples of bravery, sacrifice and revolutionary virtues were seen everywhere in the country among various nationalities and at all ages. Even in the most crucial hours of the war, the people in the South had a firm confidence in the Party and President Ho Chi Minh. By cogent arguments, our people exposed the false allegations of the enemy, they resolutely defended the revolutionary bases, protested and hid the cadres at the cost of their lives.

From the end of 1956 to 1959, the movement mounted vigorously: 2 million people took part in the struggle in 1957, 3.7 million in 1958, and nearly 5 million in 1959.

Armed struggles against ruffians and traitors also gained momentum. In 1956 and 1957, a dozen armed units were set up in Nam Bo, many traitor-suppression squads made their appearance in the 5th Interzone. The first battles were waged against the puppet troops at Minh Thanh (Thu Dau Mot) and Trai Be (Bien Hoa), many enemy soldiers were wiped out and a quantity of weapons was captured. At the end of 1957, in Resistance Base D (1), the first concentrated armed units were set up, which were the nucleus for the future regular army in Nam Bo.

In April 1958, at Bac Ai, a district in the northwest of Ninh Thuan province, 3,000 inhabitants rose up and destroyed a concentration camp. They waged political and armed struggles to defend themselves from being concentrated by the puppet authorities. In October 1958, our armed forces destroyed Dau Tieng district capital (Thu Dau Mot) and forced twenty military posts in the district to evacuate.

In 1959, with the application of Law 10/59 and most barbarous policies of the enemy, the revolution in the South was facing a most critical situation. Led by the Party, our people however were able to overcome these difficulties, and the revolutionary bases were maintained and developed. The Party kept a close relationship with the masses and led them in their struggle against the enemy.

1. The D base area, east of Nam Bo, (northwest of present-day Ho Chi Minh City).

The enslaving and bellicose policy of the U.S. imperialists and terrorist acts of the traitorous Ngo Dinh Diem clique were the root causes of the sufferings of the South Vietnam people who realized clearly that they could not live under this harsh regime unless they waged a do-or-die battle against the enemy.

While the Americans and their henchmen were plotting to partition our country permanently, the Chinese rulers left no stone unturned to prevent our people from unifying it. They "recommended" us to wage a persevering political struggle, to "lay a long ambush"; they even said that "the partition of Vietnam is a problem that cannot be solved in a short time but in a longer time, if need be in ten or even one hundred years". True to the vital interests of our people and firmly grasping the principles of Marxism-Leninism, our Party did not follow their "advice". In January 1959, the Party Central Committee held its 15th (enlarged) plenum to outline its policy in the South in the new stage. It pointed out that the fundamental task of the revolution in the South was to free it from the imperialist and feudal yoke, to wrest back national independence, apply the policy of "land to the tiller", and carry out the people's democratic revolution in the South and to build Vietnam into a peaceful, united, independent, democratic, rich and powerful country. "The immediate task was to overthrow the Ngo Dinh Diem ruling clique, to form a coalition democratic government in the South, to secure national independence and democratic freedoms, improve the people's life, maintain peace and achieve national unification.

At the plenum it was stressed that *the revolution in the South must be carried out through violence*. As required by the situation at that time this road was to

make use of the strength of the masses, mainly their political force, in combination with the armed forces, to overthrow the rule of imperialism and feudalism and to establish the people's revolutionary power.

It was also pointed out that as the Americans were the most bellicose imperialists, in certain conditions, the insurrection of the South Vietnam people would probably be turned into a long but certainly victorious armed struggle

In the light of this plenum, at the end of 1959 and the beginning of 1960 our people in the South rose up in a concerted insurrection.

In the 5th Interzone, following the uprising of the highlanders, the popular insurrection took place on 28 August 1959 at Tra Bong, a district in the hilly region of Quang Ngai province. Here, under the leadership of the local Party committee, 16,000 people of ethnic minorities rose up and swept away the puppet administration in 16 communes, forced seven enemy posts to evacuate, wiped out hundreds of quislings and set up the revolutionary power in the communes. This insurrection spread to surrounding districts.

At the end of 1959, in the east, centre and west of Nam Bo, the inhabitants rose up and wiped out the puppet administration in hundreds of communes. The movement was all the more seething after the meetings of the Nam Bo Party Committee in November 1959 and of the Party Committee in Central Nam Bo in December 1959 to implement the resolution of the 15th plenum. The Party Committee in Ben Tre province issued a resolution to organize a week of

concerted uprisings to wipe out the puppet administration and set up the revolutionary power. Mo Cay district was chosen as pilot for the movement in the whole province. On the night of 17 January 1960, under the leadership of the Party Committee of Ben Tre province, the inhabitants rose up with rudimentary weapons to attack enemy posts, capture arms and destroy the puppet administrative apparatus in the communes. From there, the movement spread sweepingly to other provinces in Nam Bo, the Central Highlands and Central Vietnam.

It was in this impetuous movement that the people set up armed units and fought many victorious battles: 500 enemy troops were captured and over one thousand fire-arms seized at Tua Hai (Tay Ninh) on 25 January 1960. After this victory, the Tay Ninh inhabitants liberated two-thirds of the communes in the province.

The success of the movement made it possible for the revolution in the South to shift from the state of preservation of force to the state of continual offensives. The revolutionary bases were expanded and included the hilly regions and large rural areas lying deep in the enemy's rear. In these regions the people secured their right to mastery. The lands of reactionary and cruel landlords were confiscated and distributed to poor peasants.

This success brought about a far-reaching change in the situation in South Vietnam and was an unexpected blow dealt at the Eisenhower strategy, and frustrated a form typical of US neo-colonialism." (1)

1. Report of the Political Bureau at the 21st plenum of the Party Central Committee (July 1973).

This success created conditions for the starting of an all-round people's war against the aggression of the American imperialists and landed the puppet administration in a blind alley.

The movement was successful because it took place at the time when the enemy was facing a fundamental political failure: seething with anger the population made powerful attacks on the weakest link of the enemy—his rural administration.

In the upsurge of this movement, on 20 December 1960, the representatives of all social classes, political parties, religious sects, ethnic minorities and strata of the people in the South met at Tan Lap commune, Chau Thanh district, Tay Ninh province and set up the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam. The meeting approved a 10-point working programme whose fundamental content was to overthrow the camouflaged colonial regime of US imperialism and the Ngo Dinh Diem dictatorial administration, in order to turn South Vietnam into an independent, democratic, peaceful, and neutral country, pending the reunification of the country.

In 1959 and 1960, the revolution in Laos was also full of events. After the signing of the Geneva Agreements, the American imperialists and their stooges schemed to impose neo-colonialism on Laos, they torpedoed the Geneva agreements, sabotaged the coalition government, annihilated the Pathet Lao army and the revolutionary forces in Sam Neua and Phong-saly provinces, arrested Comrade Souphanouvong and other leaders of Neo Lao Haksat. Implementing the policy of the Lao People's Party, early in 1959, the Lao people rose up against the Americans and their

henchmen, set up their own power, expanded the liberated zones, and consolidated their armed forces. On 19 May 1959, Battalion 2 of Pathet Lao fired the first shot at the American imperialists and their lackeys and escaped from their siege. On 23 May 1960, Comrade Souphanouvong and his associates escaped from prison and returned to their bases safe and sound. On 9 August 1960, the paratroop battalion of the Lao Royal Army staged a coup d'état in Vientiane, toppling the Phoumi Nosavan reactionary government. The Lao revolution took a new turn which was political struggle combined with armed struggle to complete the national democratic revolution.

THE THIRD NATIONAL CONGRESS OF THE PARTY
THE FULFILMENT OF THE FIRST FIVE-YEAR PLAN
AND THE DEFEATING OF THE US IMPERIALISTS'
SPECIAL WAR
(1961—1965)

The Party's Third National Congress was held in Hanoi from 5 to 10 September 1960 when socialist transformation in the North was recording a decisive victory, the heroic revolutionary struggle of our Southern fellow-countrymen was vigorously developing and the movement of concerted uprisings surging ahead

After thirty years of arduous and heroic struggle, it was the first time our Party was able to hold a Congress in the capital city of our beloved fatherland. The Congress was attended by over 500 delegates and alternate delegates representing over

500,000 Party members in the whole country. In his opening speech, President Ho Chi Minh pointed out: "The present Party Congress is the Congress of socialist construction in the North and of struggle for peaceful national reunification." The Congress heard the *Political Report* of the Party Central Committee delivered by Comrade Le Duan. In this report, Comrade Le Duan gave a profound analysis of the important changes in the international and national situations since the Party's Second National Congress (February 1951), drew up the basic lessons of the Vietnamese revolution and affirmed: "In the present international circumstances, a people, however weak, who have risen up in unity to struggle resolutely under the leadership of a Marxist-Leninist Party to win back independence and democracy, have sufficient forces to vanquish any aggressor." (1)

The *Political Report* pointed out that since the restoration of peace, the Vietnamese revolution had moved into a new stage: "the North had entered upon the period of transition to socialism; the South was carrying on the people's national democratic revolution. The general task of the Vietnamese revolution during this stage is to strengthen national unity, resolutely struggle to safeguard peace, step up the socialist revolution in the North and at the same time push forward the people's national democratic revolution in the South, achieve national reunification on the basis of independence and democracy and

1. *Documents of the Congress* — published by the Central Committee of the Vietnam Workers' Party, Hanoi, 1960. Vol. 1, p. 23.

build a peaceful, reunified, independent, democratic and prosperous Vietnam, thus contributing effectively to the strengthening of the socialist camp and the safeguarding of peace in Southeast Asia and the world." (1) The *Political Report* also pointed out that the building of socialism in the North was the most decisive *task* in the entire development of the revolution in Vietnam and the reunification of the country.

The Resolution of the Congress mapped out the Party's general line in the period of transition to socialism in the North, namely: "To unite the entire people, promote their ardent patriotism, their tradition of heroic struggle and hard work and, at the same time, to strengthen solidarity with the fraternal socialist countries, with the Soviet Union at their head, so as to take the North rapidly, vigorously and steadily to socialism, to build an abundant and happy life in the North and consolidate it as a firm base of the struggle for the peaceful reunification of the country, thus contributing to the strengthening of the socialist camp and to the safeguarding of peace in Southeast Asia and the world

To achieve this aim, it is necessary to make use of the people's democratic power assuming the historical mission of the dictatorship of the proletariat to achieve the socialist transformation of agriculture, handicrafts, small trade and private capitalist industry and trade; to develop the State-run sector of the economy, carry out socialist industrialization by giving priority to the rational development of heavy

industry, while striving to develop agriculture and light industry; to step up the socialist revolution in ideology, culture and technology; to turn our country into a socialist country with modern industry, modern agriculture, and advanced culture and science." (1)

As regards the revolution in the South, the Resolution of the Congress pointed out: "In the achievement of the people's national democratic revolution throughout the country through national reunification, our fellow-countrymen in the South have the task of directly overthrowing the rule of the US imperialists and their henchmen so as to liberate the South. Moreover, their struggle checks the US — Diem scheme of rekindling the war, thus contributing actively to the safeguarding of peace in Indochina, Southeast Asia and the world." (2)

The revolutionary tasks in the two zones belong to two different strategies but have a common target ahead, namely to achieve the reunification of the country. Therefore, they are closely related, influence each other and boost each other.

The Congress adopted the orientation and tasks of the first Five-Year Plan for economic and cultural development along socialist lines, decided policies on the consolidation of the Party and passed the new *Rules* of the Party. The Congress underlined the basic requirement for the whole work of Party building — to enhance the class and vanguard character of the Party. The new Rules of the Party

1. *Documents of the Congress*, op. cit. p. 25.

1. op. cit., pp. 179-180.

2. op. cit., pp. 174-175.

clearly laid down: "The Vietnam Workers' Party is the party of the Vietnamese working class, the organized vanguard and the highest organization of the working class..." The Party assessed that at this stage, our cadres and Party members should have not only an anti-imperialist and an anti-feudal stand, but also a high socialist consciousness. The task of leading socialist building required that our cadres and Party members rapidly deepen their knowledge of Maxism-Leninism, their cultural, scientific, technological and economic managerial level.

The Congress elected a new Central Committee of 45 members and 28 alternate ones. The new Political Bureau comprised 11 members and 2 alternate ones. Comrade Ho Chi Minh was re-elected Chairman of the Party Central Committee and Comrade Le Duan was elected First Secretary of the Party Central Committee.

The Party's Third National Congress marked an important development in the history of the Vietnamese revolution. The Congress mapped out the way to advance toward socialism in the North and the way to liberate the South and reunify the country. The Congress also worked out the orientation for enhancing the fighting strength and the leadership of the Party in the new period when the Party had to lead the implementation of two revolutionary strategies at the same time. The correct foreign policy of our Party in the new situation was adopted in this Congress.

The Resolution of the Congress guided our entire Party and people to strive fervently to achieve the socialist revolution in the North and the people's

national democratic revolution in the South. President Ho Chi Minh said in the closing speech of the Congress: "Fifteen years ago, with only 5,000 members and in extremely difficult conditions, our Party led the August Revolution to victory. Now that our Party is more than 500,000 strong and in very favourable conditions, it will surely lead the socialist revolution to success and the struggle for national reunification to victory." (1)

Since the Third National Congress of the Party, the North of our country has moved into a period in which the central task is to build the material and technical base of socialism, while continuing to complete the socialist transformation and to consolidate and perfect the new relations of production.

To give concrete forms to the line on economic development adopted at the Party Congress, the Party Central Committee successively held plenary sessions specially devoted to agricultural development (July 1961), industrial development (June 1962), the State plan (April 1963), commodity circulation, distribution and prices (December 1964). In these plenums, the Party Central Committee carried out a further analysis of the position, inter-relationships and effects of the three revolutions: revolution in relations of production, scientific and technical revolution and ideological and cultural revolution, stressing that the scientific and technical revolution was the *kingpin*.

1. "Closing Speech of the Third Party National Congress on 10 September 1960", *Documents of the Party National Congress*, published by the Central Committee of the Vietnam Worker's Party, Hanoi, 1960, V. I, p. 221

The socialist revolution in the North of our country is a process of all round development of the three above-mentioned revolutions. In the course of these three revolutions, such important problems as primary accumulation, relationship between accumulation and consumption, between economic construction and the strengthening of defence, between industry and agriculture, between heavy industry and light industry, between centrally-run industry and locally-run industry, were settled by our Party in a manner which has become more and more concrete, exact and suited to the characteristics of our country.

From 1961 onward, in the implementation of the First Five-Year Plan, our people managed to overcome numerous difficulties caused by natural calamities and by the extremely poor and backward state of our economy, in order to advance with firm steps. This was reflected in the emulation movements "Three First", "Dai Phong", "Duyen Hai", "Thanh Cong", "Bac Ly" (1) and in the movement to gain the title of socialist labour team and brigade.

1. *Three First*: First in the number, regularity and quality of one's achievements — targets of the emulation movement in the people's army and people's militia from 1959 to 1961.

Dai Phong: a farming co-operative in Phong Thuy village, Le Thuy district, Quang Binh province, the standard-bearer of the emulation movement to improve the management of co-operatives, improve techniques and increase production in agriculture from 1960 onward.

...

Through these movements, thousands of production and work teams and brigades were recognized by our Government as socialist labour teams and brigades, thousands of farming co-operatives became advanced co-operatives, thousands of units of the people's armed forces were recognized as "determined-to-win units". Our people's spirit of self-reliance, industry and thrift in building socialism was greatly enhanced.

However, while striving to build a socialist economy in the North of our country, we still find many difficulties ahead. These are not accidental and temporary difficulties, but ones that have deep roots in our economy. Therefore, the Party constantly reminded Party committees at various levels, local Party branches and Party and Government offices to strive and overcome their shortcomings and weaknesses, to improve their good points, and unceasingly endeavour to do better. In April 1961, the Fourth Plenum of the Party Central Committee

Duyen Hai: an engineering plant in Haiphong, the standard-bearer of the emulation movement to rationalize production and improve techniques in industry from 1961 onward.

Thanh Cong: a handicraft co-operative in Thanh Hoa province, the standard-bearer of the emulation movement to heighten the spirit of self-reliance, industry and thrift in building co-operatives in the handicraft sector from 1961 onward.

Bac Ly: a junior secondary school in Ly Nhan district, Nam Ha province, the standard-bearer of the emulation movement "study well, teach well" in education from 1961 onward.

discussed the problem of strengthening the leadership of the Party, mainly in organization and executive guidance. The Central Committee also pointed out the vital importance of grassroots organizations in carrying out Party policies, and launched a "drive to build *four-good* (1) Party cells and branches", while paying great attention to consolidating local Party committees.

Early in 1963, the Political Bureau of the Party Central Committee pointed out that economic management was one of our weak points. It put forward three great drives: the drive to improve co-operative management and techniques in agriculture; the drive to heighten responsibility, strengthen economic and financial management, and improve techniques, and to oppose bureaucracy, waste and corruption — in short, the "three for and three against" drive—in industry and trade; and the drive to develop economy in the highlands. Through those drives of revolutionary significance, we better realized that the tendency to spontaneous capitalist development in the economy of our North, though weak, could, however, arise and grow, especially among those still working individually on the free market. Moreover, the enemy constantly sought to undermine our efforts. Therefore, in socialist building as well as in socialist transformation, the struggle between the two roads in the North to settle the question "who will win" is still going on under the various forms of the revolution in relations of

1. Good work, good implementation of Party and Government policies, good mass work, good Party-building work.

production, the technological revolution, and the ideological and cultural revolution.

In December 1963, the Ninth Plenum of the Party Central Committee analysed the characteristics of the world situation, the task of the international communist movement and pointed out that our Party's responsibility was to take part in the struggle to safeguard the purity of Marxism-Leninism, contribute to the strengthening of unity in the socialist system and the international communism struggle to safeguard the purity of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism, and strengthen the unity and fighting strength of our Party. The Party severely criticized the rightist views which held that the North of our country had basically completed the socialist transformation of the national economy, hence there was no more class struggle, no more struggle between the two roads—the socialist and the capitalist. The Party also severely criticized dogmatic views and reminded cadres and Party members *to strive and promote the spirit of independence and sovereignty*, and in a creative way to apply Marxism-Leninism and the experiences of fraternal countries to the specific conditions of our country, while holding firmly to our Party's correct lines and policies for socialist revolution in the North and the people's national democratic revolution in the South.

Also in 1963, our Party resolutely struggled against the Beijing leaders' scheme to split the international communist and worker movement, and rejected their 25-point programme on the general line for the communist movement by which they plotted to abolish the socialist system, grasp the "leadership of the world

revolution" and set up a new "Communist International" led by Beijing. Thus, the Beijing leaders' 25-point programme found no echo and their scheme to establish a new International did not materialize.

In March 1964, President Ho Chi Minh convened a Special Political Conference with a view to further strengthening the unity and single-mindedness of the entire people in the face of the US imperialists' scheme to intensify and extend the war. The Conference heard President Ho Chi Minh's report, unanimously approved and wholeheartedly backed the home and foreign policies of our Party and Government. At the Conference, President Ho Chi Minh called on everyone to "redouble his efforts to be worthy of our Southern kinsmen." President Ho Chi Minh's Report at the Special Political Conference was widely disseminated among the Party, the people and the armed forces, inspiring everyone with more confidence, enthusiasm and eagerness to fulfil this task in carrying out the 1964 State plan and the First Five-Year Plan.

By 1964, the North of our country was self-sufficient in staple food and produced 90% of its consumer goods at the same time having a little accumulation. By the end of 1965, 80% of its farming co-operatives had been turned into higher-level ones. The first bases of engineering, metallurgical and chemical industries has been built and were gradually coming into operation. New branches of industry had developed and new items of goods were being manufactured. Hundreds of locally-run industrial enterprises had been established. In the North, an industrial economy was gradually taking shape

which included the extraction of raw materials and their processing in various branches of heavy and light industry. The living conditions of the people improved day after day. As compared with the day when peace was restored, the number of pupils was three and a half times as many, that of students of universities and secondary vocational schools 25 times as many. National scripts were devised for some minority peoples. Many highlanders were graduated from universities. Many epidemics and social diseases were controlled; the people's health was improved. Better care was given to children. Literature and arts, with socialist content and national character, were developing vigorously.

President Ho Chi Minh summed up the situation thus: "Over the past ten years, the North has made big strides forward, without precedent in our national history. Both the society and man of the country have changed." (1)

In December 1965 the Party Central Committee asserted that: "After over ten years of socialist revolution and socialist construction, the North has become the firm base for the Vietnamese revolution in the whole country, with its *superior political regime and its powerful economic and defence forces*" (2).

In the South, from mid-1961 onward, frightened by the vigorous and repeated struggles of the South

1. Ho Chi Minh, "Report at the Special Political Conference" *For Independence, Freedom and Socialism*. Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1970, p. 257

2. Resolution of the 12th Plenum of the Party Central Committee (December 1965)

Vietnamese armed forces and people, the US-Diemists launched a "special war". It was an important part of the US imperialists' flexible response strategy, a global counter-revolutionary strategy. With this strategy, the US imperialists advocated three kinds of counter-revolutionary war: special war, limited war and nuclear world war. Special war was used to repress the national liberation movements. Applied to the South of our country, it was a kind of war "using Vietnamese to fight Vietnamese", combining the ruthless methods of aggressive warfare of the imperialists who have modern weapons and technical means with the savage terrorist and repressive measures of the pro-US feudal and comprador bourgeois revanchists in South Vietnam. The main force of the US and its puppets in the "special war" was the army of the puppet regime organized, equipped, trained and commanded by the US. With the "special war", the US imperialists not only aimed at committing aggression against South Vietnam but also attempted to use the South of our country as a testing ground to gain experience in suppressing national liberation movements, threatening newly-independent countries, and compelling them to accept US neo-colonialist policies.

To wage the "special war", they worked out the Staley-Taylor plan with three strategic measures: First, to strengthen the puppet troops, use them together with many helicopters and armoured cars so as to rapidly wipe out the revolutionary armed forces. Second, to keep the towns under firm control, build a strong puppet administration and check the revolutionary movement in the towns, while crushing the revolutionary movement in the countryside

by carrying out "pacification" and setting up "strategic hamlets." Third, to strive to seal the border, control the coast, cut off the reinforcements from the North, and isolate the revolution in the South. Once this plan had been implemented, the US imperialists hoped to shift to the offensive in order to wrest back the initiative so as to "pacify" the South within 18 months. On 18 February 1962 the US imperialists set up a "special military command" (MACV) under Gen. Harkins to directly command the war of aggression in the South of our country.

In January 1961, the Political Bureau of the Party Central Committee met to assess the situation in the South after the concerted uprising and worked out the orientation and the task ahead for the revolution in the South. After pointing out the sharp contradictions of the US-Diem regime which seriously isolated and weakened it, the Political Bureau asserted that the period of relative stability of the US-Diem regime was over and that the period of continuous crisis and serious decline began. From a position of oppressed people, the Southern population had risen up in a powerful revolutionary movement; various forms of scattered guerilla and partial uprisings had appeared. An all-round general crisis of the US-Diem administration would take place while a general offensive and uprising of the people could break out to overthrow the US-Diem administration and liberate the South. The Political Bureau also forewarned an eventual intervention of the US imperialists in the South through the dispatch of an expeditionary corps which we would have to detect and cope with. The Political Bureau decided to further step up political struggle while boosting armed

struggle parallel with the political one and to attack the enemy on both political and military fronts. We would have to strive to build political and military forces, establish and expand our base area, create favourable conditions and seize all opportunities to overthrow the US-Diem administration. The Political Bureau decided to entrust the Army Party Committee and the Reunification Committee with the task of helping the Central Committee guide the military work in the South. It also decided to strengthen the Central Office for South Vietnam and the Party committees, send more cadres and supplies (material, military and financial means) and expand communications to the South...

On 16 February 1962, the South Vietnam National Front for Liberation held its first Congress. The Congress asserted: "The overall task of the South Vietnam National Front for Liberation is to unite the entire people, struggle resolutely against the aggressive and war-mongering US imperialists, overthrow the Ngo Dinh Diem clique and their henchmen, set up a democratic and national administration of broad alliance in the South, achieve national independence, democracy, freedom, better living conditions, safeguard peace and carry out a policy of neutrality advance toward peaceful national reunification, and take an active part in safeguarding peace in Indochina, Southeast Asia and the world."

The Congress worked out four urgent policies for national salvation:

1. The US imperialists must end their war of aggression in South Vietnam
2. "Strategic hamlets" must be abolished,

3. A national coalition government shall be established;

4. A foreign policy of peace and neutrality shall be carried out.

The Party's policy of neutrality for South Vietnam was a flexible tactic aimed at rallying all patriotic forces and people against the US-Diemists and isolating the US aggressors and their henchmen to the utmost, implementing the guiding line of "repelling US imperialism and its henchmen step by step and toppling them part after part. It was a transitional step to liberate the South, reunify the country and lead the whole country to socialism."

The Congress elected a Central Committee with Lawyer Nguyen Huu Tho as President.

The Party's correct line penetrated ever deeper into all sections of the people and was turned into action by millions to oppose US aggression and save the country.

Partial uprisings rapidly developed into a revolutionary war, waging both military and political struggle, combining the fight in the highlands and the plains with the people's actions in the towns.

The US Diemists regarded their policy of "strategic hamlets" as the core of the Staley-Taylor plan the backbone of the "special war". Therefore, they mobilized all forces and resorted to every means to mop up and terrorize the people, "trampling upon anger and hatred", so as to carry out their "state policy" at all costs. They reckoned that they could set up 17,000 "strategic hamlets" within a short period of time, thus turning South Vietnam into a huge concentration camp. They would then be in a

position to make deep thrusts into revolutionary bases and destroy our forces completely.

But right at the beginning, the "strategic hamlets" plan was resolutely opposed by our people. The herding of people was not so easy, as the enemy had expected. The tempo of the plan slowed down day after day. A number of "strategic hamlets" were taken down as soon as they were set up, others were broken up time and again and the enemy was unable to consolidate them. Many turned into our people's fighting villages after being broken up.

On 2 January 1963, our armed forces and people won a resounding victory at Ap Bac (Cai Lay, My Tho) which inspired our fellow-countrymen with still more confidence in their ability to defeat the US aggressors. Here, for the first time, with forces only one-tenth of the enemy's strength, the South Vietnam army and people worsted a mopping-up raid by over 2,000 enemy troops belonging to various armed services supported by dozens of helicopters and M. 113 armoured cars. This victory proved that the Southern armed forces and people were able to defeat the US militarily in the "special war." After the Ap Bac victory, at the Party's initiative, the South Vietnam National Front for Liberation launched a movement of "emulation with Ap Bac to score feats of arms", resolutely attack the enemy and foil their "helicopter and armoured cars tactics".

Together with the armed struggle and destruction of "strategic hamlets", there were large-scale and violent political struggles involving all strata of the

people. In 1963, the individual count of people taking part in the political struggle throughout the South mounted to 34 million participations. Our people completely destroyed 2,895 "strategic hamlets" among the 6,164 established by the enemy and broke them up 5,950 times. They also smashed the enemy's grip and gained mastery of 12,000 hamlets among the 17,000 in the entire South, liberating over 5 million people among its 14 million inhabitants.

Political struggle on the South Vietnam battlefield constituted not only the basis for armed struggle, but also a fundamental form of struggle by our people closely combined with military struggle. Making use of appropriate forms or methods of struggle, everyone, old and young, men and women, rushed forward to face the enemy. The powerful political armies of the masses defeated many a mopping-up operation, effectively defending the people's lives and property. This force smashed large portions of the enemy administration in hamlets and villages, isolated and wiped out the leaving despots, won over tens of thousands of puppet soldiers and officials to the people's side.

Meanwhile, on the Laos battlefield the "special war" strategy tested by the US imperialists there suffered heavy setbacks too. With the coordinated fighting of the Vietnamese volunteers, the fraternal armed forces and people launched an offensive liberating the Plain of Jars (1961), then a campaign in Nam Tha (May 1962) securing a great victory, compelling the rightist side to agree to the establishment of a national coalition government with the participation of the Pathet Lao for the second time.

In two years of "special war" the US-puppet strategy of rapidly "pacifying" the South went bankrupt. The Staley-Taylor strategy met with ignominious failure.

Our victories and the enemy's defeats caused deep dissensions, confusion and discord among the US imperialists and their henchmen. In November 1963, confronted with the powerful movement of the struggle of our people, the US imperialists had to stage a coup d'état, overthrowing Ngo Dinh Diem and putting Duong Van Minh then Nguyen Khanh in power instead. Taking advantage of Diem's fall, the masses in enemy-held areas rose up and destroyed a large number of "strategic hamlets" thus enlarging the liberated areas. The movement also surged up in the cities while the peace and neutrality tendencies developed.

The Resolution of the 19th Plenum of the Party Central Committee in December 1963 charted the orientation and task of securing greater victories for the revolution in the South. It pointed out: the revolutionary line in the South is to win partial victories, to repel the enemy step by step, to pave the way for a general assault, a general insurrection, but it is possible that we must go through a stage of transition before winning complete victory. It also stressed: it is necessary for us to have not only strong political forces but also big armed forces to bring about a fundamental change in the balance of force between the enemy and us. As for the strategic guiding principle, after analyzing the relationship between the three regions, the Party Central Committee agreed to the guiding principle mapped out by

the Political Bureau for each area: to wage mainly armed struggle in upland regions, political action combined with armed struggle in agricultural areas, and mainly political action in urban centres. During these struggles the enemy must not be allowed to cut the territory under our control into parts. The Resolution also stressed that we must fight the enemy with three spearheads: organize a front of worker-peasant-soldier alliance, firmly grasp the guiding principle of waging a protracted and difficult war and of relying on our own strength, but on the other hand we must take advantage of favourable opportunities to win as soon as possible.

In March 1964, the US imperialists worked out a new plan, the Johnson-McNamara plan, aimed at pacifying the South within two years (1964-65). They set up a Vietnam-US joint command. Meanwhile, they introduced 6,000 more US advisers and combat troops, thus raising the strength of US troops in South Vietnam to over 25,000 by the end of 1964.

Taking office in Kennedy's place, Johnson stated his continuation of the policy of aggression and immediately ratified a plan to bomb North Vietnam specifically setting 94 targets.

The new US schemes met with extremely violent reactions from all strata of our people, in the first place from the South Vietnamese. The anti-US-Khanh movement quickly spread from Hue and Saigon to other cities and towns throughout the South. On 20 August 1964, 200,000 people in Saigon encircled the "Independence Palace", demanding the resignation of Nguyen Khanh. On 24 August 1964,

30,000 people in Da Nang demonstrated, closing down markets and schools. On 20 September 1964, over 100,000 workers in Saigon and Gia Dinh went on strike and demonstrated in protest against the US-Khanh military dictatorship. On 15 October 1964, the heroic electrician Nguyễn Văn Troi turned the execution ground into a revolutionary court to indict the US aggressors and their henchmen. In November and December 1964, the people of Hue, Saigon, Da Nang, Di Lat, etc., demonstrated to demand the Tran Van Huong administration be overthrown.

Our people's fervent struggle intensified the crisis in the Saigon puppet administration. Within one year and a half, from November 1963 to June 1965, there broke out 14 coups d'état among the US puppets. The people in Saigon and many other cities helped our armed forces organize many bold and efficient assaults aimed at the US commanders and technical forces in their very dens: the attack on the US embassy killing 217 Americans; the raid on the Kinh Do cinema annihilating 150 GIs; the downing of the 15,000-ton helicopter carrier Card in Saigon; the firing at US gasoline transports taking toll of 700,000 litres of fuel, the sapping of the Caravelle Hotel in Saigon killing or wounding nearly 100 Americans; the mining of the Brinx Hotel in Saigon causing 68 dead or wounded; the mortaring of the Bien Hoa airfield destroying and damaging 13 planes; the attack on the Pleiku airfield wiping out 359 Americans and 42 planes; that on the US command-post in Quy Nhon annihilating 107 GIs; that on Da Nang airfield annihilating 193 Yankees and destroying 47 planes.

As political and armed struggles developed vigorously in all three strategic areas, in December 1964 our armed forces and people in the South won another great victory at Binh Gia (Ba Ria province). Here, for the first time, Liberation army regulars attacked puppet army regulars on their own initiative for six days running, wiping out two mobile battalions and a squadron of M. 113 armoured cars and shot down or damaged 32 aircraft. While Ap Bac was a victory of the Southern armed forces and people over the enemy's tactics of heli-borne troops and armoured cars — the enemy's main tactics to carry out his "pacification strategy" the Binh Gia victory was one of great strategic significance, marking the bankruptcy of the enemy's major means to implement his strategy of "special war" in South Vietnam.

After the great victory of Binh Gia, overall strength of the Southern army and people grew by leaps and bounds. The Liberation armed forces went on wiping out many regular puppet battalions in the battles of An Lao, Deo Nhong, Pleiku, Dong Xoai, Ba Gia, etc. At Ba Gia although our strength and equipment were many times smaller than the enemy's, we annihilated an enemy battle group, composed of four regular puppet battalions, after two days of fighting (29-31 May 1965). Altogether, in the first half of 1965 our armed forces and people put out of action over 90,000 enemy troops, including 3,000 US troops.

Our victories and the enemy's defeats tipped the balance of forces on the Southern battlefield in our favour. Our armed forces and people increased their fighting capacity and destroyed of the enemy's

mobile force. Our armed forces, comprising three kinds of troops, vigorously developed. The liberated areas were enlarged to occupy the major part of the territory and became the direct and firm rear of the South Vietnamese revolution. In these areas the people were masters. A new social order appeared. The traitors' land was confiscated and distributed to poor peasants. Meanwhile, on the enemy's side, the mainstays of "special war" namely the puppet army and administration, the "strategic hamlets" network and the cities—were shaken to roots. The puppet army was faced with disruption.

In view of our army's and people's offensive and uprisings, most of the enemy's local armed forces were disintegrated, and his regular forces were not able to sustain the punches of our regular ones. Four-fifths of his "strategic hamlets" network collapsed. The middle strata of the people tended to oppose the Americans and favour peace and neutrality. The puppet administration, too, was threatened with collapse. The formula devised by the Americans like "civilian combined with military", "civilian only", or "military only" failed to consolidate the puppet apparatus.

Faced with the danger of collapse of the puppet army and administration and the complete failure of the "special war" in the South, and becoming aware of the betrayal of the Beijing ruling circles toward Vietnam (1) the US imperialists themselves

1. While the Vietnamese people were waging a valiant and staunch fight against the US aggressors and their henchmen and the Chinese people were supporting and helping our people's fight, the Chinese ruling circles said: if the United

...

introduced combat troops into South Vietnam to carry out a "limited war" at the same time launching a war of destruction, mainly by air attacks against North Vietnam in an attempt to wriggout of their predicament. On 2 and 4 August 1964 the US imperialist staged the "Bac Bo Gulf incident" as a pretext to attack the North with their air force and navy. On 5 August 1964, US planes wrecked our economic bases and killed our people at Gianh (Quang Binh province), Lach Truong (Thanh Hoa province), Bai Chay (Quang Ninh). In their first rebuff of the war of destruction the North Vietnamese armed forces and people shot down 8 planes and captured US pilots.

The bankruptcy of the strategy of "special war" marked a strategic failure of the US imperialist in

States leaves China alone, China will not bother it. In other words, the United States is free to strike at Vietnam. Since early 1964, the United States already had contacts with China and knew that China gave it the green light to introduce combat troops into South Vietnam and bomb North Vietnam. US Defence Secretary McNamara reported this to the US Senate Armed Forces Committee on 29 January 1964 and US State Secretary Dean Rusk let it be known in his speech in Washington on 25 February 1964.

In January 1965, Mao Zedong sent word to Washington through the American journalist Edgar Snow:

"China's armies would not go beyond her border to fight. That was clear enough. Only if the United States attacked China would the Chinese fight. Wasn't that clear? Chinese were very busy with their internal affairs. Fighting beyond one's own borders was criminal. Why should the Chinese do so? The South Vietnamese could cope with their situation."

(Edgar Snow, *The Long Revolution*, Hut Chinson of London, 1972, p. 216.)

their scheme to "use Vietnamese to fight Vietnamese." By frustrating the "special war," our armed forces and people had built up great material and moral forces in order to advance forward and foil the strategy of "limited war". By defeating the strategy of "special war", our people had bankrupted the US imperialists' scheme to use South Vietnam as a testing-ground for a kind of war very attractive to the United States in its design of aggression through neo-colonialism and repression of national liberation movements in the world. As early as March 1964, President Ho Chi Minh pointed out: "The present situation in the South is clear evidence of the inevitability of US failure in this "special war". The "special war" which the US imperialists are experimenting with in South Vietnam has been frustrated and will fail in any other place. This is the international significance of the patriotic struggle of our Southern compatriots with reference to the national liberation movements in the world." (1)

FRUSTRATING THE US STRATEGY OF LIMITED WAR IN THE SOUTH AND FOILING THE FIRST WAR OF DESTRUCTION WHILE CONTINUING TO BUILD SOCIALISM IN THE NORTH (1965-1968)

Having failed to put neo-colonialism in practice by means of the Ngo Dinh Diem fascist dictatorial administration and "special war", the US imperialists

1. Ho Chi Minh, "Report at the Special Political Conference," *For Independence, Freedom and Socialism*, Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1970, p. 262.

recklessly embarked on a limited war in South Vietnam and started a very fierce war of destruction against North Vietnam. By the end of 1965, the struggle of US and satellite troops introduced into the South had reached over 200,000 men, comprising 180,000 GI's and over 20,000 satellite troops, not to mention 70,000 personnel of the US Navy and Air Force aboard ships or in Thailand and the Philippines.

The Eleventh and Twelfth Plenums of the Party Central Committee (March and December 1965) carried out profound and complete study of the situation arising from the new schemes and acts of war of the US imperialists and took many important decisions on revolutionary strategy, guiding lines and measures for the new period. In the view of the Party, the US war of aggression in the South of our country remained, in its character and purpose, a war of aggression *aimed at putting neo-colonialism in practice*. From relying mainly on the puppet army, it had grown into a *US war, relying on two strategic forces, namely the US expeditionary force and the puppet army*. Thus it would be more arduous and atrocious. However, the US imperialists were intensifying and widening the war while in a position of defeat, deprived of all initiative and forced to follow a strategy full of contradictions, leading them into a blind alley. First, the US strategy reflected the sharp contradiction between the political aim of saving the neo-colonialist regime and the old colonialist way of introducing an expeditionary force of aggression. The aggressive character of the US imperialists and the traitorous character of the puppet administration and army were laid bare. The contradiction between the

entire Vietnamese people and the US imperialists and their henchmen grew sharper and fiercer in the whole country. Secondly, because of the unjust nature of the war of aggression, the US expeditionary force was fighting without motivation and was opposed by the people of Vietnam, progressive Americans and other people in the world, hence its ever-sinking morale. However modern its equipment might be, it was in no position to cope with the united strength of our armed forces and people and to stand up to our people's war. Thirdly, though the US imperialists have the most powerful economic and military potential in the imperialist camp, the situation in the world as well as in the United States would not permit the use of all *this potential*. They could not send unlimited troop reinforcements to South Vietnam and ignore the various difficulties they would encounter on the Vietnam theatre of operations in the world as well as in the United States itself.

In the meantime, the revolutionary forces of the Vietnamese people had grown in every field and were in a favourable position. In the South, the overwhelming majority of the people were united in the *South Vietnam National Front for Liberation*. The Front organised and animated all patriotic forces in the South. The *Southern liberation armed forces* grew tremendously, their morale was high and they were holding their ground in most major strategic positions. The *revolutionary movement in the cities* was developing with ever greater vigour. The liberated areas though not forming a continuous whole yet, encompassed the majority of the population and were consolidating with every passing day. The

Southern Party organization, with its widespread and solid bases, was tempered in battle, closely related to the masses and well-experienced in political and armed struggle as well as in organising the implementation of the Party's correct line.

In the North, the people, who daily and hourly thought of their kinsfolk in the South, clearly understood their duty of standing shoulder to shoulder with their Southern fellow-countrymen in the patriotic resistance against US aggression. After over ten years of socialist revolution and construction, the North had become the firm base area for the revolution in the whole country.

The just struggle of the Vietnamese people in both zones enjoyed ever more active and vigorous support and sympathy from the fraternal socialist countries, the nationalist countries and peace and justice-loving people in the world, including the American people.

Owing to the enemy's heavy defeats and our great victories, the *balance of forces between the enemy and us remained unchanged in the main*, though the US imperialists had introduced hundred of thousands of US troops into South Vietnam. Our people had solid requisites for maintaining the initiative on the battlefield and were in a position to frustrate all immediate and long-term schemes of the enemy. The US imperialists could not win despite their 200,000 or even 400,000 — 500,000 troops brought into the South.

Proceeding from the above mentioned views, the Party Central Committee was strongly determined to mobilize the forces of the whole Party, the entire armed forces and people "resolutely to foil the war

of aggression of the US imperialists in any circumstance, so as to "defend the North, liberate the South—complete the people's national democratic revolution in the whole country and advance toward the peaceful reunification of the country (1)."

To carry out this strategic determination the Party Central Committee pointed out: we had to firmly grasp that the objective of the war as well as the concrete objective of our operations were both the US and the puppet troops; we had to carry on both armed and political struggle; we had, in particular, rapidly to develop our armed forces in every respect, especially the regular ones, in strategic areas. Together with stepping up the guerilla movement everywhere, it was of decisive importance to establish 3–4 strong battle groups while beefing up our strategic reserves. The North had to frustrate the US imperialists' war of destruction, defend socialist construction, mobilize manpower and wealth to help the liberation war of the South, while actively preparing to defeat the enemy should he expand the limited war to the whole country.

Implementing the Resolution of the 12th Plenum of the Party Central Committee, the Army Central Committee unfolded its military work on both zones and put forward six operational forms for our popular armed forces in the South:

1. Step up the activities of the regular army in large and medium-scale campaigns in the form of offensive or planned counter-offensive;

1. Resolution of the 12th Plenum of the Party Central Committee (December 1965).

2. Intensify guerilla war;
3. Strike at logistic bases, storage areas, airfields, harbours and nerve centres;
4. Destroy major land and water communications to encircle the enemy and cut him into pieces;
5. Step up the activities in the cities.
6. Combine assault with meeting: develop propaganda work among enemy troops on a strategic scale.

The increased landing of the US expeditionary force in our country *sharpened the contradiction between the Vietnamese nation and the US imperialists throughout the country and clearly set the task of patriotic resistance against US aggression as the foremost task of our entire nation from North to South*. Under the Party's leadership, our entire people resolutely fought under the motto: "All to fight the US aggressors." In March 1965, the South Vietnam Front for Liberation issued a statement pointing out: "The Southern people and their armed forces are determined not to lose hold of their weapons so long as the South Vietnamese people's basic objectives — independence, democracy, peace and neutrality — are not achieved. The South Vietnamese people are determined to deal thunder blows at the US aggressors and their henchmen and will surely win final victory." (1) In his address at the Second Session of the National Assembly, Third Legislature, of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, on 10 April 1965, President Ho Chi Minh asserted: "The US imperialists may send in

1. Main documents of the South Vietnam Front for Liberation (from Nov. 1964 to Dec. 1965), Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1966, p. 12.

hundreds of thousands more US officers and men and make all-out efforts to drag more troops of their satellite countries into this criminal war, but our army and people are resolved to fight and defeat them."

In answer to the appeal of President Ho Chi Minh and the National Front for Liberation, our people in the South held firm their initiative, stepped up their attacks, not only wiped out many big puppet units but also defeated US troops in great battles.

The US imperialists held that they were defeated in the "special war" because the puppet troops were bad, unable as they were to bring into full play their superior arms. Now that the US expeditionary corps had directly taken on the Vietnamese people with its own modern weapons, they would come out the winners. Therefore, the Vietnamese people were faced with a vital problem: to defeat the US expeditionary force at any cost. With the determination fostered by President Ho Chi Minh upon our people since the resistance war against French aggression—"rather sacrifice all than lose our country, determined not to be enslaved"—our army and people in the South bore away the palm in their first confrontation with the US expeditionary corps. On 27 May 1965, after setting foot on Nui Thanh (Quang Nam province) a company of US marines was wiped out by our territorial forces. On 18 August 1965, at Van Tuong (North of Quang Ngai province), a 8,000-strong US army of six infantry battalions and two 105-mm artillery battalions with the support of enemy tanks, armoured cars, aircraft and naval craft was vigorously counter-attacked by a Vietnamese force one-tenth of its size. 900 GI's were put out of

action, four companies, 22 tanks and armoured cars, and 13 planes destroyed. Like the Ap Bac battle in January 1963, which ushered in a drive of annihilating puppet troops organized, trained, equipped and commanded by the Americans, the Van Tuong battle *opened up the high tide of annihilating US aggressors*. The victory of Van Tuong showed that our army and people were fully able to defeat the Americans militarily in a limited war, though having to cope with both the GI's and the puppets.

The above-mentioned victories gave an impetus to the drives of "searching for the Americans to fight" and "searching for the puppets to kill". Solid "belts against GIs" appeared in Hoa Vang, Chu Lai (Quang Nam province), Cu Chi (Saigon)... On 19 October 1965, at Play Me (Western Highland) our regular army launched a counter-offensive, a "bloody battle" for the US First Cavalry Division: 3,000 enemies including 1,700 Americans annihilated, four enemy battalions wiped out many other units badly mauled, 59 planes downed or destroyed, 74 military vehicles and armoured cars wiped out. These first exploits were highly significant as they vindicated the correctness of the orientation to carry on our Party's strategy of offensives put forward when US troops in large numbers invaded our country.

The possibility to defeat the Americans militarily in a limited war materialized in winter 1965—spring 1966 with the glorious victory of our army and people smashing the first dry-season strategic counter-offensive of 200,000 US satellite troops and half a million puppet ones. In this counter-offensive (from Jan. 1965 to Apr. 1966) the enemy launched

450 operations, big and small, among which five major ones against Eastern Nam Bo and the Fifth Zone delta, Cu Cui, Ben Cat, south Phu Yen, Quang Ngai and Binh Dinh, with the objective of "breaking the Viet Cong's backbone" as they boasted and the hope of regaining the initiative on the battlefields with the array of our people's war, our army and people fought back fiercely in all directions. Our great victories at Nha Do Bong Trang (Thu Dau Mot province), Cu Chi, Song Be, (Bien Hoa province), Binh Long, Cau Dam, Cau Le (Thu Dau Mot province), Ba Ria in the Western Highlands, at Bong Son (North of Binh Dinh province), Son Tinh (North of Quang Ngai province), Phu Yen.. as well as in the US bases, the violent political struggle in the countryside and the cities, the movement against "pacification"... caused heavy losses to the US-puppets and compelled them to rapidly end their counter-offensive. Our army and people put out of action 104,000 enemies (over 40,000 GIs). This was the first setback of the US limited war.

In June 1966, we opened a front along Road 9 (Quang Tri province) for a new thrust in a major strategic area, compelling the enemy to dispatch a sizable part of his regular forces to the north.

In late 1966, the enemy launched a second dry-season strategic counter-offensive (from Oct. 1966 to Apr. 1967). With 400,000 GIs and over half a million puppet troops, the enemy hoped to secure victories for their major "search" and "pacification" operations to bring about a decisive turning-point in the war. The enemy concentrated his forces on eastern Nam Bo in the hope of annihilating our

regular forces and nerve centres, while controlling other theatres and actively defending Road 9. 895 operations big and small were launched, among them 3 key ones: Attleboro against Duong Minh Chau base area with 30,000 US troops, Cedar Falls against Ben Suc-Iron Triangle with 3 US brigades, and Junction City—the biggest against Road 22 near the Vietnam-Kampuchea border and Dau Tieng, Minh Thanh, Ben Cui, with 7 US brigades and 2 puppet battle groups (40,000-50,000 men) using plenty of weapons and modern equipment

Our army and people in the South launched a series of counter-offensives to break up these operations. Together with the people, our regular army, territorial forces, militia and self-defence units closed in, wiped out and harassed the enemy in all theatres. The attacks on the enemy in its operations, its rear, its base areas and nerve centres as well as the vigorous actions in the plains, the Western Highlands, on Road 9—Tri Thien spread the enemy thin in all directions, foiled three big operations and many other ones, putting out of action 151,000 enemies (including 68,000 GIs). Thus the "search" and "pacification" objective to bring about a decisive turning-point as set for this the biggest ever strategic counter-offensive was frustrated.

As a result, the Southern people put out of action 290,000 enemies, among them 128,000 US and satellite troops in two dry seasons. Therefore, the victory of our army and people in the South smashing two dry-season strategic counter-offensives defeated part of the US imperialists' limited

war, upsetting their battle position, lowering their morale and sharpening their inner contradictions.

Political struggle was kept up and developed while fighting the US expeditionary force. Early in 1966, in most of the Southern cities the Party led the people in the struggle to overthrow the Thieu-Ky puppet administration, demand the withdrawal of US troops, democratic freedoms and public welfare. The movement was most intense in Da Nang and Hue. Capitalizing on the enemy's inner contradictions, the Party organizations there aroused the masses to carry out strikes, paralysing the enemy's actions and mastering the cities for several days.

While the Southern people together with the people throughout the country dealt the US-puppets and satellites thunder blows, the Northern people with a plough in one hand and a rifle in the other, and with a hammer in one hand and a rifle in the other fought back the US war of destruction and kept on building socialism right in wartime. From February 1965, the US imperialists continually launched their air force and navy against the North in order to stop the great support of the Northern people to their Southern fellow countrymen's resistance war against US aggression, undermine socialist construction and reduce the anti-US determination of the North people, in the hope of compelling our people in both zones to end the liberation war on conditions advantageous for them. The US imperialists boasted of "bombing North Vietnam back to the Stone Age" (1)

1. Statement by Curtis Lemay, US Air Force general staff

The resolutions of the 11th and 12th plenums of the Party Central Committee pointed out that the urgent task of the revolution in the North was to effect a timely change in the orientation of ideological and organizational work, of economic construction and consolidation of national defence.

This change of orientation made it possible for the North to defend itself against the enemy's bombing and shelling raids and blockades, and be ready to cope with all attempts at escalation to give the staunchest support to the war of resistance of the kith and kin South and to meet the requirement of building the material and technical basis of socialism in the North.

To carry out their scheme of destroying North Vietnam, the US imperialists mobilized a huge air and naval force supported by modern weapons. During the four years of their war of destruction, they committed untold crimes against our people. They concentrated their attacks on cities, towns and populous areas, killing many of our people. The six major cities of the North: Hanoi, Haiphong, Nam Dinh, Thai Nguyen, Viet Tri and Vinh were repeatedly bombed; 25 out of the 30 provincial capitals of the North were attacked again and again and 6 were blasted: Dong Hoi, Ninh Binh, Phu Ly, Bac Giang, Yen Bai and Son La. Whole towns were razed to the ground, like Ha Tu (Quang Ninh province) and Ho Xa (Vinh Linh zone). More evil still, the US imperialists also bombed dikes and irrigation works, schools, medical, establishments sanatoriums, churches and pagodas

Right at the beginning of the US imperialists' war of destruction against the North of our country, our Party had correctly assessed the enemy's strategic designs and capacities for action, its strong and weak points, both political and military, and particularly its basic weakness in this war.

The war of destruction against the North was part of the US strategy of aggressive war in Vietnam aimed at retrieving US failure in the South. It depended on the development of the war in the South and it would end only when the US aggressive war in the South was completely foiled. On the basis of this assessment, every time a great victory was recorded by the revolution in the South, we would work out plans to frustrate the US schemes of destruction against the North.

On 17 July 1966, President Ho Chi Minh issued an appeal clearly stating the determination of our entire Party, people and army to completely defeat the US aggressors: "The war may still last ten, twenty years or longer. Hanoi, Haiphong, and other cities and enterprises may be destroyed, but the Vietnamese people will not be intimidated! Nothing is more precious than independence and freedom. Once victory is won, our people will rebuild their country and make it even more prosperous and beautiful." (1)

To cope with the war of destruction, our Party applied the correct strategic guiding principle of

1. Ho Chi Minh "Appeal to Compatriots and Fighters throughout the Country", *For Independence, Freedom and Socialism*, Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1970, p.282.

waging an all-people total war relying on our own strength while winning over international support.

Under the leadership of our Party, the people in the North promoted the absolute superiority of the socialist regime, making a rational division of labour and a rational use of all forces, and closely combining these forces so as to achieve the best results in performing their task.

The people's war in the North against the war of destruction was carried out along the line of putting the entire people on a military footing in order to bring into full play the aggregate strength of the people's war and people's armed forces including three categories of troops as the core to defeat the US imperialists' modern air force. This was a new and fruitful development in the people's war of our nation. It constituted a very important basis for our people to record still greater victories and shatter all the schemes and aggressive acts of the US imperialists

In defeating the US war of destruction we smashed part of the brutal war of aggression waged by US imperialism in Vietnam and dealt a telling blow at its will to aggression.

The US war of destruction could not stop the great support of the people in the North to their Southern kinfolk, nor shake our entire people's determination to fight US aggression, nor hinder socialist construction in the North. On the contrary, in many respects, our socialist regime had been strengthened. The socialist economy fared well in the main and some branches were even developed.

In the flames of war cooperative agriculture continued to prove the strength and superiority of collectivism. By 1967, the number of peasant households in farming co-ops accounted for 93.7 per cent of the total of working peasant households in the North, there were 18,098 higher-level farming co-ops, accounting for 88.8 per cent of peasant households in the cooperative sector; 4,655 farming co-ops were equipped with small machines, including 6,350 generators and 9,362 working machines, 2,551 co-ops reached an average yield of five tons of paddy or more per hectare. Industrial production was maintained in the main while locally-run industry vigorously developed. The percentage of industry in the national economy which was only 17.2 per cent in 1955, grew to 49.9 per cent in 1967. Regional economies began to take shape within major strategic areas. The most essential needs were met for production and combat, meanwhile, the people's life in wartime was basically stabilized. Cultural, educational and health work, far from being hindered, developed vigorously even in wartime and achieved good results.

Communications and transport was one of the main targets of the US imperialists' bombings in the North. The fight on this front was considered a strategic task and was given special attention by the Party Central Committee, the Government, the related branches and the local Party committees. Despite the enemy's fierce attacks, our communication lines were continually in good order, meeting all requirements of fighting and production in any circumstance. In the nationwide network, the North-South land and water strategic system set up in 1959 now

became a mechanized one, conveying many men and goods to the front and fulfilling its logistic duty for our army and people to defeat the US imperialists in their "limited war" strategy.

The great victory of our people in the fight against the US war of destruction was the result of our Party's correct line of people's war and people's national defence. Our Party put forward the guiding principle "*Let the entire people fight the enemy and take part in national defence*" and advocated the *rapid development of the people's armed forces*. While educating and organizing the entire people to fight back the enemy's war of destruction, our Party led the build up of regular divisions with various arms and services. Many new arms and services, anti-aircraft, engineering transport... were established. Great attention was paid to improving the equipment and fighting capacity of the regional forces, militia and self-defence units. The entire people and army heroically fought against the US air force and navy while standing ready to cope with the US ground force should the enemy recklessly send it to the North.

Our Party members displayed boundless loyalty, heroism and intelligence, keeping in close touch with the masses to give them leadership in every field of production and combat. This was the result of correct policies in *building up a Party firm and strong in politics, ideology and organization*, enabling it to fulfil the great historic mission of leading the entire people to *defeat the US aggressors and build socialism successfully*.

The Party paid great attention to raising the ideological and theoretical standard of cadres and Party

members, training and promoting young cadres, women cadres, and cadres of worker origin; training tens of thousands of scientific and technical cadres as well as economic managers; strengthening local Party committees and basis Party organizations; improving leadership and working style, opposing bureaucracy and commandism, reminding cadres and Party members to strengthen their ties with the masses. The Party also started education drives to heighten revolutionary qualities and morality, combat individualism, promote the spirit of independence, sovereignty and self-reliance, enhance the sense of responsibility, oppose all influences of revisionism, defend the purity of Marxism-Leninism, safeguard unity and single-mindedness within the Party. However, the Party Central Committee also held that those achievements were not sufficient to meet the requirement of carrying into effect the Party's strategic determination. Our victory was limited by many weakness and shortcomings. There existed such negative aspects as taking advantage of the war conditions to encroach upon and undermine the collective economy, steal public property, practise speculation and profiteering. A number of cadres and Party members still had bureaucratic and arbitrary manners, violating the people's right to mastery and even socialist legality to some extent. Some were not yet really concerned with the masses' livelihood. A number of working people did not observe labour discipline. Therefore, since 1968, the Party paid more attention to strengthening its leadership on the economic front opposing lax management, educating and promoting the sense of collective mastery of the people.

Under the leadership of the Party and President Ho Chi Minh, our people in the North started a *high tide of struggle against US aggression, for national salvation*, producing and fighting at the same time, surging ahead with extremely vigorous ardour, doing things that could not be done in ordinary circumstances. The people's armed forces pushed forward the "determined to defeat the US aggressors" emulation movement, upholding the motto "Aim straight at the enemy!" The workers held firm both the hammer and the rifle, worked industriously and creatively, fought valiantly and cleverly, defended the factories and developed production. The emulation movement to do longer working days against US aggression, for national salvation, to make innovations, improve technique, labour organization, management, and reach "three peaks" (higher productivity, better quality, substantial economies) swept over all enterprises, construction sites and State farms. The members of farming co-ops held firm both the plough and the rifle, worked industriously and courageously, resolutely fought against natural calamities and enemy destruction, emulating one another to achieve three targets in agricultural production: harvesting five tons of paddy per cultivated hectare, rearing two pigs per cultivated hectare, and one farmer working for every cultivated hectare. The intellectuals emulated one another to carry out "three determinations": determination to serve production and combat well, determination to push forward the scientific and technical revolution, and the ideological and cultural revolution, determination to build up and develop a socialist intelligentsia. Among the youth, the "three

ready" (1) movement became a broad revolutionary movement of the young generation. Among the women, the "three responsibilities" movement (2) raised the revolutionary zeal and the boundless spirit of sacrifice of Vietnamese women who overcame all difficulties in production and combat. Besides, such other emulation movements as the "two good" movement (3) among teachers and school students, the "three improvements" movement (4) among cadres and employees, the "two excellent" movement (5) in some regions and the "thousand good deeds" among young pioneers and children-merged with the above-mentioned movements into a surging, widespread emulation high tide, unprecedented in our country.

The emulation movement to fight US aggression and save the country had profound significance. Here our people's patriotism and proletarian internationalism reached great heights. As President Ho Chi Minh said: "Our people fight and make sacrifices not only for the cause of their own freedom and independence, but also for the common freedom and independence of all nations and for peace in the world" (6). That is why progressive mankind not

1. Ready to fight, ready to join the army, ready to go everywhere and do any work as needed by the Homeland.

2. Responsibility in production and work, responsibility in family affairs, responsibility in serving the fighting and in fighting.

3. Good study and good teaching.

4. Improvement in work, in organization and in the style of work.

5. Excellent in fighting, excellent in production.

6. Ho Chi Minh: *On the Task of Fighting US Aggression and Saving the Country*. Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1967, p.57.

only watches our people's struggle with admiration and gives it wholehearted support, but also recognized that "the struggle of the Vietnamese people is the vanguard banner, the centre and the apex of the revolutionary struggle of the labouring people and oppressed peoples of the world against US imperialism." (1)

On the fiftieth anniversary of the great October Socialist Revolution (1917-1967), President Ho Chi Minh wrote an article: *The Great October Revolution Has opened the way for the Liberation of Peoples*; Comrade Le Duan, First Secretary of the Party Central Committee, wrote an article: *Let Us enthusiastically march forward under the great banner of the October Revolution*. On the hundred and fiftieth anniversary of Karl Marx's birthday (1818-1968) Comrade Truong Chinh, Political Bureau member of the Party Central Committee read a report: *Let Us Be for ever Grateful to Karl Marx and Follow the Path he Blazed*. These documents reviewed a number of theoretical problems drawn from the realities of our revolution and the major events of the world revolution since World War Two, clarified our Party's independent, sovereign and creative revolutionary line and method, and reflected our people's staunchness, indomitability, valiance and cleverness.

In January 1967, the 13th plenum of the Party Central Committee advocated *stepping up diplomatic struggle, taking the initiative of attacking the enemy, and serving our people's patriotic resistance war against US aggression*. It was pointed out that military and political struggle was the main factor of

1. Resolution on Vietnam by the World Cultural Congress in Havana, 14 Jan 1968, *Nhan Dan* daily 22 Jan. 1968.

victory of the battlefield, but diplomatic struggle played an important, active and innovatory role. On the basis of the recorded victories on the battlefield, we should boost our diplomatic attacks combined with the military and political ones, in order to denounce US imperialists' crimes and deceitful manoeuvres, enhance our just fighting stand, win over the world's sympathy and support, and gather a world people's united front against US aggression. On 28 January 1967, Comrade Nguyen Duy Trinh, Political Bureau member, Vice-Premier and Foreign Minister stated that if the USA wanted to negotiate, it had to stop unconditionally bombings and all other war acts against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. Only after the USA unconditionally stopped its bombings and all other war acts against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam could there be any negotiations between the two countries.

On the basis of the military, political and diplomatic victories, the 14th plenum of the Party Central Committee (Jan. 1968) assessed that the Americans had made most strenuous efforts in Vietnam. In 1968, the trend had been to Americans in a more defensive position. On our side, we had defeated the enemy on both the strategic and the tactical planes. The fact was that we were in a victorious and advantageous situation while the enemy was in a losing and difficult one. We faced bright prospects and favourable strategic opportunities. This enabled us to shift our revolutionary war to a new stage — to give it a new impetus the Committee then decided to launch a general offensive and concerted uprisings during the Lunar New Year (Tet 1968) to deal a stunning blow at the American aggressors.

The Plenum set concrete targets ahead while foreseeing three possibilities for the unfolding of the general offensive and concerted uprisings: we would achieve great victory, the enemy would admit his defeat and end the war; or we would win in many places but the enemy would consolidate his forces and the war would drag on; or the USA would beef up its forces and expand the war to North Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea. However, in any circumstance, we would resolutely attack the enemy without respite until complete victory.

Carrying out this decision, on 30 and 31 January 1968 our army and people in the South simultaneously attacked and rose up in 64 cities, towns and in many rural areas adjacent to the cities. Revolutionary administration was established in Hue and many newly liberated rural areas. On 20 April 1968, the Vietnam Alliance of National, Democratic and Peace Forces was founded. The National United Front against US Aggression, for National Salvation was broadened.

The general offensive and uprisings in the spring of 1968 were powerful blows dealt at the US puppets; they not only wiped out considerable enemy forces, destroyed a gigantic amount of his war material, but also forced him to give up the "search and destroy" and "pacification" plan hastily and turn to the passive defence strategy of "clear and hold". With over one million troops, the US-puppets still complained of troop shortage. The Tet 1968 offensive and uprisings triggered off a credibility gap, a pessimistic and despondent mood among the US ruling class about the victory of the war. US Commander-in-Chief Westmoreland was removed.

Johnson waived a second mandate for the presidency and advocated "de-Americanizing the war".

The victory of the Tet 1968 offensive and uprisings had a great and all-embracing strategic significance: it upset the enemy's strategic position, shook the US aggressive will, foiled the strategy of limited war in the South and compelled him to end the war of destruction against North Vietnam and to accept negotiation with us.

In the same period, our people in the North won a glorious victory after 4 years of valiant fighting. Up to 1 November 1968 we had shot down 3,243 US jet planes, including 6 B52 strategic bombers, 2 F4A swing-wing fighters, the most up-to-date US plane at the time; we had wiped out or captured thousands of pilots, set afire hundreds of war ships, large and small. *We completely defeated the US war of destruction.*

Heavily defeated in both zones North and South of our country on 31 March 1968, the US government was forced to declare a "limited bombing" of the North, and on 1 November 1968 an unconditional end to the bombing and shelling throughout the territory of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, coupled with talks with the representatives of our government and those of the Provisional Government of the Republic of South Vietnam at a Four-Party Conference in Paris.

RESTORING THE ECONOMY OF THE NORTH, FRUSTRATING THE STRATEGY OF "VIETNAMIZATION OF THE WAR" AND FOILING THE SECOND WAR OF DESTRUCTION OF THE US IMPERIALISTS

(1969 — 1972)

The victory of the Tet 1968 offensive and uprising shook US opinion and dampened the US imperialists' aggressive will. Their war apparatus, moreover, was attacked from many quarters even right in the USA. The American people's movement against the war of aggression in Vietnam and the withdrawal of US troops surged throughout the country. Millions of people demonstrated in 1969. The House of Representatives passed a resolution demanding the withdrawal of all US ground troops in Vietnam as soon as possible.

The situation compelled the US ruling class to adjust its global strategy to soothe the opinion at home while maintaining the puppet Nguyen Van Thieu administration under the US neo-colonialist regime. Taking advantage of the American people's anti-war mood in an effort to obtain the presidential mandate in the late 1968 election Nixon promised to end the war within six months. Once in the White House, he put forward the "Nixon doctrine" and the "Vietnamization of the war" strategy while stepping up the war in Laos and expanding the war into Kampuchea. The basic aim of Nixon's "Vietnamization of the war" strategy was to withdraw US troops while maintaining the puppet administration in South Vietnam. To achieve this strategic objective, he made the utmost use of the US military strength, coupled with

very cunning political and diplomatic manoeuvres in the hope of securing a strong position and isolating and strangling our people's resistance war.

The maximum use of US military strength was clearly revealed in Nixon's advocacy of three types of warfare at the same time: the war to win over the people, the war to strangle the resistance and the war of extermination—the key objective being the pacification of the South Vietnam countryside.

His most cunning political and diplomatic manoeuvre was to play the "Chinese card", capitalizing on the Beijing ruling circles' betrayal and China's ambition to achieve great power status and solve the Taiwan issue so as to compel China to put pressure on Vietnam to yield to US demands.

For our Party, the "Vietnamization of the war" was a most machiavellian strategic calculation of the US imperialists with the aim of prolonging their aggressive war, withdrawing US troops step by step, and reinforcing the puppet army and administration. In this strategy, to begin with, both US and puppet troops remained the two strategic forces. The US troops constituted the mainstay of puppet troops and of the "Vietnamization of the war": the puppet troops constituted the main tool to put into effect the "Vietnamization of the war" and gradually replaced the US troops. This strategy created many difficulties for us in 1969 and 1970: our rural bases suffered losses, our mass movement was hampered and a number of our revolutionary bases destroyed. Our difficulties were partly due to our failing to sufficiently understand that the schemes and actions of the enemy then consisted in attacking and "pacifying" the

countryside, and in not readjusting our rules for action in the three areas soon enough.

On 1 January 1969, in his New Year greetings President Ho Chi Minh pointed out that the task of our fellow-countrymen and fighters throughout the country in the new stage was to "drive away the US aggressors and topple the puppets". (1)

On 20 July 1969, President Ho Chi Minh issued an appeal to our entire army and people: "The defeat of the US imperialists is already evident, yet they have not given up their evil design of clinging to the southern part of our country. Our armed forces and people throughout the country, millions as one man, upholding revolutionary heroism and fearless of sacrifices and hardships, are determined to carry on and step up the war of resistance, with the firm resolve to fight and win until the complete withdrawal of US troops and the total collapse of the puppet army and administration, in order to liberate the South, defend the North and ultimately achieve peaceful reunification of the country" (2).

At its 18th Plenum held in January 1970 the Party Central Committee set the task ahead: *to mobilize the greatest efforts of the entire Party, army and people in both zones, follow up the successes already won, carry on and step up the war of resistance, further promote the offensive strategy all-sidedly, continuously*

1. Ho Chi Minh, "New Year Greetings," *For Independence, Freedom and Socialism*, Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1970, p. 322.

2. Ho Chi Minh, "Appeal to the people on 20 July 1969" *For Independence, Freedom and Socialism*, Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1970, p. 327.

and vigorously, push ahead military struggle and political struggle in coordination with diplomatic struggle; attack the enemy while developing our armed forces and political strength, frustrate the US imperialists' "Vietnamization of the war" scheme, foil their plan of de-escalating the war to prolong it and build a strong position to maintain the neo-colonialist regime in the South of our country; to render ineffective the enemy's defensive strategy; bring about a new turn in the war conjuncture, secure gradual successes until decisive victory, drive away all US aggressors, topple the puppets and create basic conditions for achieving an independent, democratic, peaceful, neutral South proceeding to peaceful reunification of the country.

Answering President Ho Chi Minh's appeal and implementing the Party's resolution, our army and people in the South launched several drives of attacks when Nixon took power, putting out of action hundreds of US-puppet troops.

On the diplomatic front, our people waged a face-to-face struggle against the US imperialists at the Paris talks. Here on 8 May 1969 the delegation of the South Vietnam National Front for Liberation put forward a *Ten-point over-all solution* * demand

* The ten points of the South Vietnam National Front for Liberation and the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam can be summarized as follows:

1. Respect for the national rights of the Vietnamese people: independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity.
2. The US Government must withdraw all troops, military personnel, weapons and war material of the United States

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ing that US and satellite troops be withdrawn unconditionally and the USA respect Vietnam's independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity. Our stand radiant with justice cornered the US imperialists and their henchmen into a very awkward and passive position.

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and its satellites from South Vietnam without any conditions whatsoever.

3. The right of the Vietnamese people to fight in defence of their Fatherland is a sacred and inviolable right of self-defence. The question of Vietnamese armed forces in South Vietnam shall be settled by the Vietnamese parties.

4. The people of South Vietnam themselves settle their own internal affairs, without foreign interference.

5. During the interval between restoration of peace and the general elections, neither side shall force the South Vietnamese people to accept its political regime.

The political forces representing various sections of the people and various political tendencies in South Vietnam — including those forces, for political reasons, who take refuge abroad — and advocating peace, independence and neutrality will discuss together the formation of a Provisional Coalition Government on the principle of equality, democracy and mutual respect in order to achieve a peaceful, democratic and neutral South Vietnam.

6. South Vietnam shall carry out a foreign policy of peace and neutrality.

7. The reunification of Vietnam will be achieved step-by-step by peaceful means, on the basis of discussions and agreements between the two zones without foreign interference.

8. Both zones, North and South Vietnam, shall pledge themselves not to enter into military alliance with foreign powers, not to allow any foreign country to have military bases, troops and military personnel on their soil, not to

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On 6 June 1969, the *South Vietnam National Front for Liberation*, the *Vietnam Alliance of National, Democratic and Peace Forces* in the South, together with other patriotic forces, held a Congress of Representatives of the people of South Vietnam, and unanimously elected the *Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam* and the *Advisory Council to the Government*. The formation of the Provisional Revolutionary Government was a victory in the process of perfecting the system of revolutionary administration in South Vietnam, a truly national and democratic administration. In accordance with the Party's line, the South Vietnam National Front for Liberation and the revolutionary administration of the Southern people carried out democratic reforms in the liberated areas, particularly its agrarian policy. The watchword "Land to the Tillers" was put into effect. The great majority of the South Vietnamese peasants were given land to work on. Agriculture and handicraft developed. Important achievements were recorded in the fields of culture, education and public

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accept the protection of any country, any military alliance or bloc.

9. To settle the consequences of war:

a) The various sides shall negotiate the release of military personnel captured during the war.

b) The US Government must bear full responsibility for the destruction and losses caused by the United States to the Vietnamese people in both zones, North and South.

10. The various sides shall agree on an international supervision of the withdrawal of the troops, military personnel, weapons and war materials of the United States and other foreign countries on the US side from South Vietnam.

health. The democratic reforms initially carried out in the liberated areas brought out the sharp contradictions between the two fiercely contending regimes in the South of our country: the people's democratic regime and the neo-colonial one. The revolution of our people in the South was vigorously growing with a young regime full of vitality in opposition to a decaying regime born of US neo-colonialism.

In the North, where the war of destruction was temporarily halted, despite the fact that the US imperialists had not renounced their schemes, the immediate task of stabilizing the people's living conditions, and strengthening the North so as to assist the South consisted in a race against time to overcome ravages of war, restore and develop the national economy. Certain of victory, inspired by a revolutionary spirit of offensive and relying mainly on their own strength, the people of the North, in 1969, enthusiastically worked and achieved notable progress in restoring production, in stabilizing the people's livelihood and in supplying the front.

While our people in both zones, North and South, were pushing forward their resistance against US aggression and building socialism, on 3 September 1969 President Ho Chi Minh, the respected and beloved leader of our people and our Party, an outstanding fighter of the international communist movement and the movement for national liberation, passed away. The Party, the people and the army in both zones, North and South, felt boundless grief and regret. Friends the world over shared our people's inconsolable sorrow

On 3 September 1969, the Party Central Committee issued an appeal calling on cadres and Party members, fighters in the people's armed forces, fellow-countrymen throughout the country and Vietnamese abroad, united as one, to turn grief into revolutionary deeds, valiantly march forward, carry on President Ho Chi Minh's great work, materialize his ideal and aspirations, bring the patriotic resistance war against US aggression and the socialist revolution to complete success and achieve a peaceful, reunified, independent, democratic and prosperous Vietnam.

From 4 to 10 September 1969, our entire people throughout the country observed President Ho Chi Minh's mourning with solemn rites. During these days, our Party, National Assembly and Government received more than 22,000 messages and letters of condolences from 321 countries. Many countries in the world organized mourning or memorial ceremonies in honour of President Ho Chi Minh, 40 foreign delegations came to Hanoi to attend his mourning.

On 9 September 1969 a ceremony in memory of President Ho Chi Minh was solemnly held at Ba Dinh square in Hanoi. At this ceremony, Comrade Le Duan, First Secretary of the Party Central Committee, read the Last Tribute of the Party Central Committee and the Testament of President Ho Chi Minh.

After expressing the profound grief of the fellow-countrymen and fighters, the Last Tribute outlined his work and achievements. From his youth to the last minute of his life, President Ho Chi Minh devoted his life to the revolutionary cause of our

people and the people of the world. He was the first Vietnamese to have creatively applied Marxism-Leninism to the specific conditions of our country, to have charted the path for the Vietnamese revolution to advance gradually from victory to victory and to have led our people to write the most glorious pages in the history of our nation. President Ho Chi Minh was the founder, leader and educator of our Party, the architect of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the National United Front, the beloved father of the Vietnamese people's armed forces. He brought lustre to our nation, our people and our country.

The Last Tribute ended with five solemn oaths:

"To for ever carry aloft the banner of national independence, resolved to fight and defeat the US aggressors, liberate the South, defend the North and reunify the country in fulfilment of his wish."

"To go on devoting all our strength to realize the lofty ideals of socialism and communism that he set for our working class and people, achieve prosperity for our land and happiness for our fellow-countrymen."

"To preserve with all our strength the unity and one-mindedness of the Party as we would do to the apple of our eye, increase the fighting strength of the Party and make of it the nucleus of national unity, the guarantor of total victory for the revolutionary cause of the Vietnamese working class and nation."

"To constantly enhance the pure internationalist sentiments shown by President Ho Chi Minh, do our utmost to contribute to the restoration and development of solidarity and unity in the socialist camp

and among fraternal parties on the basis of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism; strengthen solidarity and friendship among the Indochinese peoples; extend wholehearted support to the revolutionary movement of other peoples, make an active contribution to the struggle of the world people for peace, national independence, democracy and socialism."

To learn, all our life, from his virtues and style of work, foster revolutionary virtues, fearlessly face hardships and sacrifices, temper ourselves into fighters loyal to the Party and the people, worthy of being his comrades, his disciples. Following his example, our entire people and youth pledge to do their best to improve themselves to become new men, masters of the new society, and to carry his ever-victorious banner to the final goal."

In parting from us, President Ho Chi Minh left a historic Testament to our entire Party and people.

First of all, he spoke about the Party: "Thanks to its close unity and total dedication to the people and the Fatherland, our Party has been able, since its founding, to unite, organize and lead our people from success to success in a resolute struggle. All comrades, from the Central Committee down to the cell, must preserve the unity and oneness of mind in the Party as the apple of their eye. Within the Party, to establish broad democracy and to practise self-criticism and criticism regularly and seriously is the best way to consolidate and develop solidarity and unity. Each Party member, each cadre must be deeply imbued with revolutionary morality, and show industry, thrift, integrity, uprightness, total

dedication to the public interest and complete selflessness. Our Party must preserve absolute purity and prove worthy of its role as the leader and truly loyal servant of the people."

He reminded our Party that it should educate and train Youth Union members and young people to be virtuous and able builders of socialism.

President Ho Chi Minh recommended us to work out effective plans for economic and cultural development so as to constantly improve the living conditions of our people.

He pointed out that we had to keep firm our resolve to fight the US aggressors until complete victory. He believed that whatever the difficulties and hardships, our people would certainly win, the US imperialists would certainly have to give up, our Fatherland would certainly be reunified and our fellow-countrymen in the South and in the North would certainly be reunited under the same roof.

About the international communist and workers' movement, he hoped that our Party would do its best to contribute to strengthening the solidarity between the fraternal parties on the basis of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism in a way conforming to both reason and sentiment.

In the last part of his Testament, President Ho Chi Minh spoke of his ultimate wish that:

"Our entire Party and people, closely joining their efforts, will build a peaceful, reunified, independent democratic and prosperous Vietnam, and make a worthy contribution to the world revolution."

President Ho Chi Minh's Testament is a great document, reflecting his thorough-going revolutionary

spirit, his pure thinking, virtues and sentiments; it is a beacon illuminating the road of unity and struggle of our entire Party and people advancing toward the fulfilment of heavy but glorious tasks: *completion of national liberation, realization of people's democracy, building of socialism and communism in our country.*

On 23 September 1969, in its fifth session of the Third Legislature, our National Assembly held a solemn ceremony in memory of President Ho Chi Minh and unanimously elected Comrade Ton Duc Thang President, and Comrade Nguyen Luong Bang Vice-President, of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

Bringing into effect Uncle Ho's Testament, turning grief into strength, on 26 September 1969 the Political Bureau of the Central Committee started a political drive of "learning and acting upon President Ho Chi Minh's Testament."

In 1970, our Party decided to launch three campaigns: one to intensify production work, one to promote democracy and strengthen the collective mastery of farming co-op members, and one to raise the quality of Party members and admit recruits into the Ho Chi Minh class. The launching of these three campaigns clearly showed our Party's determination to seize the opportune moment, resolutely redress mistakes and weaknesses in order to develop production, boost the economic and defence potential of the North, step up support to the revolution in the South, and fulfil our internationalist duty toward the Lao and Kampuchean revolutions.

On the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Party, Comrade Le Duan wrote: *Under the Glorious Banner of the Party, for the Sake of Independence, Freedom and Socialism, Let Us Advance toward New Successes.* This book summed up the experiences of 40 years of the Party's leadership of the revolution and introduced the laws of the Vietnamese revolution. It dealt with the strategic problems of the national democratic revolution, of which the two factors of victory were the *leadership of the working class Party and the role of the worker-peasant alliance* "With the Party, the vanguard of the working class, and the worker-peasant alliance, we have everything." To have an adequate revolutionary method so as to defeat the enemy of the revolution in the most rapid and advantageous way is no less important than to work out a strategic orientation and objective. Regarding the socialist revolution, the book pointed out that in the transitional period to socialism in the North of our country, the basic content of the class struggle in the main was to *struggle for taking small production to large-scale socialist production and to hold firm to proletarian dictatorship so as to carry out at the same time three revolutions*, of which the technical revolution was the kingpin. Concerning Party building, the book asserted that the basic factor of all victories was the leadership of our Party, a new type proletarian party mastering Marxism-Leninism, faithfully representing the vital interests and the legitimate aspirations of the working class, the labouring people and the entire nation, possessed of a well-knit organization, a tradition of unity and single mindedness, and closely associated with the masses.

Comrade Le Duan's work was of important significance in theory, as well as in the guidance of the immediate revolutionary tasks, taking the southern national democratic revolution to complete victory and preparing for future socialist construction throughout the country.

In January 1971, the Party Central Committee held its 19th Plenum and discussed at length the rehabilitation and development of the economy of the North. While asserting that the patriotic resistance war against US aggression remained the foremost task of the entire Party and people, the Plenum mapped out the basic contents of the class struggle, the struggle between the two roads in the transition period toward socialism in the North, solved a number of line, policy and organization so as to take the Northern agricultural economy a step further toward large-scale socialist production.

Basing itself on theoretical problems summed up and on a rigorous examination of realities, the Plenum decided that in application of the Party's general line in the initial stage of transition to socialism and in the conditions of the resistance war, the *orientation of economic development had to reflect the line of priority and rational development of heavy industry based on the growth of agriculture and light industry, of building a centrally-run economy while developing regional economies and coordinating economy with national defence.* The task of economic reconstruction and development and of cultural development had to be aimed at *satisfying the requirements of the patriotic resistance against US aggression, ensuring the people's livelihood, building and safeguarding*

the material and technical basis of socialism, step by step setting up the structures of large-scale socialist production and preparing for future economic development.

Important results were obtained in economic reconstruction. In agriculture, rice production in 1970 increased by half a million tonnes compared with 1969. In 1971, while the task of ensuring support to the South was heavier and more urgent than in previous years, the Northern people still had to overcome the aftermath of the August floods, the most serious in a century. Yet, in 1971 overall food production reached the equivalent of 5.6 million tonnes of paddy (nearly 5 million tonnes of paddy alone), a greater figure than usual yearly average. Most of the industrial establishments by the enemy were reconstructed. Only a short time after the first war of destruction ended, communication lines were reopened to traffic.

Early in 1972, the 20th Plenum of the Party Central Committee assessed that economic management was a weak link of ours. An urgent and important work of our Party and State was, therefore, to strengthen and improve economic management. The Plenum set the following basic orientation for the improvement of economic management to abolish the supply system and carry out socialist business; do away with the artisanal and scattered organization of small production: set up big industry organization so as to boost the process of taking small production economy to large-scale socialist production.

In South Vietnam, as a result of a few advances obtained in very fierce "pacification" campaigns,

the US imperialist thought the time had come for their war of strangulation. On 18 March 1970, they staged a coup d'état to overthrow the Royal Government of Kampuchea and establish the Lon Nol administration. In so doing they aimed at turning Kampuchea into a US neo-colony and "safe" military base, cutting off our supply line to the Southern battlefields. However, contrary to this expectation, the Kampuchean people resolutely opposed them and advanced their revolution by leaps and bounds. Confronted with this predicament, the US imperialists put hundreds of thousands of Saigon puppet troops into action. With the close and active coordination of our army and people, the Kampuchean people smashed the US-puppet operation, expanded the liberated areas and revolutionary bases throughout the countryside with 4.5 million people out of the 7 million Kampucheans.

On the Lao battlefield, in 1970 the Lao liberation forces twice foiled the Americans' scheme of recapturing the Plain of Jars in Northern Laos and recovered many large areas in the strategic Boloven plateau in Southern Laos.

Early in 1971, the South Vietnam army and people, together with the fraternal Lao army and people won a resounding victory on Highway 9 in Southern Laos. Here the US imperialists decided to launch a big campaign to block the Ho Chi Minh "trail" and completely cut off supplies from the North to the South. Formerly Mc Namara had failed in his attempt to set up an electronic barrier close to the 17th parallel. This time Nixon decided to use the best units of the Saigon puppet army with powerful US air support, thus carrying into effect the basic formula of

"Vietnamization of the war": puppet regulars+US firepower=victory. However, having correctly anticipated the enemy's scheme, we decided to fight him and managed to defeat him. After 43 days of fighting, the Vietnamese and Lao armies and peoples worsted the enemy's operation, annihilated 25,000 men, downed and destroyed nearly 500 planes of various kinds, captured about 600 military vehicles and 150 guns, 50 Nixon's plan to isolate the Southern revolution ended in failure.

The US heavy setbacks on Highway 9 Southern Laos once again destroyed Nixon's illusions of a military victory. The war of aggression against Vietnam deeply affected all aspects of life in the USA and the American people and constituted a handicap for Nixon in the 1972 presidential campaign. Faced with this situation, the White House plotted to compromise with the Chinese rulers to retrieve it.

Early in 1972, while the USA stepped up its bombings and minings of Vietnam, Nixon went to Beijing where he was warmly welcomed by the Chinese authorities. Meanwhile, the USA and China made a commitment; China would help the USA maintain the Thieu administration in South Vietnam and the USA would leave Taiwan to China (1).

1. The Shanghai joint communiqué between the USA and China (February 1972) clearly stated: "The USA asserts that its ultimate objective is to withdraw all US forces and military bases from Taiwan. Pending this, with the easing of tension in this area the USA will gradually withdraw its forces and military bases from Taiwan". Clearly enough, the

In so doing, the USA hoped to keep South Vietnam under US neo-colonialist rule and to sidetrack the struggles of world revolutionary forces. However, the Vietnamese people's great patriotic resistance war against US aggression and the world people's widespread movement in support of Vietnam against the USA brought into relief a stark reality that nowadays "*the spearhead of the world revolution must be aimed at US imperialists and no one else*" (1)

From May 1971, after the victory on Highway 9 Southern Laos, the Politburo decided to seize the opportunity to launch a strategic offensive in 1972 so as to win an important military victory and shatter Nixon's strategy of "Vietnamization of the war", compelling the US imperialists to end the war through negotiation. Implementing the Politburo's

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easing of tension in this area meant the end of the Vietnam war. The purport of the communiqué was: If China wanted the USA to withdraw its troops from Taiwan, it had to press Hanoi into yielding to the USA in South Vietnam. This was expressed time and again by the Chinese leaders themselves: "The toppling of the Saigon puppet administration requires time".

After issuing this joint communiqué, Kissinger said to the journalists that he was stunned when he learnt that China regarded Vietnam as the biggest obstacle on the way to improve Sino-America relations, and that from now on Nixon and himself had only to cope with Moscow and crush Vietnam.

(After Marvin Kalb and Bernard Kall Kissinger)

1. Truong Chinh: *On the work of the Front* (Speech delivered at the 3rd Congress of the Vietnam Fatherland Front, December 1971.)

decision, early in 1972 our army sprang a strategic offensive throughout the Southern battlefield, directing its main thrust at Tri Thien province.

In the spring of 1972, the Lunar New Year passed without the Southern army and people taking any large-scale action. The US-puppets thought that our people had lost all capacity for offensive. Suddenly, on 30 March 1972, the strategic offensive of the Southern army and people broke out. Several attacks were launched with overwhelming strength by regular units in coordination with regional forces and political forces of the masses against the enemy's external defence lines simultaneously in Quang Tri, Cong Tum and Binh Long. This was followed by repeated attacks on the enemy's internal defence lines in northern Binh Dinh and other places. Within a short time, half of the 13 divisions of puppet regulars, many regiments and battalions of infantry, artillery and armour were destroyed or heavily damaged. Whole regiments mutinied and surrendered. The enemy's security forces, civil guard and civil defence forces were put out of action or broken up by mass desertions. Very strong enemy defence lines from Quang Tri to Tay Nguyen and Eastern Nam Bo were breached. Newly liberated zones were set up in the highlands, the plains and along the coast, thus creating a possibility of development for the revolution in the South.

Strategically taken by surprise, Nixon risked an escalation of the war. He mobilized a considerable US aero-naval force for participation in the war in the South and resumed the war of destruction

against the North, (1) using nearly half of the B. 52 strategic bomber force of the USA for bombing raids deep into the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and mining its ports and rivers. By most brutal military manoeuvres combined with most cunning political and diplomatic ones, the US imperialists schemed to isolate and encircle our people's resistance. The 1 June 1972 resolution of the Political Bureau of the Party Central Committee assessed: "The Nixon clique is trying hard to carry out its design. This shows on the one hand that the imperialists are very stubborn in their bellicosity; it shows on the other, that the situation in the world is very complex. Our people must continually be resolute, heighten their vigilance and fight on till victory under whatever circumstance."

In August 1972, in Georgetown, capital of the Republic of Guyana, the Conference of 59 non-aligned countries laid bare the US wicked and perfidious scheme. It solemnly recognized the legitimate status of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam and the Royal Government of National Union of Kampuchea in the great family of non-aligned countries, and refused to recognize the representatives of the Saigon and Phnom Penh puppet administrations.

1. In this war of destruction, the US imperialists used two hundred B. 52 strategic bombers, nearly half of the total number of US B.52s, 1,400 tactical planes, one-third of the total number of US tactical planes, 60 warships of various kinds from the US 7th fleet. All the equipment and weapons are improved compared with the first war of destruction (1964-1968).

The heavy military and political setbacks it suffered in Vietnam and Indochina and its isolation in the international arena drove the Nixon administration into an extremely critical situation at home: devaluation of the dollar, increasing unemployment, aggravation of drug addiction and other social evils. The US ruling circles were profoundly divided. The prestige of the US in the world was going downhill.

At this juncture, the draft agreement to end the war and restore peace in Vietnam proposed by our government delegation at the Paris Conference on 8 October 1972 was an unexpected blow for the White House. The Nixon-Kissinger group could not but agree in the main to the fair and reasonable content of the draft agreement. But they still nurtured various perfidious schemes. On the one hand, they promised to sign the agreement on 31 October 1972, but on the other, they tried to delay the signing and revise on the agreed provisions. In so doing, they aimed at strengthening the puppet army and administration to give them a footing after the withdrawal of US troops, to win in the forthcoming presidential elections, while compelling us to withdraw our troops from the South and in maintaining the Nguyen Van Thieu puppet administration. To carry out this design, the Americans hastily set up a big airlift to hurriedly introduce arms and munitions into South Vietnam, (1) planned

1 While trying to put off the signing of the agreement, the US imperialists massively introduced into South Vietnam six billion dollars worth of weapons and war means (UPI, 6 March 1973) and hastily transferred US military bases in South Vietnam to the Saigon administration.

to encroach on the liberated zones after the signing of the agreement and to carry massive bombing raids in the North. To help materialize these frenzied ambitions, the US imperialists colluded with the Chinese leaders to press Vietnam to make concessions.

In view of Washington's about-face and Beijing's betrayal, our Party upheld our people's staunch and indomitable spirit by keeping firm the basic principle that the US troops had to withdraw from South Vietnam while our troops stayed on their positions there. Our Party decided to lay bare US double dealing to opinion at home and in the world, and to prepare to smash the enemy's new offensive. On 26 October 1972, our Government made public the main content of the draft agreement which had been reached by the two sides and was awaiting signature, and exposed the US about-face while asserting the results obtained by our people at the Paris Conference. The draft agreement rapidly became an effective weapon in the political struggle of our people, the American people and the people of the world.

As had been expected, after his re-election Nixon intended to abolish the fundamental points of the draft agreement. The Nixon-Kissinger clique ordered extermination bombing raids on Hanoi, Haiphong and other localities by an important air force composed of B-52 strategic bombers, F-111As and other modern aircraft. This was a large-scale air-attack without precedent in the history of warfare. (1), in

1. Under the Nixon administration in a day there were at one point 140 sorties of strategic bombers, 30 sorties of F-111 and 500-700 sorties of fighters of various kinds.

twelve days and nights — 18 to 29 December 1972 — the US imperialists dropped 100,000 tons of bombs (40,000 tons on Hanoi), the equivalent of five atomic bombs of the kind released on Hiroshima in 1945.

In so doing the White House hoped to strike terror into the Vietnamese people, bring pressure to bear upon them and create a position of strength on the battlefield and at the conference table.

Under the firm and timely leadership of our Party and Government, the armed forces and people of the North in general and of Hanoi in particular, meted out a punishment to the US imperialists. In those twelve days and nights we shot down 81 US planes, among them 34 B-52s and five F-111As. Hanoi alone brought down 30 aircraft, including 23 B-52s and two F-111As. Many planes were downed on the spot. During the US second war of destruction — from April to December 1972 — the armed forces and people of the North shot down nearly 700 US aircraft, among them 54 B-52s and 10 F-111As, sunk and set fire to many US war vessels.

The great victory of the 1972 strategic offensive in the South and the outstanding exploit of our armed forces and people crushing the US strategic B-52 raids on Hanoi, Haiphong and other localities, compelled the US Government to sign the Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam on 27 January 1973 in Paris.

The Paris Agreement stipulated that the *US imperialists had to end their aggressive war in Vietnam, withdraw all US and satellite troops from South Vietnam, undertake to respect the Vietnamese people's fundamental national rights, namely independence,*

sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity: as well as the right to self-determination of the people in the South; put an end to their military involvement and intervention in South Vietnam's internal affairs, and recognize the existence in South Vietnam of two administrations, two armies, two zones of control and three political forces. Then, on 2 March 1973 an International Conference was held in Paris by twelve government delegations from the Soviet Union, China, the United States, Great Britain, France, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the Republic of South Vietnam, the Saigon puppet administration and the four member countries of the International Commission of Control and Supervision of the implementation of the Paris Agreement on Vietnam, namely Hungary, Poland, Indonesia and Canada. The Conference approved an act taking note of the Agreement and Protocol on Vietnam and guaranteeing their strict and thorough implementation.

On 29 March 1973, the US Command in Saigon held a flag-lowering ceremony. The last unit of the US Expeditionary Corps withdrew from South Vietnam under the supervision of Vietnamese officers in the Four-Party Joint Commission.

On 28 January 1973 the Party Central Committee issued an appeal pointing out: "This is a very great victory of the most glorious war of resistance in the history of our people's struggle against foreign aggression. This is also the victory of the peoples of the Indochinese countries united in the struggle against the common enemy. This victory of the Vietnamese people is also a *victory of historic and*

epochal significance for the forces of socialism, national independence, democracy and peace, of the freedom-and justice-loving peoples of the world."

CONTINUATION OF ECONOMIC REHABILITATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE NORTH AND MOBILIZATION OF ALL EFFORTS FOR THE SUPPORT OF THE REVOLUTION IN THE SOUTH UNTIL VICTORY

After the signing of the Paris Agreement on Vietnam, peace was restored in the North. The Party advocated a rapid rehabilitation and development of the economy, an intensification of the building of socialism, and a stepping up of support to the South to complete the national democratic revolution.

As the North had advanced directly to socialism, bypassing the stage of capitalist development, and the remaining economy of predominantly small production heavily ravaged by the war, difficulties were inevitably numerous. The greatest difficulty was too weak a material and technical basis of socialism and a low labour productivity. The rate of population growth was fairly high whereas gross social product increased slowly. National income was almost stationary and internal accumulation nil. However, we have fundamental favourable conditions: our people are industrious, courageous, intelligent, inventive, devoted to the Party and inspired by revolutionary ardour after the victory of the patriotic resistance war against US aggression we possess abundant manpower and a fair contingent of scientific and technical cadres; we have a

wide range of natural resources and wide areas of unexploited land ; we receive aid and assistance in many fields from the Soviet Union and other fraternal countries, and can intensify economic, scientific and technical cooperation with the fraternal socialist countries, as well as extend economic and technical relations with other countries ; our Party has been steeled in revolutionary struggle and has a sound revolutionary line. Under our Party's leadership, our people have defeated US imperialism and will without doubt succeed in building socialism.

The task and orientations for post-war economic rehabilitation and development were set at the 22nd Plenum of the Party Central Committee in late 1973. The Plenum made a thorough analysis of the serious effects of the US imperialists' war of aggression against our country and pointed out that they were the main cause of the low level of production, the slow development of our economy and the difficulties in our people's livelihood. It also pointed out the shortcomings in leadership, guidance and management. The slowness in redressing these shortcomings was at the origin of the slackness in economic and social management, which engendered negative aspects in social life.

The Plenum asserted : "In the new stage, the general task of the North is to unite the entire people, struggle for the maintenance of peace, strive to carry on socialist industrialization, step up the triple revolution, take the North rapidly, vigorously and firmly to socialism, co-ordinate closely economic activity with national defence, heighten our vigilance, stand ready to foil every scheme of the

US imperialists and their henchmen, exert every effort to fulfil our duty in the struggle to achieve independence and democracy in the South and advance toward the peaceful reunification of the country ; to fulfil our internationalist duty toward the revolutions in Laos and Kampuchea."

To carry these tasks into effect, the Party Central Committee approved a plan for economic rehabilitation and development in 1974-1975. The task to be fulfilled in these two years was part of the initial stage of socialist industrialization in the North and aimed at meeting the following main requirements:

1. Mobilize and organize the social labour force to carry out production and construction with enthusiasm, take full advantage of economic potentialities, boost production and practise thrift. Make the level of production of every branch and unit at least equal to the highest level reached in 1965-1971. Strive to rapidly increase gross social product and national income. See to it that by 1975 national income will be sufficient to cover social expenditures and by 1978 accumulation will begin. Satisfactorily ensure the requirements of support to the revolution in the South.

2. Further consolidate and perfect the socialist relations of production in both the State and collective sectors, do away with negative aspects in economic and social life.

3. Strengthen Party leadership in State management, readjust managerial work from central to grassroots level, correctly solve immediate problems while preparing for long-term economic and cultural development.

The rehabilitation and development of our socialist economy were being carried out while a very fierce national and class struggle was proceeding in the South. The impact of this bitter struggle on the North was continually felt in many aspects. Therefore, in the spirit of the resolution of the plenum, the whole Party and the entire people had to constantly heighten their revolutionary vigilance and stand ready to cope with any eventuality. However, construction could not be neglected. On the contrary, the people in the North had to avail themselves of peace to engage vigorously in economic rehabilitation, heal the wounds of war, develop the economy and culture, build the material and technical basis of socialism, coordinate economic activity with national defence, strengthen the economic and military potentials of our country, stabilize the people's livelihood, give adequate support to the revolution in the South, while fulfilling their internationalist duty toward the revolutions in Laos and Kampuchea.

In the light of the resolution of the 22nd Plenum of the Party Central Committee, the working class, collective peasantry, socialist intelligentsia all over North Vietnam worked hard to liquidate the aftermaths of war, restore and develop agriculture, industry, communications and transport, capital construction...

In 1973, though gross national product was a bit higher than in 1965, the civil service greatly increased, the consumption of raw materials was high, labour productivity only two-thirds of that in 1965, and national income even lower than in 1965.

However, in 1974, things got better. There were two successive bumper rice crops; the production of paddy surpassed the State plan target by 8% — that is 21.4% over that of 1973. Thai Binh province obtained 7 tonnes of paddy per hectare. Many other provinces in the plain reached high yields. Many more cities, towns, districts and cooperatives reaped 5 tonnes per hectare. A number of cooperatives managed to top the 10 tonne mark.

New progress was made in building the material and technical bases of agriculture. The collective peasantry strove to restore and improve the water conservation network, fill up bomb craters in rice-fields, restore and build more seed-supplying and animal breeding stations and farms, reclaim virgin land, build new economic zones, carry out afforestation... Attention was given to the consolidation of agricultural cooperatives. In many cooperatives land was better managed, illegally-used land retrieved, and wasteful use of land put an end to. The movement to reorganize production and improve agricultural management in the direction of large-scale production was launched in a number of districts and cooperatives.

As regards industrial production, in 1974 the total value of industrial and handicraft output exceeded the State plan target by 4% and the 1973 figure by 15%. Coal production though still below the pre-war level, surpassed the plan target by 12% in output and 8% in earth-moving work. The quantity of coal supplied to industry, agriculture and export considerably increased over the previous years. The production of electricity exceeded the plan target

by 2% and the 1965 figure by 66%. The mechanical engineering branch saw the value of its output doubled compared with the prewar period. There was a considerable increase in the production of such important items as metal-cutting machines, electric motors, small tractors and others. Six new mechanical engineering plants were put into operation. A number of large mechanical engineering plants, nitrogenous fertilizer plants and textile mills were being built. Small industry and handicraft with great possibilities in producing consumer goods were restored and developed to a higher level than before the war.

With regard to communications and transports, freight carriage in 1971 rose by 30% over 1973 and 60% over 1974. Many ports and roads were rapidly restored. Many bridges destroyed by the enemy were repaired. Construction of some important bridges started. Workers and soldiers joined forces in clearing mines and dredging channels leading into ports and high-tonnage vessels can now sail in and out easily.

However, shortcomings and weaknesses were committed in economic rehabilitation and development. The results obtained in the execution of our plans failed to meet the increasing demands of the national economy. The needs for many kinds of materials and commodities were not fully met while great potentialities were not exploited. Economic management improved but slowly. The State plan failed to reflect a good application in the North of the economic law of socialism which is to progress

from small production to large-scale socialist production. In some places, there were still manifestations of a lack in the sense of responsibility, discipline and organization in implementing directives, resolutions, rules and regulations and striving for State plan targets. There were even cases of violation of the law and of infringing on State and collective property. Bureaucracy, lack of democracy, and slackness in economic management and in the maintenance of order and security were not resolutely overcome.

Generally speaking, agricultural and industrial production in 1974, in some important aspects, reached and even surpassed the figures of 1965 and 1971, the two peak years of economic development in twenty years of socialist construction in the North. The people's livelihood was stabilized and gradually improved.

The rehabilitated Northern economy ensured the stabilization of the people's livelihood and the requirements of support to the resistance war in the South in the final stage. In 1973-74, 250,000 youths enlisted in the army and went to the front at the call of the Party and the Fatherland. Tens of thousands of volunteer youths, cadres, specialists and technicians were muted to the South to serve the patriotic resistance war against US aggression.

To ensure the fulfilment of all revolutionary tasks in the new stage, the Party gave utmost attention to cadre work. This is one of the problems of decisive importance for the whole revolutionary cause. That is why the previous plenums of the Party Central Committee dealing with the situation and tasks ahead

had discussed the problem of Party building in general and cadre work in particular. In February 1973, the Party Political Bureau issued a resolution on cadre work in the new stage.

It laid stress on the problem of implementing the Party's working class line in building a contingent of cadres for the Party and the State. The resolution clearly set five criteria for a cadre's morality and ability : loyalty to the Fatherland and the revolution ; unity of mind with the Party's line and viewpoints ; capacity to fulfil the task entrusted by the Party ; respect for and promotion of the people's right to collective mastery ; a high sense of organization and discipline. The education content of the formation of cadres had to be aimed at raising revolutionary qualifications and working capacity following those five criteria.

Late in 1974, the 23rd Plenum of the Party Central Committee discussed the *strengthening of the Party's leadership and raising of its fighting strength*. This was the first plenum of the Party Central Committee on Party building. It thoroughly examined the situation of the Party and the work of Party building.

The resolution of the Plenum pointed out : For our Party to continue to fulfil its responsibility before our nation and before the international communist movement, *we must step up the work of Party building so that our Party constantly and firmly grasps and creatively applies the principles of Marxism-Leninism in the new conditions of our revolution, has correct policies, a thorough revolutionary spirit, a firm organization, a full capacity to lead and guide, worthy of being the leader*

and the very faithful servant of the people. That is the task of Party building in the new stage to strengthen and promote the Party character of the working class.

The resolution of the Plenum aptly expressed the Party's viewpoints on a range of basic problems of theory and practice newly posed in the work of Party building. This was a document of great significance for Party building both at that time and in the future. It laid down a fairly complete orientation for Party building in the stage when our Party must lead the administration, carry out the socialist revolution in the North, liberate the South, reunify the Fatherland and prepare conditions for taking the entire country to socialism.

THE SPRING 1975 GENERAL OFFENSIVE AND PEOPLE'S UPRISING—THE COMPLETE LIBERATION OF THE SOUTH

(February 1973—April 1975)

The Paris Agreement marked a great change in the balance of forces and the war conjuncture and brought about the possibility of achieving the national democratic revolution in the South.

However, the US imperialists did not resign themselves to defeat. They stubbornly hung on to Indochina and Southeast Asia, to the "Nixon doctrine" and the policy of "Vietnamization of the war," continued to use the Saigon puppet administration as a US tool, plotted to put all of South Vietnam under neo-colonialist rule and to partition our country for

ever. To reach this aim, the US imperialists and the Saigon puppet administration sought every means of destroying the political forces and the armed forces of the revolution and erasing the fact that there existed two administrations, two armies and three political forces in the South (to "remove the condition of leopard spot" as they said). The Nixon-Kissinger clique hoped to put this strategy into effect by consolidating the puppet administration and boosting the puppet army's armament according to the formula "puppet army and US aid and command." They hoped to do it with the "deterrence" of the US forces, the trend of détente in the world and the close coordination of Chinese great-nation expansionism and hegemonism.

After the signing of the Paris Agreement, the Beijing ruling circle outwardly hailed it but inwardly strove to hinder our people's fight to liberate the South, reduced their aid to the least possible, and connived with the US imperialists at maintaining the Thieu administration and prolonging the partition of our country(1).

Carrying out this strategic scheme, the US imperialists strove to build the puppet army into "the strongest in Southeast Asia" with over 1,100,000 men organized in four army corps comprising 13 divisions and many brigades, regiments, battalions, with 1,850 aircraft of various kinds, 1,588 guns, 2,074 tanks, 1,611 naval craft and millions of tons of war means introduced into the South before and after the signing of

1. At that time the Chinese rulers counselled the Americans not to lose in Vietnam, not to withdraw from Southeast Asia. (Gen. A. Haig, *Christian Science Monitor*, 20 June 1979)

the Paris Agreement. Besides, there were well-armed civil guards and people's militia.

Relying on this army, they repeatedly perfected many a war plan(1) in the hope of occupying all our liberated areas and putting the whole South under their control within three years (1973-75).

However, the enemy did not take into account the development of the revolutionary forces and overestimated their own after the Paris Agreement.

In South Vietnam there took shape two control zones, two armies and two administrations. The revolutionary armed forces were holding important strategic positions. The prestige of the South Vietnam National Front for Liberation and the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam grew stronger and stronger in the international arena. The summit conference of nearly 80 non-aligned countries in Algiers in September 1973 recognized the Republic of South Vietnam as an official member of the non-aligned movement, and the Provisional Revolutionary Government as the only genuine representative of the South Vietnamese people. After the Paris Agreement, the Vietnamese, Lao and Kampuchean revolutions developed. The liberated areas of the three Indochinese countries juxtaposed one another and formed a large and con-

1. The puppet three-year war plan (1973-1975) was aimed at reducing our armed operations to group level and within 15 bases. The six-year plan to build the puppet army (1974-1979) was aimed at modernizing and perfecting it. The eight-year postwar economic plan (1973-1980) was aimed at making the Southern puppet economy surpass the Northern one.

tinuous base, very advantageous to the revolution in the three countries.

On the enemy's side, the situation was going downhill. After withdrawing from the South of our country, the US imperialists sank deeper into a grave crisis. The United States was submerged by a "credibility gap", the US economy was in recession, inflation and unemployment rose, the US society was in a turmoil, the administration and the political parties were seriously split. On top of that, the Watergate scandal aggravated the US tragedy. Nixon had to withdraw from the White House. US military aid to the Saigon puppet administration was gradually cut down from 1,614 million dollars in 1972-73 to 1,026 million in 1973-74 and 701 million in 1974-1975.

The Nguyen Van Thieu puppet administration was faced with insuperable difficulties. With the shortage of ammunition, fire support (about 60%), aircraft, vehicles and fuel, mechanized means (50%), Thieu had now to fight a poor man's war. The strategy of "face-to-face war" to "maintain territorial security to the utmost" spread the enemy's forces thin. With this scattered deployment, it could not withstand our army and people's offensive and uprising on all battlefields.

In October 1973, the 21st Plenum of the Party Central Committee set the task of the revolution in the South after the signing of the Paris Agreement. The resolution of the Plenum pointed out: The fundamental task of the revolution in the South at the new stage was *to complete the people's national democratic revolution*. Its immediate task was *to unite the entire people, to fight on the political, military and diplomatic*

fronts with initiative and flexibility to coordinate them at the right time in the right place in order to compel the enemy to strictly implement the Paris Agreement, while preparing for a counter-attack to win complete victory. It was stressed in the resolution that under any circumstances the triumph of the revolution in the South would only be secured by violence, and consequently the offensive strategy had to be firmly grasped. From the signing of the Paris Agreement on, the South of our country knew not even one day of peace. The US-Thieu concentrated all forces, used all schemes and manoeuvres, made "pacification" and encroachment their foremost strategic measures, in the hope of wiping out the liberated areas, the people's liberation armed forces, and the people's power, while consolidating their administration and army, proceeding to abolish the revolutionary gains, the Paris Agreement on Vietnam, and putting the whole South under US neo-colonialist rule.

Implementing the resolution of the 21st Plenum of the Party Central Committee, our people in the South resolutely fought back the war acts of the Saigon puppet administration with appropriate forms and in every place. Not only did the liberation armed forces resolutely fight back the enemy's "pacification" and encroachment operations, but they also attacked the enemy right in his staging bases. As a result, in 1973-1974 our army and people frustrated nearly all the enemy's encroachment operations, recovered most of grabbed areas, narrowed the enemy-controlled areas, maintained and expanded our liberated areas, drove the enemy into a passive defensive position and forced him to regroup in order

to hold the urban centres and the important communication lines.

By mid-1974, a new situation appeared in the Southern battlefield. After our army liberated the district towns of Thuong Duc, Minh Long, Nha Bich, Tong Le Chan, Tanh Linh, Mang Den, Gia Viet... the enemy had to reconcile himself to the fact without any possibility of retaking them. The above-mentioned successes showed that the puppet main-force units could not cope with our regulars and the possibility of defeating the entire puppet army was becoming an immediate reality. The liberation of Phuoc Long and the whole province of Phuoc Long on 6 January 1975 was a further proof of that assessment.

Late in 1974, fundamental changes took place. *The conditions for the total liberation of the South were ripening* The People's Liberation Forces with the three categories of troops grew unceasingly in numbers and quality. Mobile battle groups including various arms were set up, which constituted strong punches and sharp thrusts on important strategic fronts. Our armed forces and people, who were keeping the initiative of attack on the battlefield, were able not only beat off the enemy's plan of pacification and grabbing, but also to launch big campaigns destroying the enemy's sizable battle groups, and to liberate many large and heavily populated areas, both in the plains and in the cities. A network of strategic roads covering more than 20,000 km lengthwise and crosswise on the Truong Son Range up to Eastern Nam Bo and various battlefields; communication lines were established from Hanoi to Loc Ninh through which phone

conversations could be exchanged between the great rear and the liberated areas; enormous quantities of food, weapons, and equipment were brought to the battlefields, ensuring the logistic requirements of the liberation war in the final stage. The achievements of the economic restoration of the North in 1973-1974 brought about the possibility for the Northern people to give great support in manpower and wealth to the South. The political struggle in the Southern cities, though not yet strong everywhere, already had the general tendency of demanding the overthrow of the Nguyen Van Thieu dictatorial and bellicose fascist regime and demanding peace, independence, democracy and welfare.

Guessing that the Saigon puppet administration was close to collapse, the imperialists and international reactionaries sought every means of stopping the complete victory of the revolution in the South. With US agreement, on 20 January 1974, the Chinese rulers sent troops to occupy Vietnam's Hoang Sa (Paracels) Islands.

Once again the collusion between the United States and China was laid bare before world opinion. Ten years ago, China connived at the US introduction of troops into the South and the bombing of the North, now the United States connived at the Chinese occupation of Vietnam's territory (1).

In view of the new situation, the Political Bureau of the Party Central Committee met in October 1974

1. US ambassador A. Martin to Saigon then turned down a request for help from the Nguyen Van Thieu administration, and the US Pacific Fleet was ordered to stay away from the Paracels Islands.

and January 1975 to review the situation and pass a historic resolution.

The Meeting assessed that the relation of forces between the enemy and us in the country as a whole and particularly in the South had fundamentally changed, and that our strength was the greater. Never had such a strategic opportunity been as favourable for us to achieve the national democratic revolution in the South. Therefore the meeting decided :

"To mobilize to the utmost the efforts of the Party, army and people in both zones of the country in 1975 and 1976, to accelerate armed and political struggle in coordination with diplomatic action in order to bring about a rapid and all-round change in our favour of the balance of forces on the battlefield in the South, to make urgent and complete preparations for a general offensive and uprising to wipe out and disintegrate the puppet army, overthrow the puppet administration at all levels, seize power and liberate the South." At the same time, the Meeting stressed that it was necessary to make preparations in every aspect so that when the opportune moment came, the strength of the nation could be rapidly mobilized to liberate the South even in 1975.

The Meeting pointed out that the general offensive was of decisive significance and should precede by one step the general uprising.

Regarding the possibility of a new intervention in the South, the Meeting assessed: the heavily defeated US imperialists having had to withdraw their troops it would be very difficult for them to stage a comeback. However, they could intervene with their air and naval forces when the puppets were close

to collapse, on the condition that the latter could resist for a long time. The Meeting concluded that, nevertheless, we had enough determination and benefited from conditions enabling us to defeat them.

The Western Highlands were chosen as the main axe of attack, and Buon Ma Thuot as the key opening the battle.

The guidance, the command and the organization of operations assured by the Military Commission of the Central Committee and the Army's High Command were put under the close leadership of the Political Bureau throughout the General Offensive and Uprising.

Regional committees of the Party in the South and in the North as well as all different branches concentrated their efforts on solving the enormous requirements of the new task ready to seize the historic opportunity

The Spring 1975 General Offensive and Uprising won its first resounding victory in the *Western Highlands campaign* (10-24 March 1975). We started by cutting off all communication lines and annihilating a number of important support points, then tricked the enemy into reinforcing the defence of Pleiku; and when Buon Ma Thuot, the kingpin target of the Western Highlands campaign had become relatively weak and exposed we boldly and unexpectedly attacked the town. After nearly two days of fighting we were in complete control of it.

This lightning blow stunned the enemy and sowed panic in his ranks. On 12 March, Thieu ordered "to hold Buon Ma Thuot at all costs". But all his frenzied counter-attacks to retake it failed. Assaulted

on all sides by our army and uprisings of the people, on 14 March 1975 Thieu and the puppet general staff decided to withdraw from Pleiku and Kontum to keep their forces intact. The Political Bureau and the Military Commission of the Central Committee, which had anticipated this manoeuvre, ordered our units to destroy the enemy. The withdrawal became a disorderly rout ending with a total annihilation on 24 March 1975. We thus won a complete victory in Western Highlands campaign. The large strategic Western Highlands with 600,000 people of various nationalities were liberated and 120,000 enemy troops wiped out. Following up their victory, our regular battle groups continued their offensive towards the Central coastal plains. In close coordination with the Western Highlands campaign our army and people attacked the enemy on all fronts. The avalanche of offensives and uprisings increased in the Central and South Central provinces. Under the flexible and resolute leadership of local Party organizations, the people and the armed forces rose up and liberated the provinces of Binh Dinh, Phu Yen, Khanh Hoa (including Cam Ranh harbour), Lam Dong, Tuyen Duc and Quang Duc. The whole of puppet Military Region II was written off.

Immediately after the liberation of Buon Ma Thuot and the Western Highlands, the Political Bureau assessed that it was possible to win greater victories and more rapidly than anticipated; in fact, the strategic general offensive had already begun with this victory. The Political Bureau then took the decision to liberate the South before the 1975 rainy season.

After the victory of the Western Highlands campaign came that of the Hue-Da Nang campaign.

Since the Western Highlands campaign had begun, the armed forces and the people of Tri-Thien had coordinated their actions, had attacked and risen up in many places to carry out the instructions of the Political Bureau and the Military Commission of the Central Committee. On 19 March 1975, the entire province of Quang Tri was liberated. After that, they encircled Hue and checked the enemy's withdrawal route to the sea and to Da Nang. On 24 March, Tam Ky and Quang Ngai were liberated. On 26 March, the armed forces closed their manoeuvre of encirclement and together with the uprisings of the revolutionary masses annihilated the defence complex of Thua Thien - Hue with more than 40,000 enemies, controlled Hue city and the whole province of Tri Thien.

The resounding victory of Tri Thien - Hue and that of Tam Ky - Quang Ngai completely isolated Da Nang.

During the unfolding of the Western Highlands campaign and particularly during the rapid liberation of the South Central provinces, the Political Bureau and the Central Committee Military Commission had instructed the armed forces and the people of Zone V to make active preparations for the Da Nang battle. Immediately, the Party Organization and Army Command of Zone V shifted the direction of attack northward and decided to liberate the entire region according to the instructions of the Political Bureau and the Central Committee Military Commission.

On 24 March 1975, while the battle for Hue was raging the Central Committee Military Commission

and the Army High Command decided to launch the attack on Da Nang with the motto: Strike at the right moment, quickly, audaciously, suddenly and surely.

The puppet administration pledged itself to defend Da Nang "to the last" at any cost. With about 100,000 troops from all arms and services: infantry, artillery, armour, air force, navy, civil guard, people's militia, people's self-defence and police, they hoped to check our attack. They also estimated that we would have made preparations for at least one month after liberating Hue and before attacking Da Nang. But all the enemy's schemes collapsed. To the US-puppet's consternation, new revolutionary storms prepared to submerge them.

On 27 March 1975, from Hue, Tam Ky and Thuong Duc our battle groups rushed Da Nang together with the attacks and violent uprisings of the local armed forces and people. Following the example of the armed forces and people of Quang Ngai, the armed forces and people of Quang Nam rose up, attacked and liberated Hoi An. The armed forces and people of Da Nang rose up, attacked and liberated the prison, encircled and disarmed the enemy, suppressed the reactionaries, led the way for the main-force units to rapidly occupy the enemy positions, encircled the economic and cultural bases. On 29 March, after only 30 hours of offensive and uprising, our armed forces and people won a brilliant victory, liberating Da Nang — the second biggest city in the South, annihilating or putting out of action over 100,000 enemy troops including the Command of the puppet First Army Corps. The enemy's

strongest military complex of Central Vietnam was thus put out of action. Puppet Military Region I was wiped off the map. The enemy plan of strategic regroupment to hold the coastal plains was smashed!

In coordination with our major attacks in the Western Highlands and at Hue — Da Nang, the armed forces and people of eastern Nam Bo attacked and rose up in strength, liberated the whole province of Binh Long, annihilated many district towns, sectors and military bases and liberated a very important area north and northwest of Saigon. In the Mekong delta, our armed forces and people also rose up, fiercely attacked the enemy, and seized power in many places. These victories gave our armed forces and people a more favourable position from which to deploy their strength in every field and carry out the general offensive against Saigon to liberate the whole of Nam Bo.

The victories of the Hue—Da Nang campaign and the Western Highlands campaign together with those on all other battlefields drove the enemy into despair. His morale collapsed, his organization disintegrated as well as his tactics and strategy. The US imperialists themselves admitted their impotence to re-establish the situation. However, with their extremely reactionary and stubborn nature, the US-puppets sought every means to dig in.

With the help of US Gen. Weyand and a great amount of US weapons hastily brought in from Bangkok by a new airlift, they hurriedly built a defence line from Phan Rang to Saigon in the hope of holding on until the rainy season. At the same time they mapped out an urgent plan to consolidate

and reinforce their troops. In the Saigon area, their last lair, they deployed heavy forces at all points controlling the entrance to the city with infantry divisions and brigades, armoured units, paratroops etc.. Moreover, road blocks were put up to stop the advance of our infantry and tanks and three air divisions were mobilized as support units.

Meanwhile, on our side, every fighter and fellow-countryman from North to South was imbued with an ardour of revolutionary offensive and a deep confidence in the final victory.

Following the Meeting of the Political Bureau on 25 March 1975 which had set the concrete task of liberating Saigon before the rainy season, on 31 March 1974 the Political Bureau again met and assessed that the strategic general offensive had won an extremely great victory, destroying and putting out of action two enemy army corps, liberating 16 provinces, thus bringing the population of the liberated areas to 8 million. As regards both position and strength our superiority was overwhelming. The enemy troops were powerless in the face of total collapse. The time was ripe to launch a general offensive and uprising against the last sanctuary of the enemy. We needed great determination to secure a final victory if possible by April 1975. The Political Bureau assessed: Saigon was the last lair of the enemy, the spot where the fate of US-puppet neo-colonialism would be decided, so the enemy would defend it to the last. The Political Bureau decided to set up the Command and the Party Committee for the Saigon front led by Political Bureau members Le Duc Tho, Pham Hung and Van Tien Dung.

Comrade Van Tien Dung was Chief of the General Staff commanding the campaign and Comrade Pham Hung, Political Commissar. On 25 March, the Political Bureau decided to establish a Council for supplying of the front, presided over by Prime Minister Pham Van Dong. Everything was carried out according to the motto: "Strike quickly, audaciously, suddenly and surely" First priority for the campaign: to liberate Saigon.

Many big main-force battle groups were brought to the battlefield, making, together with those already there, strong attacking axes of the campaign. Some battle groups had to move post-haste with all their arms and technical equipment over more than 1,000 km., fighting their way to the front in spite of all the difficulties and obstacles.

Carrying out the plan of the Council for supplying of the front, long convoys of cadres from various branches and levels and new recruits, as well as considerable quantities of material, of weapons and food supplies from all corners of the country, even from newly-liberated areas, poured without let up to the front.

Under the direct leadership of the Southern Party Regional organizations, the people in the enemy-occupied areas, both countryside as well as cities, made intensive preparations for combat. Steeled in the face-to-face struggles with the enemy, our people were perfectly aware of the coming opportunity and ready to rise up for the last-ditch and decisive battle. A plan for mass uprisings in the whole of Nam Bo and in Saigon — Gia Dinh, in coordination with the offensive of the regular army was mapped

out in accordance with the instruction of the Political Bureau.

The ardour for mobilization to the Front was at its height within the entire Party, people and army when it was learnt that the Political Bureau had decided to call the campaign to liberate Saigon *Ho Chi Minh Campaign*.

Early in April 1975 we stepped up our operations to the east of Saigon, attacking Xuan Loc, a vital defence perimeter of the enemy on this front. By mid-April, our eastern wing liberated Phan Rang, annihilating all the enemies there, including the forward command of the puppet Third Army Corps. After that, the local armed forces and people liberated Binh Thuan and Binh Tuy. Repeatedly attacked and hard pressed from all sides, the enemy had to abandon Xuan Loc. To the southeast, one battle group occupied Ba Ria. To the southwest, we opened a corridor opening onto Highway No. 4, thus creating a springboard for an army wing to advance on Saigon. To the north and the northwest, two army wings advanced, occupied the battleground and closed in upon the enemy, decimating his troops, paralysing his artillery batteries and cutting off his mobile unit communication lines. In Saigon and its suburbs, under the leadership of the Saigon - Gia Dinh Party Committee, the people feverishly prepared for the biggest fight. Special forces and commando units were already deployed near their assigned targets.

While our people's fight to liberate Saigon was being urgently prepared, the resistance war against US aggression in Kampuchea also won repeated victories. On 17 April 1975, in coordination with

the struggle and with the active help of the Vietnamese and Lao peoples, the Kampuchean people liberated Phnom Penh. The US imperialists and their henchmen suffered a heavy defeat to which they had to resign themselves without daring to react. This was a further proof of their impotence before the irresistible victories of the Indochinese peoples.

On 26 April 1975, the big assault against Saigon began. Fierce fighting and shelling took place particularly in the east where the enemy had concentrated a huge force and organized a frantic resistance. From all directions, our five detachments, in coordination with local armed forces and supported by the people's uprisings, launched storm-like attacks on the enemy. From 26 to 28 April we destroyed a sizable part of the enemy's force on the outer defence perimeter and tightened our encirclement around Saigon. On the afternoon of 28 April, our air force bombed Tan Son Nhat airfield, destroying many enemy planes.

The US puppets panicked at the menace of total annihilation. On 28 April 1975, US President G. Ford ordered an urgent evacuation of Americans from Saigon. This rout dubbed "operation run-for-your-life" was hastily carried out in complete panic by a big US air and naval force. With Huong having replaced Thieu (21 April), then Duong Van Minh having replaced Huong (28 April), the puppet administration stood at the door of death, the enemy strove to use his remaining divisions to hold at least a part of his remaining territory. Moreover, the US puppets hoped to get out of their difficulties

by diplomatic manoeuvres, counting on the calculations of the imperialists and international reactionaries. On 29 April, three delegates of the Saigon administration were sent to meet our delegation at Tan Son Nhat to sound out our objective and propose a ceasefire to hold talks. The US ambassador to Saigon also wanted to meet our delegation. This was a US puppet scheme to prevent our general offensive from achieving total victory. In face of the Saigon puppet administration's death-throes, the Chinese rulers also plotted to set many puppet brass hats and functionaries against our army and people's general offensive and uprising. However, the fate of the Saigon puppet administration was sealed and Beijing's design to salvage it was nipped in the bud.

On the morning of 29 April the Political Bureau sent a message commending the exploits of all the officers and men, Party members and communist youth participating in the campaign, and calling on them to rapidly assault the enemy's last lair with their greatest determination to disarm the puppet troops, dismantle the puppet administration, liberate Saigon-Gia Dinh city and secure a complete victory. The Political Bureau reminded officers and men entering the city to care for the people's livelihood, strictly observe discipline, and protect the people's lives and properties.

On 30 April 1975, in coordination with the special forces, commando and self-defence units and the widespread and timely uprising of the people in the city and its suburbs, our columns of attack perforated the enemy's defences and advanced into

Saigon-Gia Dinh, occupying important targets already designated: 'Independence Palace, (puppet Presidential Palace), the General Headquarters and the Command Post of the enemy's various arms, the Tan Son Nhat airfield, the Ministry of National Defence, the Bach Dang harbour, the Radio Station, the Capital Special Defence Sector and the Police General Headquarters. The people of Saigon heartily welcomed the armed forces—their sons — and helped them search and disarm the enemy, arrest thugs, agents and spies, call on puppet troops to side with the revolution, lead the way for the armed forces, protect economic and cultural establishments. In the small hours of 30 April, US Ambassador Martin fled by helicopter. Puppet President Duong Van Minh had to announce unconditional surrender. At 11h 30 on 30 April, a revolutionary flag was hoisted on the roof of the puppet presidency.

Early in April 1975, together with the liberation of central and south Trung Bo provinces, our army and people liberated a host of our offshore islands. On 14 April, Military Region V in coordination with the Navy Command liberated the Truong Sa (Spratly) Islands held by the Saigon puppet troops. After the liberation of Saigon — Gia Dinh, in the flush of victory, our fellow-countrymen and fighters in the Nam Bo provinces still under enemy occupation implemented the plan of the Central Office for South Vietnam and the South Vietnam Command with the motto "each community, each district, each province liberates itself". They carried out attacks and uprisings, occupied military bases, district towns, townlets and forced the puppet troops to

lay down their weapons and surrender. In this irretrievable disintegration, the puppet Fourth Army Corps and the entire armed forces and puppet administration in this region collapsed. By 2 May, all the provinces in Nam Bo were liberated, as well as the more distant islands of Phu Quoc, Con Son... All told, in this period, we destroyed and dismantled over 400,000 enemy troops of the puppet Third and Fourth Army Corps, all the civil guards, police, people's militia, the entire repressive system from the centre to the grassroots, captured all the weapons and equipment in the hands of the puppet army and administration, liberated Saigon - Gia Dinh and all the remaining provinces in the South.

Thus the Spring 1975 General Offensive and Uprising, whose climax was the historic Ho Chi Minh campaign, was crowned with total victory

The Party's correct and bold strategic determination was completely achieved. Under the Party's leadership, our people honourably fulfilled Uncle Ho's Testament, "Our resistance against US aggression may drag on. No matter what difficulties and hardships lie ahead, our people are sure of total victory. Our Fatherland will certainly be reunified. Our fellow-countrymen in the South and in the North will certainly be re-united under the same roof."

Assessing this victory, the Political Report of the Party Central Committee at the Fourth Party Congress (December 1976) pointed out: "A stage in the development of the whole of our patriotic war of resistance against US aggression, combined result of all the forces and factors making up our people's invincible strength in the great patriotic resistance

war, the Spring 1975 General Offensive and Uprising unfolded with the speed of "one day equalling twenty years". Within 55 days and nights, with overwhelming strength in both military and political fields, our army and people won a complete victory. Over one million puppet troops and the entire puppet administration were crushed. The neo-colonialist regime, laboriously set up under five successive US presidents, collapsed totally.

Vietnam's victory was also a great victory for the forces of peace, national independence, democracy and socialism in the world. It constituted an important contribution to the common struggle of nations and went down in world history as a great exploit of the 20th century, an event of great international importance and deep epochal character.

In the whole 200-year history of the United States, this was the greatest, heaviest and most ignominious defeat, the "Waterloo of the United States." The scheme to turn the South of our country into a US new-type colony and military base, and to partition our country for ever was crushed. The US counter-revolutionary global strategy was upset, US imperialism was seriously weakened militarily, politically and economically, and will bear the numerous and serious consequences for a long time to come.

Our people's victory in their patriotic resistance war against US aggression ended 30 years of national liberation war and national defence, terminated more than a century of imperialist rule, fulfilled the historic tasks of national liberation and reunification set by the Party Third Congress, and

ushered in a great turning-point: taking our entire country toward socialism.

In the eyes of the world, the Vietnamese people's victory shattered the biggest counter-offensive of the imperialist ring-leader against the revolutionary forces since World War II. It pushed back the battle grounds of imperialism, extended that of socialism, broke an important defence line of US imperialism in Southeast Asia. It also upset the counter-revolutionary global strategy of imperialism and international reactionaries and drove the United States into an unprecedented predicament. It weakened the imperialist system, boosted the strength and the offensive position of the three revolutionary currents of our time, brought faith and enthusiasm to hundreds of millions of people on the earth struggling for peace, national independence, democracy and socialism.

With this victory, the Vietnamese people demonstrated to the whole world the inevitability of the complete bankruptcy of neo-colonialism, as the victory of the August 1945 Revolution and the resistance war against French imperialism had heralded the complete collapse of old colonialism.

In Laos, under the leadership of the Lao Revolutionary People's Party, the struggle for peace, independence and democracy of the Lao people gained momentum throughout the country. The political struggle of the masses, the pressure of the revolutionary armed forces, the mutinies in the army and the legal struggle in the coalition government — all these tornadoes hastened the collapse of the rightist army and administration. Within four

months, the whole US-subservient rightist administration and army in Laos collapsed. Answering the people's aspirations, the Lao Revolutionary People's Party decided to convene a National Congress. On 2 December 1975, the Congress decided to abolish the monarchy and establish the Lao People's Democratic Republic with Comrade Souphanouvong as President and Comrade Kaysone Phomvihane as Premier.

Our people's great exploits were the result of several factors: the Party's correct leadership, the stoicism, indomitability and heroism of the Vietnamese people, the strength of the socialist regime in the North, the militant solidarity of the Vietnamese, Lao and Kampuchean peoples; the sympathy, support and assistance of the fraternal socialist countries, the international communist and worker's movement, the national liberation movement; and the struggle for peace and justice of the world people, including the American people.

From July 1954 to April 1975, in the process of leading the successful implementation of two revolutionary strategies, our Party accumulated many experiences having the character of law.

In the patriotic resistance war against US aggression the Party raised aloft two banners of national independence and socialism and simultaneously carried out two revolutionary tasks: national people's democratic revolution in the South and socialist revolution in the North, with the common aim to achieve the national people's democratic revolution in the whole country, reunify Vietnam and create conditions to take it forward toward socialism.

Raising aloft the two banners of national independence and socialism, our Party brought into full play the forces of the entire people, the revolution in the South and the revolution in the North, to secure victory for the patriotic resistance war against US aggression.

Raising aloft the two banners of national independence and socialism, our Party integrated our people's patriotic fight with the world people's struggle for peace, national independence, democracy and socialism into a broad international front in support of Vietnam against the US imperialist aggressors. Our Party thus combined our people's strength with that of the three revolutionary torrents of our times (1) into strength defeating the enemy.

In the process of leading our patriotic resistance war against US aggression, our Party *firmly grasped and continually carried out an offensive strategy*, repelled and defeated the enemy step by step and built up a position and a strength to win complete victory.

Our Party continually paid attention to consolidating and defending the Northern rear while stepping up the offensive to contain and to defeat the enemy ground forces in the South. However, when

1. The three revolutionary torrents of our times are :
- the world socialist system as a decisive factor in the development of humanity ;
 - the movement of national liberation in the colonial and dependent countries ;
 - the struggle for the amelioration of living conditions, for democracy and for social progress of the working class in the different capitalist countries.

the United States escalated the war, our Party *resolutely* led our people to defeat each form of US warfare, at the same time searching the means of forcing it to a gradual de-escalation so as to proceed forward to total victory.

The victory of the national democratic revolution in the South was due to our Party's *scientific and creative revolutionary methods*. These are: to use a compound revolutionary violence of the political force of the masses and the people's armed forces to stage localized insurrections and develop from there into revolutionary war; to combine military with political and diplomatic struggle; to combine mass uprisings with revolutionary war, uprisings with offensives, offensives with uprisings; to fight the enemy in the three strategic areas: highlands, countryside and cities; to attack the enemy with three prongs: military operations, political action and agitation work among puppet soldiers; to combine the three categories of troops — regular forces, regional forces, militia and self-defence to combine guerilla warfare with regular warfare; to combine big, medium and small-size attacks; to exercise our mastery over the land in order to wipe out the enemy and wipe out the enemy in order to exercise our mastery over the land; to firmly master the strategy of protracted fighting while knowing how to create and avail oneself of opportunities to launch strategic offensives in order to change the war conjuncture and proceed to a general offensive and uprisings to crush the enemy and win final victory.

The *penetrating and strategic guidance* of the Party Central Committee and the Political Bureau, *the art*

of organizing the struggle experienced by the Party and the various army cadres also constituted a well of knowledge from our resistance against US aggression.

The victory of our anti-American resistance demonstrated that in our times, when the world revolutionary forces are in an *offensive position*, a nation whose territory is not vast and whose population is not large, but who is closely united and fights resolutely under the leadership of a Marxist-Leninist Party, armed with a correct revolutionary line and methods, raising aloft the banners of national independence and socialism, and enjoying the sympathy, support and assistance of the socialist countries, revolutionary forces and progressive people the world over is fully capable of defeating all the aggressive forces of imperialism, be it the imperialist ringleader itself.

In the process of leading the socialist revolution in the North, our Party assessed that to achieve complete success for the socialist revolution, *the first condition is to establish and unceasingly strengthen proletarian dictatorship and to exercise and constantly bring into full play the working people's right to collective mastery.*

The socialist revolution in our country is a process of overall, continuous, deep and thoroughgoing revolutionary changes. This is a process of simultaneously carrying out three revolutions: the revolution in relations of production, the scientific and technological revolution, and the ideological and cultural revolution, of which the scientific and technological revolution is the kingpin. It is a process combining transformation with building, with

the latter as the main aspect, a process of step-by-step establishment of the system of socialist collective mastery, large-scale socialist production, the new culture and the socialist new type of man. This means, in our country, to build a national socialist economic structure, a modern industrial-agricultural structure, combine central economy with regional economies, combine economy with national defence, strengthen our economic ties with the fraternal socialist countries and to develop our economic relations with other countries.

PART V

THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

(1975-1985)

**STABILIZING THE SITUATION IN THE SOUTH
ACHIEVING THE REUNIFICATION OF THE COUNTRY
AND TAKING THE WHOLE OF VIETNAM TO
SOCIALISM**

The complete liberation of our country constituted a historic turning-point of great significance for our entire nation, ushering in a new stage of the revolution in Vietnam.

From a partitioned country torn by war, Vietnam became independent and reunified. Formerly carrying out simultaneously two strategic tasks, the Vietnamese revolution now waged the task of building socialism and defending the socialist Homeland throughout the country.

Back in wartime, our Party made preparations in all fields to deal with this revolutionary change. The new situation of Vietnam after liberation set to our Party the responsibility of complementing and perfecting its line so as to shift the orientation of

the revolution throughout the country while defining the concrete tasks of each zone in accordance with its specific characters.

Therefore the task of taking over the newly-liberated areas from the towns to the countryside, from the mainland to the islands, from the military bases to the production, administrative, cultural bases was done urgently and successfully. The reunification of the country in many aspects was diligently fulfilled. The rounding up and repression of counter-revolutionaries was actively performed; political security and social order was maintained. Right in the first days of liberation, all the people's activities in countryside and town, including the city of Saigon, were rapidly brought back to normal.

In August 1975, the Party Central Committee convened its 24th Plenum which mapped out the strategic task of the Vietnamese revolution in the new stage: "To complete the reunification of the country and take it rapidly, vigorously and steadily to socialism. To speed up socialist construction and perfect the socialist relations of production in the North, to carry out at the same time socialist transformation and construction in the South."

With regard to the socialist revolution in the South, the resolution of the Plenum pointed out that in applying the general line drawn up for the period of transition to socialism, it was necessary to firmly grasp the main principle of socialist transformation and construction, namely "to closely combine transformation and construction all through the revolutionary process and in every field: political, economic,

technical, cultural and ideological, in the whole country and in each unit."

The combination of transformation and construction, the resolution stressed, had to effectively develop production, raise social labour productivity, turn out more goods, improve social life and better the people's material and cultural living standards.

The resolution pointed out the tasks ahead, to build a firm people's revolutionary administration at all levels, resolutely repress counter-revolutionaries; eliminate compradore capitalism and the vestiges of feudal landlordism, rehabilitate and develop production; do away with unemployment left by the former regime; satisfactorily solve the problems of circulation, credit, finance, banking and currency; apply adequate measures of economic management, eradicate the bad effects of the culture and ideology of the former regime, build a new culture and ideology, boost the revolutionary movement among the masses, strengthen the work of Party building to ensure the successful implementation of the revolutionary task in the new stage.

With regard to the socialist construction in the North, the resolution pointed out, it was necessary in the new stage to make the greatest efforts to overcome all difficulties while continuing to promote the active impact of the North upon the development of the revolution in the whole country.

The reunification of the country brought about a new strength and new opportunities to develop the economy and culture, and consolidate national defence. It helped raise Vietnam's prestige in the world. Therefore, the resolution asserted, "The sooner the

reunification, the more rapidly the all-round strength of the homeland is promoted."

While stepping up the reunification process in all fields we actively prepared for the reunification of the State, the mass revolutionary organizations and the national front. The great victory of the elections to the National Assembly, sixth legislature, the single National Assembly of the whole country—on 25 April 1976 demonstrated our entire people's will for reunification and revolutionary awareness. This proved that our fellow-countrymen living for many years under US neo-colonialist rule remained faithful to our Party and realized that their Homeland would inevitably be reunified and their whole country would go socialist—the only way to preserve independence and freedom, and obtain civilization and happiness.

In June 1976, in answer to the people's aspirations at its first session the National Assembly decided to rename our country the *Socialist Republic of Vietnam*, Saigon *Ho Chi Minh City* and to make Hanoi the capital of the whole country.

Parallel to the brilliant victory of the reunification of state institutions, our people did their best to heal the wounds of war and bring life back to normal. The two zones now had conditions to trade with each other and help each other.

The North had to boost socialist construction, ensure and step by step improve the people's livelihood, while actively supporting the South in taking over, stabilizing the situation and taking the South to socialism, and at the same time fulfilling its international duty in the new stage. The socialist relations of

production in the North were consolidated and ever broadened. Production reorganization and managerial improvement increasingly made their impact felt.

The economic bases heavily devastated during two fierce US wars of destruction were rapidly rehabilitated and further developed. Many works and factories were rebuilt and enlarged. Output of staple goods in the main reached and surpassed the pre-war level. The contingent of cadres and technical workers rapidly grew up. Education, public health, culture and art flourished.

Initial achievements were recorded in the transformation of the old society and building of the new one in the South. People's power at all levels was strengthened and mass organization developed.

The movement for productive labour has made notable progress. Factories and enterprises strove to overcome difficulties and restore production. The movement of irrigation, land reclamation, putting back land into cultivation, intensive farming and multiplication of crops developed in many places. A system of State trade was set up, thus helping curb speculation, hoarding and market manipulation.

Wholesome cultural and educational activities were developed. Manifestations of reactionary and depraved culture were condemned and forbidden. The system of general education, higher and secondary vocational education was initially transformed and reorganized.

All strata of the people were growing more and more attached to national independence, unification and had a better understanding of socialism; they were more conscious of their role as masters of the

country in socialist revolution and socialist construction.

Together with the completion of the tasks of the national people's democratic revolution (to build people's power, repress counter-revolutionaries and agents of imperialism; wipe out the vestiges of feudal land tenure etc.) socialist transformation and initial socialist construction were stepped up. Although the reactionaries at home and abroad frantically sabotaged the revolution, order and security was maintained, the situation in the South was stable and developed along the revolutionary path.

In July 1976, the Political Bureau of the Party Central Committee passed a resolution on the immediate tasks in the South. The resolution made a deep and all-round analysis of *transformation and building in the South* with a view to making both zones advance towards socialism, particularly as regards the economy.

The Political Bureau laid stress on the requirement of *consolidating the revolutionary power* at all levels and set concrete orientation for *economic rehabilitation and development*. It underlined the requirement of *holding firmly to proletarian dictatorship and relying on the strength of the labouring people as collective masters* to strictly implement the line and concrete policies *aimed at eliminating the compradore bourgeoisie and the vestiges of feudal landlordism* in 1976, on the basis of developing State economic forces rapidly, vigorously and steadily to carry out step by step *socialist transformation of private capitalist industry and trade*. The Political Bureau particularly pointed out the requirement of *stepping up the struggle* on the cultural and ideological front and put

forward the line of solving a number of urgent problems in *strengthening organization, improving style of work* and the relationship between levels and branches in the whole country with regard to the new situation.

The Political Bureau asserted the necessity of grasping and abiding by the orientation to closely combine transformation with construction as put forward in the resolution of the 24th plenum of the Party Central Committee.

In order to increase the entire Party's unity of mind as regards politics, ideology and fighting strength, readjust and strengthen the organization, improve the style of work in view of the new situation and the new task as set in the resolution of the Meeting of the Political Bureau, a political drive was organized in the entire Party, both in the South and in the North thanks to which cadres and Party members raised their knowledge and sense of responsibility as well as their determination to fulfil their tasks as communists in the state of socialist revolution and construction in the whole country.

THE FOURTH PARTY NATIONAL CONGRESS AND INITIAL EFFORTS IN NATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION

The Fourth National Congress of the Party met from 14 to 20 December 1976 in Hanoi while our entire people were enthusiastically working, healing the wounds of war and making revolutionary changes in all fields of social life.

Over 1,000 delegates representing more than 1.5 million Party members in the whole country attended the Congress. At the Congress were presented the Political Report, the report on the orientation, tasks and main targets of the Second Five-Year State Plan (1976-1980), and the Report by the Party Central Committee reviewing Party building and amending the Party Constitution.

The Congress decided to rename the Vietnam Workers' Party *the Communist Party of Vietnam*.

The Congress reviewed the abundant experiences of the patriotic war of resistance against US aggression.

The resolution of the Congress pointed out three main characteristics of the Vietnamese revolution in the new stage:

First, our country was in the process of advancing from a society with a predominantly small production economy straight to socialism, bypassing the stage of capitalist development.

Second, our peaceful, independent and reunified Homeland advanced towards socialism with many great advantages but also with many difficulties owing to war aftermaths and the vestiges of neo-colonialism.

Third, the socialist revolution in our country unfolded in a favourable international context, but the struggle "which will win" between revolution and reaction in the world was still hard and fierce.

The Congress put forth the general line for the socialist revolution in our country as follows:

To hold firmly to proletarian dictatorship, to promote the right to collective mastery of the working

people, carry out three revolutions simultaneously: the revolution in relations of production, the scientific and technological revolution and the ideological and cultural revolution, of which the scientific and technological revolution is the kingpin; step up socialist industrialization, which is the central task of the period of transition to socialism; establish the system of socialist collective mastery, and large-scale socialist production, develop new culture and mould the new socialist people, abolish the regime of exploitation of man by man, do away with poverty and backwardness; unceasingly uphold vigilance, constantly consolidate national defence, maintain political security and social order, successfully build the Vietnamese homeland into a peaceful, independent, unified and socialist country; actively contribute to the struggle of people in the world for peace, national independence and socialism." (1)

The line for building the socialist economy in our country is as follows:

"To step up socialist industrialization, build the material and technical basis of socialism, and take the economy of our country from small-scale production to large-scale socialist production. To give priority to the national development of heavy industry on the basis of developing agriculture and light industry, build industry and agriculture in the whole country into an industrial-agricultural economic structure; build the central economy while developing regional economies, combine the central economy

1. Communist Party of Vietnam: *Resolution of the Fourth Party National Congress*, Su That Publishing House; Hanoi 1977, p. 29.

with regional economies into a unified national economic structure, combine the building of productive forces with the setting up and perfection of new relations of production; combine the economy with national defence, strengthen the relations of cooperation and mutual assistance with the fraternal socialist countries on the basis of socialist internationalism, at the same time develop our economic relations with other countries on the basis of firmly maintaining our independence, sovereignty and mutual benefit; turn Vietnam into a socialist country with modern industry and agriculture, advanced culture and science, firm national defence and a civilized and happy life." (1)

The Congress made a deep analysis of the system of socialist collective mastery in our country.

The contents of socialist collective mastery covers many fields: political, economic, cultural and social; mastery of society, mastery of nature and mastery of oneself mastery over the whole country, in each locality and each base; it is the organic combination of collective mastery with the genuine freedom of each individual. This is genuine mastery, in its fullest sense.

Socialist collective mastery finds its concentrated expression in the collective mastery of the working people (of which the worker-peasant alliance is the core) chiefly through the socialist state under the leadership of the vanguard Party of the working class.

The economic basis of the system of socialist collective mastery is large-scale socialist production.

1. *of. cit.*, p.30

Together with the establishment of the system of socialist collective mastery and large-scale socialist production, it is necessary to develop new culture and mould the new, socialist man.

To defend the socialist revolution, the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Homeland, it is necessary to actively build a firm all people national defence. As our economy still has lots of difficulties, the Party advocates that our armed forces actively build the economy while standing ready to defend the Homeland.

Applying the Party's general line and the economic line to the concrete situation, the Congress set the orientation, tasks and main targets of the 1976 - 80 five-year plan aimed at two basic objectives, namely initially to build the material and technical basis of socialism and the new economic structure in the whole country (the main part of which being the industrial - agricultural structure), and to improve a step further the working people's material and cultural living conditions.

The resolution of the Congress pointed out the orientation for the development of the various branches of the national economy, and of science and technique, the transformation of old relations of production, the consolidation and perfection of socialist relations of production.

The Congress also put forth a correct international task and foreign policy, imbued with the pure spirit of proletarian internationalism that President Ho Chi Minh taught our Party, people and army.

The Party advocated taking advantage of the favourable international conditions to heal the wounds of war, build the material and technical basis of socialism, consolidate national defence, and continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with the fraternal socialist countries and all other peoples in the struggle for peace, national independence, democracy and socialism. In view of the scheme of imperialism and international reaction undermining and separating the socialist countries, the international communist and worker's movement, our Party deemed that the strengthening of unity in the socialist system and in the international communist and worker's movement on the basis of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism was a problem of utmost importance. In this monolithic unity our Party strove to preserve and develop the special relationship between the Vietnamese people with the fraternal Lao and Kampuchean peoples.

To ensure the fulfilment of all the Party's revolutionary tasks, the Congress worked out a line for Party building to heighten the Party's leading capacity and fighting strength in the new stage.

The resolution of the Congress clearly laid down that Party building had to follow these guiding principles.

The Party must be solidly built in all three aspects: political, ideological and organizational. The building of the Party in the ideological and organizational fields must be closely coordinated with and prompted by the political line and tasks, and at the same time must ensure the correct

formulation, full grasp and strict implementation of the political line and tasks.

The Party must be built through the revolutionary mass movement. The masses must be organized to participate in the building of the Party, to contribute to the supervision of Party activities, of the work and quality of Party cadres and members.

Party building must be closely linked to strengthening the organization, heightening the managerial ability of the State, building and consolidating mass organizations.

The raising of the standards of cadres and Party members must be coordinated with that of Party cells and primary organizations, and with the strengthening of the leading body of each level and each branch.

When expanding the Party's ranks, importance must be attached to quality instead of going after quantity, development must go along with consolidation. On the one hand, outstanding and qualified people must be admitted, and on the other, degenerate and corrupt elements must be expelled from the Party. We must guard against the infiltration of opportunist elements, spies and reactionaries into the Party.

The Congress passed the (amended) Constitution of the Party, elected a new Central Committee with 101 full members and 32 alternate ones.

The new Political Bureau includes 14 full members and 3 alternate ones. Comrade Le Duan was elected Secretary General of the Party Central Committee.

The Fourth Party Congress had a very great historic significance.

This was the Congress of total victory of our national liberation struggle. The Congress summed up the whole national people's democratic revolution in Vietnam and drew up lessons with a rich and deep content, which would guide our Party's activities in the new stage of the revolution.

This was the Congress of reunification of our country, after 30 years of heroic resistance against its partition by French old colonialism and US neo-colonialism. The Congress marked a new development of the Vietnamese revolution, an important land-mark in the historical evolution of the Vietnamese nation.

This was the Congress taking the whole country to socialism. The Congress marked the great march of our entire people into a new historic stage. It asserted the path of development of reunified Vietnam, and decided in an independent way the line, orientation, the task of socialist revolution and building in the whole country.

The Congress had also a very important significance in strengthening Party organization. Selected, trained, fostered and appointed following the political line of the Congress, the Party's hierarchy and ranks would apply their qualifications and oneness of mind to fulfilling the revolutionary tasks in the new stage.

The great victory of the Congress caused great envy and fear among the imperialist circles headed by US imperialism and Chinese big-nation expansionism and great-power hegemonism. The plan set by the Congress for the building of an independent, unified and socialist Vietnam with great economic

and national defence potentialities, and a civilized and happy life, was an obstacle to their dark schemes in this region of the world.

The resolution of the Congress would guide all Vietnamese to bring into full play their intelligence and ability to build an independent, reunified and socialist Vietnam.

The brilliant victory of the Fourth Party National Congress inspired our entire Party and people in their new fight "to rebuild our country and make it even more prosperous and beautiful", as President Ho Chi Minh had wished.

The building of the Homeland in the new stage began with the implementation of the Second Five-Year Plan (1976-1980).

The foremost task of this plan was to concentrate on developing agriculture all-sidedly, vigorously and steadily while boosting forestry, fishery and consumer goods industry. Then there was the task of building and developing heavy industry, developing communications and transport, pushing ahead basic construction; gearing circulation, finance and banking to the requirements of transformation, building and development of socialist economy; expanding economic relations with foreign countries, intensifying scientific research, promoting the key role of the scientific and technological revolution; building, consolidating and perfecting the socialist relations of production, building socialist culture, impelling the ideological and cultural revolution, and further improving the people's living standards.

With regard to the measures to carry out the plan first of all there was the need to reorganize social

production, redistribute the productive forces in the whole country; at the same time to better managerial methods and strengthen the efficiency of the State apparatus.

To implement the Second Five-Year Plan, the Party Central Committee convened the Second Plenum (July 1977) and the Third Plenum (December 1977). The Second Plenum advocated *mastering the forces of the whole country to fulfil the task of developing agriculture*.

The Plenum pointed out that it was necessary in the years ahead to develop agriculture, forestry and fishery to the utmost: solve the problem of food and foodstuffs, create favourable material conditions to build the material and technical basis of socialism while further improving the people's material and cultural life.

The Plenum asserted that uniform socialist relations of production should be established throughout the country. Together with consolidating and vigorously developing State farms in both zones, it was necessary to consolidate agricultural cooperatives in the North and carry out socialist transformation of agriculture in the South.

The Third Plenum of the Party Central Committee reviewed the economic situation in 1976-77 and set the urgent economic task of the 1978 State plan. It assessed that the economic situation had a turn for the better, new active elements and new possibilities to overcome the difficulties and give great impetus to production. It advocated all-out efforts to do away with the stagnation in production and economic management over the past years and to bring about an economic boost to fulfil the Second Five-Year Plan.

Our people embarked into the Second Five-Year Plan with most favourable conditions; an abundant manpower, the great economic potential of a reunified country; the economic and technical assistance and cooperation of the fraternal socialist countries and other countries; the political and moral unity and the enthusiasm of the entire people after the victory over the US imperialist aggressors. Besides these favourable conditions, our people still had a lot of difficulties. The heavy aftermath of over 30 years of atrocious war and of old and new colonialist regimes required a long time to be overcome. Meanwhile, the urgent needs of the people's livelihood after the war had to be met rapidly. We had to reorganize a poor and backward economy based mainly on small production, and proceed to build a large-scale socialist production throughout the country. We had both to unceasingly improve the people's livelihood and to make accumulation to build the material and technical basis of socialism, and at the same time ensure the consolidation of national defence. While the aftermath of war and the backwardness of the economy still lingered, new difficulties cropped up. The hostile acts of Chinese great-nation expansionism and hegemonism and of the Pol Pot - Ieng Sary reactionary puppet clique against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam caused many new difficulties to our people, and at the same time set to our country new and great requirements in national defence. Heavy natural calamities for years on end played havoc upon our agriculture. In particular, the repeated storms and floods in both North and South in 1978 took a toll of three million tonnes of food while destroying and seriously damaging production means.

"Sharing food and clothes", our people helped one another overcome difficulties and trials. Many new and active elements appeared in production, building and fighting. In calamity-stricken areas, cadres and armymen joined forces with the people to overcome the disasters, stabilize the livelihood, rehabilitate and develop production. In 1976-78, nearly one million hectares were reclaimed or brought back to cultivation. Electricity output was up by 88,000 kw, coal by 1.9 million tonnes, cement by 220,000 tonnes. Railways and roads were restored and consolidated. After lying abandoned over 30 years, the railway linking Hanoi to Ho Chi Minh City were back in operation.

In the South, great successes were recorded in the socialist transformation of economic components. Private capitalist enterprises were turned into socialist ones under various forms. Over one half of the workers engaged in small industry and handicrafts joined collective organizations. Small traders also joined new organizations. The socialist economic system absolutely prevailed in industry and trade, and became the core leading the economy in the South. This success created conditions to boost the transformation and development of agriculture. The peasants joined work-exchange teams, solidarity-in-production teams and production unions. These co-operation-in-production organizations impelled the movement for irrigation, intensive farming, putting back land under cultivation, mobilizing the peasants' contribution to the State, while acquainting them with collective labour. The forms and steps to be taken in gradually bringing the peasants to collective production, based on the peasants' willingness,

ensured economic efficiency, closely combined transformation with building, taking into account both the law of cooperativization and the specific conditions of the South. At the time of the winter 1978 - spring 1979 crop, the central coastal provinces and the Western Highlands achieved in the main cooperativization. The process of cooperativization was closely combined with that of technical improvement and production development. Production markedly increased in many cooperatives. The income of many co-op members was better than under individual enterprise.

The unification of the currencies of the two zones created favourable conditions for that of economic and financial policies and managerial regimes, and expanded economic intercourse in the whole country.

Emulation movements for production and thrift were developed. Also were the movements for water conservancy, land reclamation, cultivating subsidiary crops, developing winter crop, cooperativization and re-organization of production in agriculture, the movements for improving technique, saving materials, seeking raw and substitute materials in many industrial enterprises, and particularly the movement for boosting the production of food.

Party building was pushed ahead in the spirit of the Resolution of the Fourth Party Congress. The apparatus at all levels was strengthened. Party committee members with higher and secondary education level were up from 1% to 5%, to 11.8% at provincial level. Theoretical education for cadres and Party members was stepped up by long-term training and

fostering in accordance with basic curricula on short-term fostering on line and policies. The dismissal of unqualified Party members was done as a matter of routine along with the raising of Party members' qualifications and the strengthening of Party cells. The admission of outstanding elements in the labouring masses and people's army into the Party increased the quality of Party members and the fighting strength of the Party.

However, these efforts were insufficient to make our people rapidly overcome the difficulties caused by natural calamities and enemy's destruction. This was partly one of our shortcomings in the guidance of implementation and organization of management. Our line and orientation of economic development were correct but they were not fully grasped in policies, organization of management and of implementation; we did not pay due attention to building an independent and sovereign economy, and therefore did not actively strive to solve the urgent economic problems we were able to deal with. Our policy and system of economic management did not show a correct and creative application of the economic laws of socialism to the characteristics of our country, and did not really encourage production. Little progress was made in amending our regime of administrative management which belittled economic efficiency. Our managerial apparatus and guidance of implementation failed to ensure strict observance of the Party's line and policies, and to firmly grasp the foremost task of vigorously developing agricultural production and taking agriculture to large-scale socialist production. The system of production organization still needed revamping. The work of

organization and cadre work has not yet ensured the fulfilment of our task in the new stage. Along with our economic achievements in both zones of our country, our diplomatic activities were vigorously stepped up. The admission of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam into the United Nations Organization was a great victory.

The visit to the People's Democratic Republic of Laos of our Party and Government delegation led by Comrade Le Duan and Comrade Pham Van Dong was a brilliant success on 18 July 1977, the Treaty of Friendship and cooperation between Vietnam and Laos, the Treaty on border demarcation between the two countries, and the Agreement between Vietnam and Laos on aid and loan for 1978-80 were signed in Vientiane. This important historic event marked a new major development in the militant solidarity and all-round cooperation between the peoples of the two countries.

The Treaty delineates the national frontiers between Vietnam and Laos, and is a fine manifestation of the good combination between genuine patriotism and pure proletarian internationalism, a model of the friendship and good neighbourhood policy of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the People's Democratic Republic of Laos. Under the Treaty, the two countries' peoples are determined to build the Vietnam-Lao frontier into a frontier of lasting and durable friendship.

In December 1978, the Fifth Plenum of the Party Central Committee unanimously assessed the progress made in the first three years of implementation of the Resolution of the Fourth Party Congress

and pointed out the new difficulties caused by the Chinese reactionaries schemes and acts and natural calamities, as well as the shortcomings in economic management. The Plenum asserted our people's three great tasks in the new conjuncture:

1. To stabilize the people's livelihood;
2. To strengthen national defence and security;
3. To continue building the material and technical basis of socialism.

DEFEATING TWO WARS OF AGGRESSION BY CHINESE BIG-NATION EXPANSIONISM AND GREAT-POWER HEGEMONISM ON THE SOUTHWESTERN BORDER AND NORTHERN BORDER OF OUR COUNTRY

After decades of destructive imperialist war of aggression our people need peace to rebuild their country when the patriotic war of resistance against US aggression achieved complete victory.

But the international imperialist and reactionary clique do not want to see an independent, unified, strong and prosperous socialist Vietnam. Over the last 30 years the reactionary elements in the Beijing ruling circles have always stood for maintaining Vietnam in the state of being isolated and weak and therefore forcing it to depend on China. If conditions allowed they would swallow up our country. They went out of their way to deploy their extremely reactionary global strategy following the "three

worlds" theory (1). The aim of that strategy is to eliminate Marxism-Leninism, eliminate socialism, divide and sabotage the socialist countries, and carry out China's big-nation expansionism and great-power hegemonism in the world, first of all in Southeast Asia.

They entreat aid from the imperialists, mainly US imperialism and other international reactionary forces, and volunteer to act as a counter-revolutionary shock force against the Soviet Union, Vietnam, other socialist countries and against the three revolutionary torrents in the world.

During the Vietnamese people's anti-US struggle for national salvation they made use of the assistance given to our people to disrupt US encirclement of China, and pressurize us into renouncing the policy of national independence and sovereignty; they took advantage of our people's fight to make a bargain with the US; while helping us they tried to check our advance, out of fear of the rapid growth of our revolution. While helping us they made preparations for their expansion to Indochina and Southeast Asia. In close collusion with the US imperialists, they attempted to maintain in power the Saigon puppets and perpetuate the division of our country. However, under the judicious leadership of our Party which was pursuing an independent and sovereign policy,

1. According to the "three worlds" theory, the "first world" comprises the Soviet Union and the US as two "super-powers", with the Soviet Union as "the most dangerous Number-one enemy"; the "second world" consists of developed capitalist countries in Europe and socialist countries in Europe except the Soviet Union; the "third world" is composed of developing countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America; and China belongs to this world.

the anti-US war for national salvation won complete victory, our Homeland was reunified, and the whole country is now advancing towards socialism. The US imperialists' and Chinese reactionaries' scheme to divide our country has gone bankrupt. However, the victory of the Vietnamese revolution had upset the counter-revolutionary global strategy not only of the imperialists but also of the Beijing reactionaries. It was a painful defeat of the US imperialists and at the same time a setback of the Chinese expansionists. The birth of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam was the biggest obstacle to the realization of their strategic objective. Therefore, the Beijing reactionary clique did their utmost to collude with the imperialists, undermine our people's socialist construction, weaken our country, prepare for the conquest of Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea, subjugate the three peoples, then annex the other countries of Southeast Asia and achieve their greater expansionist scheme.

Failing in their designs and manoeuvres to force us to follow their reactionary line, the Chinese reactionaries openly carried out a systematically hostile policy against our country.

Capitalizing on the Kampuchean people's victorious war of resistance against US aggression, the Beijing reactionary ruling clique made use of the despotic and bellicose Kampuchean traitors Pol Pot-Ieng Sary as a shock force to test China's great-nation expansionist and hegemonist strategy in order to turn Kampuchea into a military base, a neo-colony and a springboard from which to attack Indochinese and Southeast Asian countries. They

poured into Kampuchea hundreds of thousands of tonnes of weapons and war means, including hundreds of tanks, hundreds of long-range guns, scores of jet planes, together with 20,000 military advisers and billions of dollars. They hastily beefed up the Kampuchean reactionaries' army from seven divisions by mid-1975 to 23 divisions by late 1978 so as to turn them rapidly into an efficient mercenary army. Relying on counter revolutionary violence and enjoying the guidance and all-round support of the Beijing bosses, the Pol Pot-Ieng Sary henchmen strove to implement a most reactionary policy at home and abroad.

Inside the country, they carried out an utterly inhuman policy of genocide. Aping Chinese "cultural revolution", they frenziedly started a purge of genuine revolutionary forces in Kampuchea and made use of unprecedentedly horrible means to massacre the Kampuchean people. Imitating the Chinese communes, they herded the population into concentration camps, forcing them to do hard labour and caused them to die a slow death out of pains, illness and hunger. They banned all social activities, abolished all family and village life and deprived the people of all democratic freedoms and all normal means of living. They declared money null and void, banned all market places, closed all schools and massacred intellectuals. They styled themselves "thoroughgoing revolutionaries".

The Pol Pot-Ieng Sary clique's utterly reactionary policy brought a great disaster to the Kampuchean people. Three million Kampucheans were killed. The remaining four million had to endure untold

sufferings. The Kampuchean land was destroyed. Therefore the outbreak of the Kampuchean people's struggle to save their homeland and their families was a necessity.

Abroad, under the orders of Beijing, the Pol Pot-Ieng Sary gang launched a war of destruction against Vietnam's Southwestern borders. Immediately after the South of our country was completely liberated, the Kampuchean reactionaries staged operation after operation of encroachment and provocation against our country. On 3 May 1975, the Pol Pot-Ieng Sary clique sprang an attack against Phu Quoc island. On 8 May 1975, they violated our territory in many places from Ha Tien to Tay Ninh and on 10 May 1975 they assaulted The Chu island. Late in 1975 and early in 1976, they repeatedly violated our borders in a systematic way and on an ever larger scale. In April 1977, the Pol Pot-Ieng Sary gang launched many divisions time and again upon Vietnam's territory, killing our fellow-countrymen most savagely. They expanded the border conflicts into a war of aggression against our country. Moreover, the Kampuchean reactionaries attempted to collude with the reactionary forces in our country in the hope of coordinating assaults from without with riots from within. Our people consistently showed our goodwill to settle the border issue through peaceful negotiations. However, the Kampuchean reactionaries regarded it as a mark of weakness. They adamantly rejected our Government's

fair and reasonable propositions (1) and went on with their aggressive acts.

Confronted with these utmost barbarous crimes, the Kampuchean people were compelled to rise up, and our fellow-countrymen to fight in defence of their sovereignty, territory and lives. Therefore, our people's war to defend their homeland was harmoniously coordinated with the Kampuchean people's uprising and national liberation war.

The Chinese reactionaries on the one hand wirepulled the Pol Pot — Ieng Sary clique to attack our country in the southwest, and on the other posed a military threat to the northern border. They also plotted riots and subversion in the People's Democratic Republic of Laos to bring pressure to bear upon us from the west. In May 1978, the Beijing reactionary rulers impudently staged a "victimized oversea Chinese"

1. On 5 February 1978, our Government put forth a three point proposal:

1. To put an immediate end to all hostile military activities in the border region; to withdraw the armed forces of each side five kilometres from the border.

2. To hold an immediate meeting in Hanoi, Phnom Penh or in a place on the border to discuss and sign an agreement between the two sides undertaking to respect each other's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-aggression, not to use force or threat of force in their relations, not to interfere in each other's internal affairs, not to carry out subversion against each other, to treat each other as equals, to live in peace and friendship as good neighbours.

To sign an agreement on the border between the two countries on the basis of respect for each other's territorial sovereignty in their existing borders.

3. To agree on an adequate form of international guarantee and supervision.

farce, coaxing and forcing the Hoa in our country to leave for China then accusing us of "ostracizing" them. In June 1978, they closed down our three general-consulates in China. On 3 July 1978, the Chinese government unilaterally decided to cut all economic and technical aid to Vietnam, then withdraw Chinese engineers and technicians from Vietnam. Day after day, they carried out propaganda against Vietnam, created national enmity, sowed division between Vietnamese, Hoa and Khmers undermined the friendship between the Vietnamese and Kampuchean peoples.

Their acts showed to the world people that they sided with the exploiting classes against the working class and the labouring people, with imperialism against the revolution and the entire progressive mankind.

In this conjuncture, there took shape in the world two opponent forces: on the one hand, the revolutionary and progressive forces in the three revolutionary torrents of our time; and on the other, the imperialist and reactionary forces opposed to socialism, national independence, democracy and peace, with the United States as the imperialists' ringleader and the Beijing reactionary ruling clique as the biggest international reactionary force allied to the United States.

In Southeast Asia, there emerged a main contradiction between national independence and socialism on the one hand, and Chinese great-nation expansionism and hegemonism as well as imperialist forces contending for power and influence in this area. The Beijing reactionary ruling clique plays the role

of the biggest counter-revolutionary shock force, directly opposed to the three revolutionary torrents in Southeast Asia.

In face of the Chinese reactionaries' dark scheme and hostile and provocative acts, our Party exposed the new arch-enemy of our people, then set the task of rapidly increasing our economic and defence potential and making all-round preparations to defeat the Chinese aggressors. The Party pointed out that to frustrate all schemes and acts of great-nation expansionism against Vietnam was the historic mission of our entire people to defend national independence, advance rapidly, vigorously and firmly to socialism, to contribute to the defence and strengthening of socialism in the world and in China, to preserve the purity of Marxism - Leninism.

To meet the requirements of the new situation and tasks, the Party Central Committee issued a resolution on strengthening the organization and improving the style of work. The resolution pointed out: in view of the new conjuncture, to fulfil the historic mission toward the nation and the world people, it was necessary to strengthen the organization, improve the regime of work, so as to raise labour productivity, ensure the quality of products, and increase economic efficiency; to bring about a *radical change* in building the organization, renovating the guidance, resolutely doing away with the methods and style of work unfit in the new stage of the revolution; to readily adapt to all circumstances and ensure both requirements of building, and of fighting and standing ready to fight.

Our people were at one with the Party Central Committee's views on the nature and acts of the Chinese great-nation expansionism and hegemonism on the two strategic tasks in the new stage - stepping up socialist construction while defending the Homeland, fighting and standing ready to fight.

The resolution of the Party was rapidly translated into acts by the entire people in all fields - economic, national defence, diplomatic, ideological and organizational.

This oneness of mind of the entire Party and people brought about a great strength in every aspect: the movement for production in agriculture was boosted; new progress in industry was recorded; the tasks of fighting, supporting the fighting and ensuring political security were satisfactorily carried out. Our people had to spare an important part of manpower, material means and cadres for strengthening national defence and consolidating border areas. Tens of thousands of cadres were assigned to the consolidation of grassroots bases, districts and provinces in this region. Hundreds of thousands of labourers were brought there. Military commands were reinforced.

The movement for production, standing ready to fight and fighting gained momentum when the Chinese great-nation expansionists and hegemonists' sabotage and provocative acts became blatant and their design of aggression transparent.

Ever since the expansionists and hegemonists threatened to make war against our country, the socialist countries and many others in the world, the entire progressive mankind raised their voices to

sympathize with, support and assist our people's just cause, and condemned the Beijing reactionary ruling clique's schemes and acts.

The fraternal socialist countries devotedly helped our people build a socialist economy, while contributing to increasing the strength of the socialist system. In June 1978, the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance unanimously admitted the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. Our participation showed that the fraternal friendship and solidarity between the socialist countries was increasingly consolidated and developed in every aspect. On 3 November 1978, a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation between the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was signed. Besides important clauses about the development of political, economic, scientific and technical relations between the two countries, the Treaty stipulated that the two sides would consult each other on all important international issues involving the interests of the two countries. In case one of the parties became the object of attacks or of threats of attack, the two sides would immediately begin mutual consultations for the purpose of removing, that threat and taking appropriate effective measures to ensure the peace and security of their countries.

The Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation between Vietnam and the Soviet Union marked a new development in the relations between the two Parties and the two countries. With the broadening of cooperation with the Soviet Union as well as with other fraternal socialist countries, our people got added strength in building socialism and defending their Homeland

contributing to the stabilization of the situation in Southeast Asia and the world.

While our army and people in the southwest of our country separately smashed the land-grabbing operations of the Pol Pot—Ieng Sary clique, the Kampuchean people also repeatedly rose up to overthrow the reactionary Pol Pot—Ieng Sary administration and seize power in many localities. The liberated areas were expanded. On 2 December 1978, the Congress of delegates of Kampuchean revolutionary forces and people's strata established the National United Front for the Salvation of Kampuchea and made public a revolutionary programme uniting the entire people to overthrow the Pol Pot—Ieng Sary reactionary clique, and build a peaceful, independent, democratic, neutral, non-aligned Kampuchea advancing to socialism.

Under the leadership of the Front, the people's uprisings rapidly developed into a broad revolutionary armed struggle.

Late in 1978, the Chinese reactionary ruling clique ordered the Pol Pot—Ieng Sary gang to launch a big offensive against our country's border. On 23 December 1978, they mastered plenty of crack divisions against Ben Soi in Tay Ninh province so as to occupy Tay Ninh town and open the way to other military adventures.

To maintain our territorial sovereignty and protect our people's lives and properties, our army and people promptly fought back. In a short time, we smashed the big offensive of the Pol Pot—Ieng Sary aggressors, wiped them out of our land and restored peace on the southwestern border of our Homeland.

Availing themselves of this extremely favourable strategic opportunity the Kampuchean revolutionary armed forces and people launched a general offensive and uprising. On 7 January 1978, Phnom Penh was liberated. The People's Republic of Kampuchea came into being. The Revolutionary People's Council of Kampuchea was founded with Comrade Heng Samrin as President.

This great victory saved the Kampuchean people from the peril of genocide caused by Chinese great-nation expansionism and hegemonism. Heroic Kampuchea was reborn and entered a new era: the era of independence, freedom, advancing towards socialism.

This great victory was the common victory of the Vietnamese, Lao and Kampuchean peoples. The heroic struggle of the three fraternal nations on the Indochinese peninsula entered a new stage, the stage of close solidarity in their advance to socialism. The Chinese expansionists strove to separate the three peoples of Indochina with a view to annexing and subjugating them easily. However, the Kampuchean people's victory frustrated this design and welded the peoples of Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea into an unprecedentedly firm bloc of close solidarity.

Chinese great-nation expansionism and hegemonism used subservient Kampuchean reactionaries to destroy the Vietnamese revolution. They launched a continual war to disturb the political security in South Vietnam, weaken our forces and make us follow their reactionary line. But this perfidious design was foiled by our south western fellow-countrymen's

heroic fight in self-defence and the Kampuchean people's resounding exploit.

The great victory of the peoples of Kampuchea and Vietnam extinguished a most dangerous hotbed of war in the southwest of our country, crushed an important strategic base, smashed a warlike shock army carefully groomed by Beijing. This victory constituted an important contribution to the consolidation of peace in Southeast Asia and the world.

On 16 February 1979, at the invitation of the Revolutionary People's Council of Kampuchea, a Vietnamese Government delegation led by Prime Minister Pham Van Dong paid a friendship visit to the People's Republic of Kampuchea. On 18 February 1979, a Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation between Vietnam and Kampuchea and other important agreements were signed in Phnom Penh. The Treaty stipulated that the two sides undertook to devotedly support and help each other in all fields and in every necessary form, to increase their capacities for defending their people's independence, sovereignty, unity, territorial integrity and peaceful labour against all schemes and acts of destruction by imperialism and international reaction. The two sides would take efficient measures to fulfil this pledge when one of the two sides required.

Having suffered repeated and heavy defeats in their many schemes to annex and subjugate Vietnam, and being wiped off Kampuchea, the Beijing reactionary rulers brazenly launched a large-scale war of aggression against our country. On 17 February 1979, they mustered 600,000 troops comprising 30 divisions from 9 army corps of regulars together

with thousands of tanks, armoured cars and guns and staged a massive attack along a 1,400 km—border from Phong Tho (Lai Chau province) to Mong Cai town (Quang Ninh province). The Chinese aggressors burnt houses, plundered properties, massacred people and committed most savage crimes against our fellow countrymen on the border. Taking advantage of their numbers, the Chinese commanders madly sacrificed their men to penetrate deep into our territory 50 km at certain places, occupying and razing four towns—Lao Cai, Cam Duong, Cao Bang and Lang Son,—as well as many areas in six border provinces.

Trampling underfoot our border areas for over a month, the Chinese aggressors committed extremely savage crimes. They killed in cold blood crowds of civilians, women and children, like in the executions ordered by medieval despots, blood thirsty Hitlerite fascists or Pol Pot—Ieng Sary butchers. All the four towns they set foot on were razed, all the 320 villages devastated, 691 crèches, 428 medical establishments, 735 schools destroyed. Irrigation works, important factories, mines, 41 State-farms and 38 logging yards were destroyed. Their perfidious aim was to eliminate our people's living conditions and weaken us economically.

Right on 17 February 1979, our government issued a statement on the Chinese reactionaries' war of aggression against Vietnam. The statement pointed out: "The Vietnamese people are a staunch, heroic and indomitable people who have defeated all their aggressors. Firmly confident that under the correct leadership of the Communist Party of Vietnam and

the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, and enjoying strong sympathy and support from friends the world over, the Vietnamese people will certainly worst the aggressive war of the Chinese rulers, safeguard their independence and sovereignty, and make a worthy contribution to the defence of peace and stability in Southeast Asia and the world."

No sooner had the Chinese aggressors set foot on our territory than they were grimly fought back by our people. Relying on prepared positions, our army and people in the six northern border provinces enhanced their determination that "nothing is more valuable than independence and freedom" and dealt the Chinese aggressors well-deserved blows, defending every inch of their Homeland. The armed forces comprising three kinds of troops, the armed people's security forces and people of all nationalities merged into a bloc resolutely and courageously checked the enemy's advance, inflicting upon him heavy losses and foiling their strategic aim of rapid victory to capture Cao Bang, Lang Son and Lao Cai towns within 48 hours. Examples of valiant and resourceful fighting of collectives and individuals appeared on all fronts, among all age-groups and from all nationalities.

Local people's war in the war to defend the Homeland was developed to a higher level.

In unison with the front, our fellow-countrymen and fighters throughout Vietnam rose up like one man to resolutely defeat the Chinese aggressors and did their best to support the front. Millions of

them volunteered to join the armed forces or build fortifications.

On 4 March 1979, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam issued an appeal to our fellow-countrymen and fighters throughout Vietnam, pointing out: "At present, the Beijing reactionary rulers are the immediate and dangerous enemies of our people. They have become the dangerous enemies of the whole socialist system, the movement for national independence, democracy and peace in Asia and in the world. To defeat the reactionary Chinese aggressors this time is a glorious national duty as well as a lofty international duty of the Vietnamese people."

On 5 March 1979, the President of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam issued the Order of General Mobilization throughout the country to defend the socialist Homeland and completely frustrate the Chinese expansionists and hegemonists' war of aggression; then the Government Council put forth a decree on putting the entire people on a military footing and arming them to defeat the reactionary Chinese aggressors and defend the Homeland.

Since the start and throughout our people's just fight against the Chinese expansionist aggressors, our people enjoyed a warm support and valuable help from the fraternal socialist countries and progressive mankind.

The Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the governments of the socialist countries, the communist parties and the governments of many countries in the world issued statements condemning the Beijing rulers' aggressive war, and

demanding that they put an immediate end to the war of aggression against Vietnam and withdraw their troops from this country. The government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics affirmed it would perform its duty as stipulated in the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. The organizations, parties and progressive personalities, the peace-and justice-loving people in the world were indignant at and vehemently protested against the Beijing reactionary ruling clique, and resolutely supported the Vietnamese people in defeating the Chinese aggressors.

Seeing through the Chinese reactionaries' mad design for war, the world people continued to condemn and check their new adventurist steps. From 6 to 8 March 1979, an emergency international conference in support of Vietnam was held in Helsinki at the initiative of World Peace Council and the Finland Peace Committee. It was attended by the delegates of over 100 countries and over 30 international organizations. The meeting condemned the Beijing reactionary rulers' aggressive acts and demanded that they immediately withdraw their troops from Vietnam, refrain from another aggression, and pay for all the damage they caused in this country.

Although subjected to new black-out and repression, the Chinese people came out in increasing numbers against the unjust war. Many posters and leaflets condemned the reactionary rulers. In Beijing there appeared such slogans as: "Oppose the Offensive against Vietnam", "Withdraw Immediately the Aggressors from Vietnam"... To cope with the

Chinese people's reaction, the Beijing reactionary rulers banned all demonstrations, gatherings and discussions about the aggressive war against Vietnam, regarding that as one of China's wartime emergency measures.

Faced with our army and people's powerful blows, with our entire people's position to fight and to foil the war of aggression in whatever circumstances, with the strong protest to the world people and the Chinese people, the aggressors were compelled to withdraw their troops. However, warlike and stubborn, they stated that they were "keeping their right to teach Vietnam another lesson." (1)

Throughout 30 days and nights of heavy fighting from 17 February to 18 March 1979, our army and people put out of action 62,500 Chinese aggressors and destroyed many war means. A heavy setback of the enemy was his failure to incite riots in our country. Our people's victory compelled the Chinese reactionaries to shamefully withdraw their troops and hold talks.

After this initial victory, our Party reminded our fellow-countrymen and fighters to be constantly

1. Before launching his troops against Vietnam, Deng Xiaoping stated in his talks with US President Carter that he "will teach Vietnam a lesson". On 1 May 1979, he again made the above-mentioned statement before Kurt Waldheim, UN Secretary General (AP, Beijing 1 May 1979). Early in July 1979, Vice Premier Li Xiannian said in an interview with *Newsweek* correspondent: "Vietnam has not yet learnt from our February counter-attack again: I do not want to rule out the possibility of another Chinese counter-attack in self-defence against Vietnam." (*Vietnam News Agency*, 13 July 1979)

vigilant against the Chinese reactionaries' aggressive design, actively fulfil their task of national defence, and stand ready to fight to defend the Fatherland.

On 19 March 1979, our Ministry of National Defence put forth a communiqué pointing out our army and people's great victories and warning the cruel and haughty Chinese reactionaries and all their bellicose accomplices to remember the lesson: *Anyone who aggresses Vietnam will lamentably fail.*

Our people's most glorious victory over the Chinese aggressors was an all-round victory both militarily and politically.

The Beijing reactionaries hoped that their numerous army would outdo our own and wear down part of our regular forces. But the bitter truth threw the enemy into despair. With only local armed forces and a people's war position at the front-line of the Homeland we dealt stunning blows at half a million aggressors. Our army and people acquired more fighting experiences in defending the Homeland. We knew how to promote our strength, using local forces to check the enemy at the front-line of the Homeland, and defeating him in a short time. We carried out the strategy of mastering the country and the battlefield to destroy the enemy and of destroying the enemy to master the country and the battlefield, promoting to the utmost the aggregate strength of people's war to defend the Homeland.

Our people frustrated the Chinese expansionists, war of aggression when our country had just emerged from 30 years of fierce war with countless difficulties in all respects, when the enemy spent decades to prepare the annexation of our country. This showed

our nation's strength to defend the country in the new era, its capacity to worst any aggressive war of any enemy, whatever his size, weapons and war means. The Chinese reactionaries brazenly aggressed our country and carried out the design of imperialism, US imperialism in the first place, in the hope of getting imperialists' technical aid to achieve their "four modernizations". However, the Chinese aggressors' lamentable defeat in Vietnam's border lowered imperialist confidence in the Beijing reactionary clique. This war of aggression increased China's difficulties in many aspects. The social situation became all the more unstable.

By inciting and commanding the Pol Pot - Ieng Sary clique to attack Vietnam in the southwest and directly aggressing Vietnam in the north, the Beijing reactionary rulers laid bare their strategic design to become the centre of the world and dominate the whole planet, first of all Southeast Asia. The war of aggression against Vietnam was only the first act of the process of materializing the scheme to annex Vietnam, Laos, Kampuchea and Southeast Asian countries. Today, more than ever, the Chinese reactionaries revealed themselves before the whole world not only as immediate and dangerous enemies of the Vietnamese, Lao and Kampuchean peoples, but also as dangerous enemies of the entire socialist system, of the entire movement for national independence, democracy, peace and progress of the world people, including the Chinese. Inciting their henchmen to attack Vietnam and invading it, the Chinese reactionaries exposed themselves as a reactionary, bellicose, cruel, wicked, stubborn and perfidious clique. While launching hundreds of thousands of aggressors against

our country they posed themselves as defenders of national independence, freedom and peace. They loudly condemned aggression, attacked imperialism, expansionism and hegemonism, supported the national liberation movement while themselves were most dangerous imperialist aggressors, great-nation expansionists and hegemonists, colluding with all forces of imperialism and international reactionaries against the movement for national liberation everywhere. The Chinese reactionaries were past masters in deceit, slander, distortion, about-face; they turned aggressors into aggressed, people and changed victims of expansionism into expansionists.

By waging two wars of aggression against Vietnam, the Chinese reactionaries revealed their true colours. The signboard of sham revolution and sham socialism they had used to deceive gullible people was torn down.

The greatest defeat of strategic significance of the Chinese reactionaries this time was to be unable to split and weaken the bloc of militant solidarity between the Vietnamese, Lao and Kampuchean peoples. This bloc was not only restored but also consolidated and reinforced like a big dike checking the spate of Chinese expansionism toward Southeast Asia. Not only did Chinese expansionism and hegemonism lose its foothold in Kampuchea, but it also failed in its scheme to incite riots and overthrow the People's Democratic Republic of Laos aimed at turning Laos into a second "Democratic Kampuchea" of the genocidal Pol Pot - Ieng Sary clique to oppose Vietnam. The victory of the three Indochinese peoples foiled an important part of the Chinese and imperialists' wicked scheme in Southeast Asia, rapidly and radically

changed the balance of forces between revolution and counter-revolution in this area.

On 22 March 1979, the Agreement on economic, cultural, educational and technical cooperation between the People's Republic of Kampuchea and the People's Democratic Republic of Laos signed in Phnom Penh asserted the militant solidarity and close friendship between the peoples of the two countries. This Agreement created a new strength, expressing their will to resolutely defend their national independence, freedom, advance to socialism, and their readiness to worst all schemes of sabotage and aggression against Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea.

The defeat of Chinese expansionism and hegemonism in Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea was also a defeat of imperialism, particularly US, and international reactionaries which attempted to make use of Chinese great-nation expansionism and hegemonism to weaken Vietnam and contain the revolutionary movement in Southeast Asia. The Chinese reactionaries attempt to make use of the weakness of imperialism after the Vietnam war to seek superpower status was also dealt a heavy blow.

The victory of our people and that of the Lao and Kampuchean peoples greatly contributed to strengthening the socialist system, the three revolutionary torrents in the world, the possibility to safeguard national independence, peace and stability in Indochina and Southeast Asia. This was a common victory of the peace- and justice-loving peoples in the whole world, of progressive mankind, including the Chinese revolutionary people and the genuine communists in China.

HELPING OUR COUNTRY WEATHER ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DIFFICULTIES

The 6th Plenum of the Party Central Committee (4th term) was held in September 1979.

The Plenum assessed that after the reunification of the country our people would devote themselves to the peaceful labour of national construction. However, they were still healing the wounds of war when they had to cope with two wars of aggression in the southwest and the north masterminded and launched by the Beijing rulers, and with great natural calamities in three consecutive years. In these extremely difficult circumstances, under the Party's leadership, our people staunchly fought and frustrated two wars of aggression launched by the Chinese reactionaries, thus safeguarding the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Homeland, performing its international duty to the fraternal peoples of Kampuchea and Laos, and checking Chinese expansionism and hegemonism. Our people recorded important achievements in healing the wounds of war, struggling against natural calamities, restoring production, ensuring the people's livelihood and continuing to build the material basis of socialism.

The Plenum set the urgent task of *'boosting production, stabilizing and ensuring the people's livelihood, strengthening national defence and security, standing ready to fight and defend the Homeland, overcoming the negative aspects in economic and social activities.* The Plenum decided important

orientation, tasks and measures to develop regional industry and consumer goods industry. Basing itself on the time for socialist revolution and that for economic development mapped out in the Fourth National Congress and basing itself on the laws of socialism and the practical experiences in the recent past, the Plenum decided to amend a number of policies and measures aimed at promoting the people's right to mastery, ensuring the common interest of the entire people, the collective and each producer, caring for the working people's material interests, bringing about a turn in production and livelihood, and advancing the revolution a step further.

In order to further boost the implementation of the urgent tasks laid down by the 6th Plenum of the Party Central Committee, in April 1980 the Political Bureau adopted a resolution on a number of policies and measures to push ahead production, procurement, distribution, consumption and management of food-grain

The Political Bureau decided that after discharging their obligation toward the State the peasants might use and sell their remaining food-grain; the speculators, hoarders, dealers, illegal transporters of food-grain and the thieves of State food-grain should be severely punished.

In June 1980 the Political Bureau issued a resolution on the renovation of distribution and circulation, including finance, money, prices, wages, trade and market management.

It pointed out that the objective of the renovation of distribution and circulation in the coming years

will be: to give a strong fillip to production, agricultural production in the first place, stimulate labour productivity and economic efficiency, set the workers and peasants' mind at ease and ready to produce more commodities for society, stabilize finance, monetary circulation and market, help the State control more goods, particularly such strategic commodities as food-grain, consolidate and develop the socialist economic sector, rationally distributed the social product and national income to the entire society, maintain and gradually improve the living standards of the toilers in the State and collective sectors, in the first place workers, cadres and people in the areas torn by war or hit by natural calamities.

In November 1980 the Political Bureau issued a resolution making a profound change in organization so as to strengthen leadership and management, particularly in the economy.

The resolution stressed: Organizational and personnel work should ensure a grasp of the economic line and implement the political tasks of the Party; ensure the building of an agro-industrial economic structure for the entire country, each branch of activity and each region, ensure economic management according to the socialist mode of enterprise; materialize the principle of leadership by the Party, mastery by the people, management by the State, and the principle of democratic centralism; ensure the full use of the work force and impel the distribution of social labour; ensure the good implementation of research work and application of scientific and technological progress to production; ensure the renova-

tion of distribution and circulation, serve well production and life; serve well the task of economic business with foreign countries as befits its strategic importance, promote the latent capacities of all branches regions and grassroots for export.

Organizational work had at the same time to ensure a good solution of urgent political tasks and to create conditions to anticipate the basic and long-term tasks of the third five-year plan and see beyond that for some matters.

To fulfil the concrete tasks of organizational work in the immediate, the Political Bureau stressed, *there must be a profound change of a revolutionary character in the viewpoint on building organization and renovating managerial work, an all-out endeavour to overcome the disparity* at present between the requirement of the political task and the organizational level, bring organizational work abreast of the political task, serve well the requirement of the political task.

The implementation of the Party's timely policies brought about some progress in production and made good some of the great deficiencies of 1979.

In 1980, despite natural calamities, grain output reached more than 14 million metric tons: the second time we got the highest yield since 1976. A number of industrial crops increased in both acreage and output. The test of product-based contract down to the labourer in agricultural co-operative opened favourable conditions to better exploit the potential in labour and land.

In industry, piece-work wages accounted for notable economic results. A number of enterprises raised both labour productivity, output and quality of the product.

In five years (1976-80) on the economic front our people did a good job: overcoming step by step the heavy sequels of the aggressive war caused by the US imperialists, the Chinese expansionists and their agents; restoring most of the industrial, agricultural and communication establishments in the North and rebuilding the rural areas in the South destroyed by the war; consolidating the State and collective sectors in the North, initially transforming and readjusting private industry and trade in the South, bringing a section of the peasants in Nam Bo and South Trung Bo on to the path of collectivization; initially redistributing social workforce; further strengthening the material-technical infrastructure of the national economy. Many achievements were scored on the front of culture, education, science, technique and health care.

Positive factors began to appear here and there. In these five years, however the result of production did not yet correspond to the workforce and capital invested; the great imbalances in the national economy remained grave; national income did not ensure social consumption; the market, prices, finance and money were unstable; the working people still met with many difficulties in their daily life.

In 1981, our entire people were determined to stabilize and develop our economy step by step. The 1981 State plan was implemented with a seething mettle in

production and enterprise owing to the fine results of the Party's resolutions, particularly the Resolution of the 6th Plenum of the Fourth Term of the Party Central Committee.

The new mettle soared when the Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam was promulgated, materializing our people's right to collective mastery. On 18 December 1980, the 7th session of the Fourth National Assembly unanimously passed our new Constitution, after consultations with our entire people. The new Constitution institutionalized the line of the Communist Party of Vietnam in the transitional period to socialism throughout the country; it affirmed that our entire people under the Party's leadership would successfully build a prosperous and strong socialist Vietnam.

In December 1980, the Party Central Committee held its 9th Plenum to decide on the orientation and socio-economic tasks for 1981.

The basic content of the 1981 plan was : to make the most of all existing real possibilities, particularly to fully use the most precious capital—work force, land and trades ; the primordial task was to push ahead agricultural production ; to pay utmost attention to expanding small industry, handicrafts and developing consumer goods industry in each district, province and city ; to broaden economic activities with foreign countries boost export-import trade ; to continue making a vigorous and all-round turn on the field of distribution and circulation ; to impel socialist transformation in the South and perfect the socialist relations of production in the North ; to give

affillip to the activities in culture, education, health care, physical education and sports ; work upon the invalids, social affairs, etc.

In implementation of the policy of "expanding and perfecting the product-based contract system in agriculture" adopted by the 9th Plenum, in January 1981 the Secretariat of the Party Central Committee issued a directive : to improve the contract system expand "the product-based contract system down to the work group and the individual" in agricultural co-operatives.

In January 1981, the Council of Ministers issued a decision on a number of policies and measures to continue promoting the State enterprises' right to production-enterprise on their own, and to financial autonomy ; it decided to expand contract-based wages, piece-work wages and various forms of bonuses in State's production-enterprise units. At the same time, to stimulate technical progress and develop production both in industry and agriculture, the Council of Ministers promulgated the Regulations on the initiatives to improve technique, rationalize production and inventions.

To further boost scientific and technological activities, timely meet and practically serve most effectively the requirements of the economic, cultural and social tasks while building an advanced science and technology in our country, in April 1981 the Political Bureau issued a resolution on the policy about science and technology of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

The resolution on the policy about science and technology is an important resolution of our Party

This is the first relatively comprehensive and systematic resolution the policy about science and technology, a concretization of the Party's general line for evolution in the field of science and technology, a component of our country's strategy of economic and social development.

After the extremely difficult years 1976-1980, in 1981, the first year of the third five-year plan period, our people recorded remarkable successes. The output of food-grain exceeded 15 million metric tons, a peak record. Industrial crops also developed. For the first time, our agriculture overfulfilled its plan both in output, yield and acreage. Maritime products progressed in both exploitation, procurement, culture and processing for export. Despite an acute shortage of energy and materials, industry managed to tide over difficulties and soar up, particularly regional industries and handicrafts which scored outstanding achievements. On the cultural and social front, there appeared many models in literature, art, health care, education, physical culture and sports... National defence and security were consolidated.

Although moderate and piecemeal, the changes in 1981 brought about new possibilities to bring our economy forward.

The changes in the situation of the country and the difficulties in socialist building and transformation required that the Fifth Party Congress give a new orientation to and put in a more concrete form the line for socialist revolution formulated by the Fourth Congress.

THE FIFTH PARTY CONGRESS AND THE NEW SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHANGES IN OUR COUNTRY

The Fifth Party Congress, held from 27 to 31 March 1982 in Hanoi Capital, was attended by 1,033 delegates representing more than 1.7 million Party members.

The Congress reviewed the implementation of the Party's line, assessed and analysed the causes of the achievements and the difficulties in the past five years since the previous congress.

The victories won after the Fourth Party Congress had brought the Vietnamese revolution to a new and firmer strategic posture. The Congress said, "The recent five years were inscribed in the history of the nation as a very glorious stage of the Vietnamese revolution." Our people went through countless difficulties and hardships to achieve this victory. Every Vietnamese fondly treasures and resolutely safeguards the fruits of the revolution.

While our country is enjoying peace, we have also to cope with the enemy's many-sided war of sabotage and stand ready to deal with a large-scale war of aggression, the Congress asserted that our entire people had to endeavour in fulfilling two strategic tasks:

- Firstly, to build socialism.
- Secondly, to stand ready to fight and firmly defend socialist Vietnam.

These tasks were simultaneous and related to each other. As the enemy was very perfidious, our people had to display utmost vigilance. However, only when we were strong could we check his adventurist moves. Therefore, we had to build socialism as our

foremost task while standing ready to deal the aggressors stunning counterblows.

To firmly grasp proletarian dictatorship, build the system of collective mastery of the working people and carry out socialist industrialization were problems of vital concern in our Party's revolutionary lines.

The Congress asserted its continuation of the line adopted at the Fourth Congress by putting it into concrete policies and measures appropriate to each stage. The stage ahead of special importance includes the eighties.

The Political Report pointed out:

"The coming stage is one of continuing socialist building and transformation, further strengthening our people's political and moral unity, reducing and overcoming difficulties, stabilizing and improving our people's living conditions, checking and eliminating negative manifestation, achieving important progress in all fields, creating a new balance in the economy while preparing for firmer and more vigorous strides forward in the next stage." (1)

On the basis of the general line for socialist revolution and the line for building a socialist economy in our country, as well as the realities of our national economy, the Congress defined the overall socio-economic objectives of the eighties as follows:

1. To meet the most pressing, urgent and essential requirements, gradually stabilize then improve the

1. *Communist Party of Vietnam: Documents of the Fifth Congress*. Su That Publishing House, Hanoi 1982, Vol. 1, p. 51.

people's material and cultural living standards, first of all to solve for good the food problem, better satisfy the needs in clothing, study, medical care, housing, transport, child care and other essential consumer needs.

2. To continue building the material-technological infrastructure of socialism, mainly to boost agricultural production, consumer goods industry and exports, while improving the technical equipment of other economic branches and preparing for a more vigorous development of heavy industry in the next stage.

3. To achieve the socialist transformation in the southern provinces; to continue perfecting the socialist production relations in the North, and to consolidate the socialist production relations in the whole country.

4. To meet the requirements of national defence and maintain security and order.

To realize the four above-mentioned objectives, the Congress defined the major socio-economic policies to basically change the economic realities of our country. It adopted the report on "The orientation, tasks and main objectives in the socio-economic field for 1981-1985 and the eighties."

The main content of socialist industrialization in the coming stage was to concentrate on vigorously developing agriculture, regarded as the foremost front bring it one step toward large-scale socialist production, strive to boost the production of consumer goods and go ahead with building a number of important heavy industry branches; integrate agriculture, consumer-goods industry and heavy industry in a rational agro-industrial structure.

Together with the socio-economic task, the Congress worked out the task of ideological and cultural revolution. The Political Report analysed that in the coming stage, although the material living standard was not yet high, but with our objective and subjective conditions, we should and could step by step build a society with a fine way of life and good relations between man and man, a society in which the working people feel happy. "Collective mastery is the greatest happiness and the noblest beauty of man."

The Congress pointed out that the struggle to build the new man and the new culture is a long-drawn, complex and difficult one. It could not be separated from the resolute, continuous and sharp struggle to wipe out the backward and reactionary ideological and cultural vestiges of the old society; nor could it be dissociated from the vigorous, tenacious and thorough struggle against psychological war to eliminate and continually prevent all influences of various reactionary and decadent cultures introduced on the sly by the imperialists, the Chinese expansionists and hegemonists and their agents.

To ensure the successful implementation of the revolutionary tasks, an urgent problem of a decisive significance was to strengthen the socialist State, launch a mass movement, build and promote the working people's right to collective mastery according to the mechanism of leadership by the Party, mastery by the people and management by the State.

The Congress paid utmost attention to readjusting the organization and improving the activities of State organs, strengthening the Party's leadership over the

administration and laid particular stress on the strategic significance of the mobilization and organization of the masses to make them true masters.

As regards foreign affairs, our Party persistently and ceaselessly strengthened the iron and steel solidarity between our country and the Soviet Union and other fraternal socialist countries. The Congress regarded the solidarity and all-sided co-operation with the Soviet Union as the cornerstone of our Party and State's foreign policy. This was our principle, our strategy and at the same time our revolutionary feeling. The Congress also pointed out that the Vietnam—Laos—Kampuchea special relationship was a law of development of the revolution of the three countries, a matter of life and death for the destiny of the three nations. Our Party thoroughly carried out a policy of broad co-operation between Vietnam and the other members of the Non-Aligned Movement, of opposition to imperialism and colonialism, of defence of world peace, the independence and sovereignty of nations. Our Party advocated expanding normal relations with all countries on the basis of respect for the independence, sovereignty, equality and mutual interest.

In foreign affairs we should take the initiative and actively struggle against all schemes and manoeuvres of the Chinese expansionists and hegemonists in collusion with the US imperialists so as to weaken and annex our country. With regard to the Chinese people, our people always preserved our long-standing friendship and good-neighbour relations.

The Congress reminded of President Ho Chi Minh's teaching that our Party should always "prove worthy of

its role as the leader and very loyal servant of the people."

To this end, the Congress gave utmost concern to raising the Party's fighting capacity in the new stage. The complexity of the revolutionary struggle all the more required a real change in Party building.

The Political Report wrote:

"The key task in the building of the Party at present is to continue upholding its working class and vanguard character, build it into a politically, ideologically and organizationally strong Party so as to successfully implement the Party's line, to enhance its capacity to lead the building of socialism and the defence of the homeland, ensuring that it constantly maintains its revolutionary and scientific character, and remains a Party with high moral standards, a high fighting capacity and close links with the masses." (1)

This task required that the Party strengthens its leadership in all fields, economic in the first place. Along economic leadership, it should raise the quality of its ideological leadership. In particular, it should strengthen its organizational leadership, a decisive link in the whole work of implementing the Party's line and policies.

The Party should strive to build a contingent of cadres and raise the quality of its members. While raising the quality of its members it should actively admit into its ranks the best elements among the revolutionary masses and resolutely expelled those who

1. Communist Party of Vietnam: Documents of the Fifth Congress, Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1982, Vol. 1, p. 158.

failed to comply with the qualifications of Party members. In any place, at any time and in any work, each Party member had to evince abilities and quality worthy of a communist... He must constantly 'review his or her work style, maintain close contact with the masses, go deep into the mass movement, attentively listen to the masses, and accept their creative experiences, constantly show a sense of organization and discipline, preserve the unity and oneness of mind of the Party, oppose erroneous views, defend the truth and the Party, maintain a healthy, honest life and resist the temptations of a luxurious and depraved way of life". (1) At present, the revolution required all the more that Party members should study, ceaselessly raise their level in all fields, believe in the victory of the revolution in a scientific way, and stand firm in face of hard and decisive trials.

The Congress fully agreed to and unanimously passed the "Report on Party Building" by the Central Committee and its proposals to make some concrete amendments to the Party's Rules.

The Party's Rules (amended) were adopted.

The Central Committee newly elected by the Fifth Congress comprised 116 full members and 36 alternate members.

The Political Bureau of the Fifth Central Committee included 13 full members and 2 alternate members. Comrade Le Duan was re-elected General Secretary.

1. Communist Party of Vietnam: Documents of the Fifth Congress, Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1982, Vol. 1, pp. 172-173

The Fifth Party Congress was an important landmark in the process of socialist revolution in our country. The resolutions of the Congress showed a new development in the application of the universal laws of socialist revolution in the conditions of our country.

In the late seventies our economy met with a lot of difficulties which made some people waver and fail to fully realize our important victories of strategic significance. This time the Congress pointed out the achievements recorded and reviewed thoroughly the past shortcomings, then set measures to redress them — bringing to our entire people a strong belief that with the thorough, versatile and adequate concretization of the Party's line our economy would surely make firm steps ahead. The resolutions of the Congress gave our entire Party, army and people a new impetus in the new stage of the revolution.

Through the content discussed and adopted the Fifth Congress gave expression to a vigorous development of the Party's leading ability and the Party members' quality.

The Congress glaringly showed the close ties between the Party and the working class and the entire people. Whatever the difficulties, our Party consistently and devotedly worked day and night "all for the socialist Motherland and the people's happiness". Our Party was determined to implement the tasks of the revolution in the complex situation of the country and the world.

The resolutions of the Congress proved that our Party had better understood our country, more accurately assessed the real situation and more clearly realized

the obstacles on the path of socialist building in our country. Hence our Party and State would unceasingly work out more appropriate policies to ensure the implementation of the Party's line.

The Fifth Congress further consolidated the unity of the entire Party, strengthened our Party's unbreakable oneness of mind, helping it cope with the aggressors and the new difficulties.

The Fifth Congress further cemented the solidarity based on pure proletarian internationalism between our people and the fraternal peoples of the Soviet Union, Laos, Kampuchea and the socialist community.

The Fifth Congress armed our entire Party, army and people with sharp weapons for the fight in the coming stage, "brushing aside all obstacles" (1).

The orientation laid down by the Congress was later put in concrete form in the resolutions of the 31st, 4th and 5th Plenums of the Party Central Committee.

The 31st Plenum was held from 3 to 10 December 1982. It discussed and adopted the orientation and tasks of the 1983 socio-economic plan and the targets up to 1985, including a number of urgent problems on distribution, circulation, renovation and devolution of economic management, the further building and strengthening of the district level.

Despite our entire people's efforts and progress, our economy was still beset with many difficulties. The Plenum solved a lot of important problems so as to bring about a change right in 1983. These were

1. From Comrade Le Duan's closing speech at the Party Fifth Congress.

concrete measures in the first stage of the transitional period about the struggle between the two roads—socialist and capitalist—about socialist transformation and building, about the renovation of socio-economic management and the strengthening of the socialist ideological front... What was pressing was to readjust production, make the most of all existing potentialities, and overcome, step by step, economic imbalances.

The 3th Plenum gave a boost to the progress of our economy. However, the weakness of the ideological and organizational front was a major obstacle to the implementation of the Party's tasks. The 4th Plenum held from 18 to 24 June 1983 decided on *the urgent measures on ideology and organization to ensure the implementation of the immediate socio-economic tasks.*

The Plenum strongly asserted the great victories won in the recent past. The outstanding achievements were the fact that we were able to meet the *minimum needs in food-grain throughout the country* for the first time after many years.

The Plenum laid stress on the strengthening of political education for the entire people; cadres and Party members at central and regional levels had to preserve their revolutionary qualities, uphold their sense of responsibility and organization and discipline, overcome all manifestations of rightism, bureaucratism and loss of vigilance. We had to abide by the principle of democratic centralism in socio-economic management, strictly carry out self-criticism and criticism, promote the working people's right to

collective mastery, renovate our work, and fulfil all tasks.

Half a year later, from 29 November to 8 December 1983, the Central Committee held its 5th Plenum to discuss two problems: first, study and adopt the orientation and tasks of the 1984 socio-economic plan and the target for 1985; second, study and decide on the policies and measures to readjust the distribution and circulation front.

The Plenum pointed out the very important significance of the tasks for 1984 and the target for 1985, that is to fulfil the third five-year plan (1981-1985), ensure "the stabilization of the socio-economic situation in the main", and make very good preparations for the fourth five-year plan (1986-1990).

The Plenum paid particular attention on the measures to bring about a basic change in distribution, circulation and the stabilization of the people's life, in the first place of the workers, public employees, army men and people in the northern border areas. The Plenum decided to continue renovating the mechanism of economic management and planning, carrying out the three levels of mastery: central, regional and grassroots. All economic activities had to be assessed following the criteria of productivity, quality and efficiency.

At the Plenum Comrade Le Duan said: "In this first stage, we have no large-scale industry yet, but if we exercise our right to mastery and make good use of labour, land and trades, we can bring our economy one step ahead toward large production, meet our people's minimum needs in food, clothing, housing, study and medical care, create a gradual

accumulation for industrialization, while ensuring the basic requirements of national defence and security."

In the early eighties, our economy got a change for the better with the Party's correct line mapped out by the Fourth Congress and put in concrete form since the Fifth Congress, and with the close guidance of the Central Committee through its subsequent plenums.

The countless difficulties in 1979-1980 caused lots of deficiencies although these difficulties were not basically solved, the initial changes in economic management did bring about heartening achievements in production, and *our economy forged ahead, consolidated itself step by step, and laid prerequisites for new developments.*

Regarding agricultural production, the salient feature was that in three consecutive years food-grain output went up nearly one million metric tonnes a year on the average, as against 200,000 tons a year during the second five-year plan. Although the population increased by 3.7 million people from 1980 to 1983 food-grain per capita output went up from 268kg to 300kg. Hence, State procurement of food-grain reached 3.75 million tonnes in 1983 compared with 800,000 tonnes in 1982—increasing by one million tonnes a year between 1981 and 1983 in comparison with the 1976-1980 period.

Industrial crops, afforestation, animal husbandry, sea-fishing... showed a great many good points.

Industry, small industry and handicraft fulfilled or overfulfilled their planned targets. Gross industrial output value was up 118% a year as against 0.6% during 1976-1980. Communication and transport

though beset with very many difficulties scored progress. In 1983, the volume of freight increased by 8% or 14% in tonne/kilometre compared with 1982. In basic construction, we concentrated on major works, rapidly created new production capacities highly significant for the development of our national economy.

Socialist transformation in the Southern provinces got initial results. Management of the market was readjusted step by step. Export was on the increase.

Good models emerged from educational, cultural and social activities.

A historical event worthy of note in our socialist industrialization was on 12 January 1983 at the Da River hydroelectric site the checking of the fierce waters which had caused so many floods was carried out. This opened a new very important step in the building of the Hoa Binh hydroelectric power station—the hugest work in our country—preparing for a vigorous step of Vietnamese socialist economy.

Along with the rapid progression of the Hoa Binh hydroelectric work, other major works were also stepped up. In 1983, the construction branch alone boasted 1,164 works put into commission, including such important projects as the first section of the Pha Lai thermopower station, the second production line of the Bim Son cement plant, a number of production lines of the Lam Thao superphosphate plant, sugar refineries, yarn factories, paper mills. The Hoang Thach cement plant entered upon trial production. On 25 January 1984 the lower floor of the Thang Long bridge was completed. Construction at the Tri An hydroelectric work, the Dau Tieng

irrigation work, the Vung Tau - Con Dao oil and gas combinat were in full swing.

Also completed were other works requiring very complicated technique and high quality. After two years of construction the Da Lat nuclear reactor was put into commission on 20 March 1984 (1).

These achievements accounted for the creative labour of the entire people imbued with a sense of collective mastery, a spirit of self-reliance, a determination to tide over difficulties, build and defend the socialist Motherland; the co-operation and great help of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries in the spirit of proletarian internationalism.

All these victories opened lots of new prospects for our country.

Nevertheless, on the whole, our economy was not yet stabilized in many aspects, production forged ahead but not yet steadily.

In the plenums of the Central Committee the victories were reviewed in full, while the shortcomings were also thoroughly analysed, particularly those in the mechanism of management and planning, in the economic management work. The State was not in firm control of goods and money, distribution and circulation. Socialist transformation was not yet adequately impelled. Socialist production relations were

1. The former Da Lat nuclear reactor built in 1963 gave no result worth of note and practically ceased operating. In March 1975 before withdrawing from South Vietnam the US imperialists dismantled it. With the help of the Soviet Union, it was restored and enlarged since 15 March 1982 as a major work with 15 sub-works.

not yet strengthened, with the State economic sector developing slowly. Cadres, workers and army men still met with many difficulties in their daily life.

Nor had cultural and social activities a good turn. Many problems claimed for an urgent solution. Negative phenomena were not yet curbed. The people's cultural life degraded, as witness the non-fulfilment of concrete targets.

Our people's socialist building and national defence were linked to those of the Lao and Kampuchean peoples. The Lao, Kampuchean and Vietnamese summit held in Vientiane from 22 to 23 February 1983 reviewed the situation of the three countries and the world and examined the measures to strengthen the solidarity and all-sided co-operation between the three countries.

Together with Laos and Kampuchea, Vietnam persistently sought for a dialogue with ASEAN countries to reach a solution to the problems related to peace and stability in Southeast Asia. We did not agree with the stubborn forces tailing after China to oppose Vietnam and the Indochinese countries and create tension in the area.

With pure socialist internationalism, our people efficaciously helped the peoples of Kampuchea and Laos in the economic, cultural, national defence fields... The meetings to exchange views for mutual aid in many areas contributed to stabilizing and developing various aspects in national construction and defence of each country.

Helped by Vietnam, Laos, the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, the Kampuchean people

went through a marvellous rebirth, creating a favourable posture for the revolution, which no reactionary force could subvert.

Since March 1984, at Beijing's command, the Pol Pot remnants aided by the Thai army again harassed the Kampuchea-Thailand border, causing lots of barbarous crimes against the Kampuchean people. Side by side with the Vietnamese volunteers the Kampuchean armed forces inflicted well-deserved punishments upon the insurgents and destroyed their lairs. This victory proved that the Kampuchean armed forces had grown up and the security in Kampuchea was consolidated.

To ward off the blows aimed at the reactionary Khmers and to offer a present to Reagan during his visit to China, the Beijing expansionists and hegemonists went ahead with their scheme by shelling and making armed incursions into many places on our northern border. Faced with the high vigilance of our armymen and local people, the Chinese troops got severe rebuffs.

In co-ordination with Chinese military activities on the Vietnam-China border and Pol Pot harassments on the Kampuchea-Thailand border, the Bangkok authorities mustered air, artillery and infantry force to occupy Ban May, Ban Cang and Ban Savang of Laos.

The Chinese authorities' stepped up armed aggression on our northern border, their instigation of Pol Pot's harassment on the Kampuchea-Thailand border, and of Thai occupation of Lao territory testified that their policy of hostility against the three

Indochinese countries had not changed an iota but grew more cunning and perfidious.

While the peoples of Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea together with the entire mankind struggled for peace, friendship between peoples in the world, the US imperialists frenziedly created tensions, by accelerating the nuclear arms race, deploying medium-range missiles in Western Europe, preparing for the militarization of space, and counter-attacking the growing revolutionary movements.

Our Party vehemently condemned the bellicose and aggressive acts of the US imperialists. On 19 January 1983, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam and the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam issued a declaration resolutely opposing the US imperialists for their threat to war, particularly nuclear war, and fully supporting the important initiatives of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact member countries for the defence of peace and the safeguard of mankind from nuclear holocaust. Our Party and State continued to issue statements supporting the Joint Declaration of the Warsaw Pact member countries particularly the stern statements by the Soviet Union on the strong measures in response to the stubborn attitude and acts of the US imperialists.

The Beijing expansionists and hegemonists in collusion with the US imperialists and other international reactionaries sought every way to oppose our people. After their war of aggression failed lamentably in 1979, the Chinese reactionaries waged a multi-faceted war of sabotage in hopes of

creating unrest, socio-economic collapse, discontent among the masses and non-confidence in the Party's leadership, thus creating conditions for their easy annexation of our country.

After clearly defining the two strategic tasks of the revolution in the new stage — socialist building and defence of the socialist Homeland, our Party correctly applied the close relationship between socialist industrialization and national defence, resolutely worsted the multi-faceted war of sabotage and stood ready to smash the enemy's war of aggression on whatever scale.

Our people's revolutionary cause enjoyed the devoted support and assistance of the fraternal socialist countries, particularly the Soviet Union. The Summit Meeting of the member countries of the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance held in Moscow by mid-June 1984 marked a new development in socialist co-operation and integration, creating conditions for our economy to develop rapidly. The Summit unanimously adopted the Declaration on the basic orientations of continuous development and strengthening of economic, scientific and technical co-operation and the Declaration on the "defence of peace and international economic co-operation". The content of these important documents showed the powerful economic might of the socialist community. The result of the implementation of the resolutions of the Summit would contribute to ensuring the fulfilment of our people's socio-economic tasks in the coming stage. Our people were duty bound to boost production, create a change in economic management, and bring our economy one step ahead.

Early in July 1984 the Fifth Central Committee held its 6th Plenum to discuss the urgent tasks in the renovation of economic management. On the basis of the past changes, the Plenum asserted that in the present socio-economic conditions we could bring about a vigorous turn in the socio-economic life should we grasp and put in concrete form the correct Party's line by *a rational economic structure and an adequate managerial structure, vigorously promote the working people's right to collective mastery at each grassroots, each region, each branch of activity, and mobilize the aggregate strength of the whole country*

The Plenum assessed that *the progress and changes in economic management were not yet homogeneous, vigorous and basic*. Economic management still had many shortcomings and weaknesses, including some drawn-out and serious aspects, which were not adjusted in time to the new situation. These shortcomings were manifestations of *bureaucracy subsidy-based system, conservatism and sluggishness* in the mechanism of economic management, and of *scatter-edness, sectionalism, anarchy and indiscipline*. These shortcomings were utterly against the Party's line and policies, the nature of our regime, hindered production and the improvement of the living standard. The Central Committee severely criticized these shortcomings; at the same time, each branch, each level was duty bound to uphold self-criticism and criticism, and overcome its shortcomings.

The 6th Plenum charted the orientation and main requirement of the renovation of economic management in the coming stage. In the immediate, we had to vigorously promote the working people's right to

collective mastery, dynamism, creativeness, and all the capacities of the grassroots, re-organize production, step by step build a new managerial structure, carry out a judicious division of labour, and a devolution of managerial responsibilities; solve a number of urgent problems on distribution, circulation, particularly in the fields of market prices-wages-money, so as to serve well the grassroots, while solving correctly the distribution in the national economy.

Speaking at the Plenum, Comrade Le Duan clearly analysed the problems having the character of law of the socialist revolution in our country. Having grasped these laws, the 6th Plenum mapped out new policies on economic management.

With a high oneness of mind among the entire Party and people, all branches and levels diligently put the policies laid down by the 6th Plenum of the Fifth Central Committee into concrete programmes and work plans, improved their work style and boosted the revolutionary movement of the masses in production and economic management.

Under the leadership of the Communist Party of Vietnam, the Vietnamese nation went through half a century full of hardships and trials but also replete with glorious victories.

In the 4,000-year history of the nation, no period had so many great, radical and pressing changes. In these decades, our people smashed the French colonialist rule, eliminated the feudal regime, and became the masters of their country; they foiled the French imperialists' colonial type aggressive war; they frustrated the US imperialists' neocolonial-type war of

aggression, completely liberated the South and took the whole country to the socialist path; the North did away with the regime of exploitation of man by man, established the regime of socialist ownership, and set about building the material and technical basis of socialism; the South achieved in the main socialist transformation of private capitalist industry and trade, and embarked in cooperativization and collectivization. Lately we won two aggressive wars over the Chinese great-nation expansionists and hegemonists on the southwestern and northern borders, initially worsting their design to annex our country; we maintained and strengthened special solidarity with the fraternal Lao and Kampuchean peoples, actively contributing to the consolidation of peace, independence, democracy and socialism in Southeast Asia and in the world. From slaves, our people became masters of their country and society, actively and consciously made history, entered the era of independence, freedom and socialism, and joined the vanguard nations struggling for the lofty ideals of mankind.

At the Second Party National Congress in February, while summing up the changes in the world in the first half of the 20th century and the 21-year experience of our Party since its founding, President Ho Chi Minh predicted: "With the efforts made by revolutionaries, the latter half of the century will witness greater and more glorious changes". (1)

History has proved the correctness of Ho Chi Minh's prediction.

1. Ho Chi Minh, : "Political Report at the Second National Congress". *For Independence, Freedom and Socialism*, Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1970, p. 96.

Leading our people to achieve great exploits, our Party fully deserved the honour of being the revolutionary vanguard of our working class, people and nation.

Our people's immediate task is extremely heavy and complicated. We have to overcome the serious aftermaths of over thirty years of war unleashed by the French colonialists and the US imperialists. We have to eradicate small production, poverty and backwardness to attain large-scale socialist production. Our people's basic goal is to build an independent, reunified and socialist Vietnam, with modern industry and agriculture, advanced culture and science, firm national defence, and a civilized and happy life.

Because of their grudge against Vietnam, imperialism and Chinese reaction will not let our people reach this goal. Driven out of South Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea, the US imperialists colluded with the Chinese reactionaries and left no stone unturned to undermine our independence, reunification and socialist regime. Heavily defeated in Kampuchea and on our northern border, the Chinese reactionaries still cling to their design of great nation expansionism and hegemonism and of annexing our country, feverishly prepare forces, continue new adventures, unceasingly undermine the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and solidarity of Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea. As imperialism and international reaction can create many new difficulties to our country, we have to carry out simultaneously two tasks: socialist construction and defence of the Homeland.

Our people have every reason to believe that we will certainly frustrate all the dark schemes of the

Chinese reactionaries, build and firmly defend an independent, reunified and socialist Vietnam. Our nation's tradition of staunchness and indomitability and of heroic fight under the leadership of the Communist Party of Vietnam have endowed our people with many factors of success.

Ours are a very heroic people, animated by patriotism, imbued with proletarian internationalism, most confident in their vanguard Party, and master of their country politically, economically, culturally and socially. Our armed forces are well equipped, very courageous, resourceful, ably led and commanded, motivated by a noble fighting ideal of "loyalty toward the country and piety toward the people", and ready to "fulfil any task, overcome any obstacle, defeat any enemy." Our socialist state is a state of the people, for the people and from the people. The firm militant solidarity and all-round cooperation between Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea are increasingly strengthened in the process of building and defending their respective Homelands. The devoted, great, efficient and many-sided cooperation and support of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and other fraternal socialist countries, as well as the sympathy and support of the international communist and of progressive mankind toward the Vietnamese people's just cause grow with every passing day. The decisive factor for every victory of our revolution is the leadership of the Communist Party of Vietnam, tempered, seasoned and clear-sighted revolutionary vanguard, a factor bringing about the aggregate strength of the entire nation.

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