

The Truth Behind the Myth of the Vietminh

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Part One

The publication of the now famous "Pentagon papers" has aroused a wave of outrage, indignation and protest in "public opinion".

The "democratic" press has welcomed it as decisive proof of the "crimes" for which the American government has long been put "under indictment" by the "peace movement" and the "court of human rights".

Here's a list summarizing American "crimes" according to the Democratic Opposition; 1) The "first to start", i.e. the US was the "aggressor"; 2) On the part of the DRV, there was no invasion or even an invitation to insurrection; 3) It was the US that "violated" the Geneva Accords of 1954; 4) With their bestial conduct of war, the USA has a thousand times surpassed the Nazis in ferocity and breadth of means employed in terrorism and organized extermination of a people; 5) The respect that the USA have for treaties does honor to the Nazis; the US has "violated" all international treaties, "human rights", "people's right to self determination", etc; 6) With their military intervention, finally, the US has acted "against the will of the American people", "against the will of Parliament"; they have trampled on their own laws, have denied their own principles of "democracy", "freedom", etc.

But how could the US government go against everything and everyone: "its people", its "principles", its legislative bodies? Its actions violated a thousand "rights", but it has fully respected the only one that counts, the right of the strongest.

In front of such a blatant shows of brutality and cynicism, how insulting and sterile are the astonishment and the whining of the candid petty-bourgeois pacifists, who against real force wield "rights" and would like to oppose weapons with pieces of paper! The American state, like all bourgeois States, defends neither an ideology nor a constitutional charter, but a network of interests; thus it can and it will, if necessary, trample "its own laws". We have, on one hand, a sleazy "current of opinion" which defines itself with a generic "pacifism" that claims to fight alongside the Vietnamese, pointing to war and violence as the cause of all evil and peace as the solution to everything: on the other hand, a real fight with bombings and massacres. But the heroic Vietnamese fighters, who have been fighting almost unceasingly for more than 25 years, fight alone: alone against US imperialism; alone against the "peace movement" that only confuses the ideas of the Western proletariat and to endorse the thesis that the

Vietnamese "can do it alone" and that solidarity with their struggle must take place in democratic and nonviolent forms; alone against their own leaders who are inextricably linked to the policies of Moscow and Beijing, who have always tried to contain the movement within national-bourgeois limits and (as we shall show) who not only always avoided upsetting the interests of the landowning class, but even fought to agree with them, systematically screwing over proletarians and poor peasants.

This fact that the Western proletariat has witnessed, without lifting a finger, the systematic extermination of thousands upon thousands of Vietnamese shows the extent of the degeneration of the movement, ongoing for over 50 years now.

That's the whole point, and while everyone hypocritically exalts the struggle and the military victories of the Vietcong, we won't hide the fact that the Vietnamese proletarians and poor peasants are and will remain hopeless, until the Western proletariat is freed from the heavy chains of opportunism that shatters and divides their struggles, keeping them on legalitarian and peaceful ground.

But are those who limit themselves to exalting the battles of the Vietnamese fighters without drawing the necessary lessons from past events, however painful they may be, perhaps helping them? Are those who claim that the events in Vietnam prove that "a small and weak people can defeat imperialism on its own" on the side of the heroic Vietnamese fighters?

What does 25 years of war prove, first against the Japanese, then against the French, and now (for eleven years) against the Americans?

In 1946, after the expulsion of the Japanese, an agreement with France paved the way for the entry of French troops in the North and prelude to a new war. In 1954, after the great victory of Điện Biên Phủ, the Geneva agreements were reached, according to which the French avoided the complete destruction of their expeditionary corps, the Vietnamese had to withdraw their forces above the 17th parallel, and the country was divided in two, laying the groundwork for a new war. Today, after other brilliant military successes such as the Tet Offensive in 1968 and the recent victories in Cambodia and Laos, we may be approaching a new agreement, or rather, another swindle.

The Vietnamese have shown incredible valor on the battlefield; but, while everyone is singing hymns to peace, preparations are again being made to crush them at the negotiating table. The previously described thesis is thus resoundingly disproved. Another thesis that everyone generally endorses and that contributes to confuse the ideas of the Western proletariat claims that in Vietnam there is an oppressed "people" fighting united against a "foreign aggressor". According to this conception, which the current Vietnamese leaders

have always upheld, the class struggle has to cease and, faced with the "priority" objective of the struggle against the aggressor, the whole nation must unite as one. A brief examination of the events that have taken place from 1930 to the present day will serve to demonstrate the falsity of this thesis as well and to unmask the attitude of the Vietnamese leaders who have always sacrificed the essential interests of the proletariat and the poor peasants on the altar of "peace" and "national unity".

1930-1940 - Insurrection

The Indochinese Communist Party was formed in 1930, when the revolution had already been defeated in Europe and the Third International and the Soviet State had completely degenerated under the blows of the Stalinist counterrevolution. However, there existed within it a left wing of essentially class-based positions (normally generically titled "trotskist") that was at the head of the workers' and peasants' revolts and that was always opposed to compromise with the national bourgeoisie.

This is evidenced by the fact that it was only in 1941 (after these best comrades had been exterminated in the repression of the revolts) that the policy of the national bloc with the landowning class (which automatically meant renouncing agrarian reform) was definitively affirmed. According to the Stalinist Jean Chesneaux, author of *The Vietnamese Nation: Contribution to a History* which we use, "the word "fatherland" in communist texts from 1930 to 1940... practically never appears." The author, a real bastard, laments the fact that "the communist-directed popular movements, from the Nghe An revolt to the insurrections of 1940, had been content (!) until then to hoist the red flag with the hammer and sickle of international communism". Even General Giap, in his writing *People's War, People's Army*, recalls that "it was not until 1939-1941 that the anti-imperialist task, the task of national liberation was clearly conceived as the most essential". Indeed, at the time of its establishment, the party's program included: - Overthrow of French imperialism, feudalism and the reactionary bourgeoisie. - Formation of a government of workers, peasants and soldiers. - Expropriation of banks and other imperialist enterprises. - Confiscation of all property of the imperialists and the reactionary bourgeoisie in Vietnam and its distribution to the poor peasants. - Introduction of the eight-hour workday.

In 1930 (under French rule) Vietnam was a predominantly agricultural country, but it also included a fairly large and concentrated proletariat (the mines and rubber plantations alone employed about 230,000 workers). The workers entered the scene with their own demands with a strike wave in 1928-29. In 1930, following the collapse of rice prices and poor harvests, large-scale peasant agitations took place, led by Communist Party militants. The movement exploded in violent forms; in many areas public places were attacked, registers and archives were burned, landlords were expelled and the slogan of land distribution was launched. In 1931, real Soviet power was established in the

Nghê An province. The peasants' soviets confiscated the land of the landowners and distributed it to poor peasants, people's courts were established, and in the villages power is entrusted to committees of poor peasants. But this magnificent example of revolutionary struggle was drowned in blood a few months later. Even in the sugar region, the insurrection was immediately crushed.

Other centers of the insurrection were the great rice fields of the South, which employ a large number of wage earners, and the great plantations of Annam and Cochinchina, where between 1930 and 1932 bloody worker revolts against wage reductions and layoffs took place everywhere. At the same time, in the cities, workers' agitations for wage increases and against unemployment resumed.

To get an idea of the violence of the struggles and the high degree of revolutionary militancy achieved by the workers and peasants, we only need to point out that in 1930 alone the pro-French authorities carried out 30 summary executions during the demonstrations on May 1, 40 for the anniversary of the October Revolution, 115 for the anniversary of the Canton insurrection. Needless to say, in these repressions the best comrades were exterminated. The Stalinist fraction of the party thus began to gain the upper hand, advocating an alliance with the national bourgeoisie, of which the much-hyped Ho Chi Minh was one of the major exponents. However, the "trotskist" opposition is still strong, especially in Cochinchina where it gathers around the newspaper *La Lutte*.

The final break between the "trotskist" opposition and the Stalinist wing occurs only in 1937-38, when the latter proclaims the priority of the fight against the "Japanese fascists" over the fight against the landowners, and unity not only with the latter, but also with the French colonialists.

In 1939, Ho Chi Minh, in a report to the Comintern, wrote: "1) At this time the Party...must avoid aiming too high with its demands...lest it fall into the provocations of the Japanese fascists. It must confine itself to demanding democratic rights – freedom of the press, etc. 2) In view of these aims, the Party must strive to create a broad national-democratic front, including not only Indochinese, but also French progressives, not only the laboring classes, but also the national bourgeoisie. 3) With regard to the national bourgeoisie, the Party must show itself to be skillful and elastic. It must do its best to convert it to the cause of the front. 4) No alliance and no concessions towards the trotskites. We must expose by all means these agents of fascism, we must annihilate them politically".

Note the fury with which the repressor of the Vietnamese workers lashes out at comrades who had always been at the head of the struggles and had suffered the most from their repression; and, on the other hand, the submissive, servile tone towards the national bourgeoisie. He goes so far as to argue in point 6 of the report: "The Party must not impose its leadership on the front", or, in

other words, it must leave the leadership of the front to the bourgeoisie (from *Scritti, lettere, discorsi del presidente Ho Chi Minh*, ed. Feltrinelli).

1940-1946 - The Popular Front

In 1940, after the French defeat in Europe, the Japanese penetration into Vietnam begins. In June the Japanese obtain various concessions from the French colonial authorities (i.e. the right to use three airports and to maintain a contingent of troops there, control of a railway, etc.);

In the same year a series of armed riots broke out, directed against both the Japanese and the French. The revolt takes on such large proportions that in the repression, the Japanese and French unite together in a proper joint military operation with the use of aviation. The repression is extremely harsh, and decimates the most militant and radical cadres of the Party. Finally, the French administration, put at a disadvantage, opens even more the doors to the penetration of the Japanese, who remain in Vietnam until the end of the war.

It is the failure of this insurrection that opens the way to the final shift of the Communist Party of Indochina to national-bourgeois positions, and to the victory of the current led by Ho Chi Minh. This line was in fact sanctioned only in May 1941 in the VIII session of the Central Committee: on the same occasion the Vietminh (League for the Independence of Vietnam) was founded.

It took 10 years to make the Vietnamese proletarians and peasants swallow the Popular Front line!

The program of the Viet Minh proclaimed the struggle for "national and democratic revolution", "the struggle against the French government of Vichy and against Japan", the "alliance of the Vietnamese people with the democracies that fight fascism: China, the United States, the Soviet Union", universal suffrage, democratic freedoms, and the eight-hour workday.

Shortly after the founding of the Vietminh, good old Ho, in a letter from abroad, appeals to national resistance: "Rich people, soldiers, workers, peasants, intellectuals, officials, traders, youth, and women who warmly love your country! At the present time, national liberation is the most important problem. Let us unite together!"

But what does union with the "rich", the "officials" mean, if not renunciation of agrarian reform? In fact, the agrarian program of the Vietminh provides for the partition only of the lands of the colonialists and the "traitorous" (of the fatherland) owners. Ho Chi Minh himself, later on, recalling the events of this period, will say: "The slogan 'confiscation and distribution of landowners' lands to the peasants' was avoided in order to obtain the support of the landowners to the national front" (op. cit, from a report held in 1951).

In turn, General Giap defined the new agrarian policy as follows: "temporarily put aside the slogan for agrarian reform and replaced it by the slogan of reduction of land rents and interest charges, and confiscation of land belonging to imperialists and Vietnamese traitors and its distribution to the peasants" (op. cit.). But the poor peasants, crushed by taxes and usury, certainly did not rise up to win freedom of the press or universal suffrage, but to chase the landowners from their lands, or at least to obtain an improvement in their living conditions. Thus it's clear that the poor peasants and the national bourgeoisie, essentially landowners, could never march together for common goals, and that the slogan of "national unity" served only to cover the complete subservience to bourgeois interests.

On the other hand, did the local landed bourgeoisie stand on its own strength? No! It relied, from time to time, on the Japanese, the French, the Chinese of the Kuomintang, the Americans, depending on the circumstances. So it's clear that "national liberation" could only take place against the indigenous bourgeoisie which was bound hand and foot to imperialism.

Between 1941 and 1945, the Vietminh participated in the anti-Japanese struggle alongside the Allies, and in this period, according to what the Pentagon Papers reveal, the US sent a military mission to the Vietminh. To better characterize the figure of the much hailed Ho Chi Minh, it will be useful to remember that in 1942 he collaborated and was financed by the Chinese Kuomintang, which, leaning on a part of the bourgeoisie, tried to penetrate into Vietnam. Only at the end of the war, on August 13, 1945, shortly after Hiroshima, did the Vietminh launch a call for all-out insurrection: the Japanese were now everywhere in retreat and on September 2 the independence of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam was proclaimed.

The government then formed was truly a government of "national unity", just as Ho liked it. The landed bourgeoisie, which until then had supported the Japanese, fully adhered to the DRV – suffice it to say that the government includes, among others, Hung Huy, a member of the imperial family in Tonkin and the Mandarin Phan Kế Toại, former imperial delegate in Tonkin, while Bao Dai himself, former head of the pro-Japanese government, is appointed "supreme advisor" of Ho Chi Minh's government. In the aforementioned 1951 report, Ho Chi Minh, recalling these events, exalted the fact that some members of the Central Committee, although they should have been part of the provisional government, "withdrew of their own free will in favor of patriots who were not members of the Vietminh" (i.e. in favor of bourgeois former collaborators of the Japanese). To complete this national unity, came the adherence of the church; in November 1945, the four Catholic bishops of Vietnam, in a common pastoral letter, invited the faithful to support the new regime; one would later be elected to the national assembly.

But why did the landed bourgeoisie lean so confidently on the DRV? What was the price of "national unity"?

The anti-Japanese insurrection had set in motion the peasants who were also starved by the famine that broke out that year. Any peasant movement made the landowners tremble. They knew that their lands were in danger, while there were no longer any French or Japanese to defend them. What could they do but join the DRV government, which, in the name of the fatherland, protected their interests?

In several provinces, such as Quang Ngai and North Annam, the peasants, in the wake of the anti-Japanese victory, had begun to divide up the lands of the landowners. The DRV government immediately took care to prevent the movement from spreading; a circular letter of November 21 declared: "The rice fields and cultivated land will not be divided up as false rumors have announced" (Jean Chesneaux, op. cit.). Moreover, on November 11, 1945, the Communist Party of Indochina dissolved itself. This was the cost of unity with the national bourgeoisie: renunciation of agrarian reform and dissolution of the party!

In 1945, 80% of the population were peasants; of these, 61.5%, had no land of their own, The distribution of land in North Vietnam, in 1945, was as follows:

	Surface (ha)	% of total Surface
Settlers (Japanese or French)	15.952,05	1.0
Church (missions)	23.928,07	1.5
Communal or semi-communal lands	389.801,25	25.0
Landowners	390.825,22	24.5
Rich peasants	113.259,55	7.1
Medium peasants	462.609,45	29.0
Poor peasants	169.520,50	10.0
Rural proletarians	17.547,25	1.1
Other workers	12.761,64	0.8

(Source: statistics from the Agrarian Reform Committee of the DRV, as reported by Chaliand Gerard in Peasants of North Vietnam)

The communal lands, which, as we can see, are very extensive, are often usurped by the landowners and the peasants are demanding their share. The peasants constitute the majority of the population and the government of the DRV must in some way appease them. Therefore, a number of measures were taken to improve their living conditions: reduction of the rents by 25% (to the

benefit of the mass of small tenants), reduction of the rate of credit, confiscation and division of communal lands and of French and Japanese settlers.

However, these measures remained on paper; in fact, their execution is entrusted to local administrative apparatuses, where the influence of landowners predominates. In December 1953, Phạm Văn Đồng denounced the fact that only 5% of the lands belonging to landowners and settlers had been affected by the reduction of the rent; only a little more than half of the communal lands had been partitioned, and about 10% of the lands belonged to settlers and missions.

But the famine still loomed and a peasant uprising was feared; the DRV absolutely had to increase its agricultural production, but the presence of large estates and the excessive power of large landowners (which means high rents, usury, poor cultivation of large areas, etc) prohibited this. On the other hand, a division of the land would imply an open war against the landed bourgeoisie, which Ho and his comrades were careful to avoid. On November 15, the "Central Committee of Intensive and Rapid Agricultural Production" was constituted; a sort of "battle of wheat" or, better, "battle of rice" was launched. In the cities, even the smallest portion of land is cleared (gardens, playgrounds, etc.).

In the meantime, the proletariat, after 5 years of stagnation, starts to move again. The government of the DRV is forced to proclaim freedom to the trade unions and the 8-hour day, and to officially recognize Labor Day. On May 1, 1946, massive demonstrations take place with thousands upon thousands of participants. During the summer, strikes break out all over the country. One example is enough to demonstrate the magnificent militancy of the Vietnamese proletariat: in June, 5000 miners from the Hon Gay mines strike against a dismissal and in July they obtain the re-hiring of their comrade.

1946-1954: The War Against the French - DIÊN BIÊN PHU – Geneva

While the great powers divided the world according to their interests, however, there was no prospect for an independent Vietnamese state. In the winter of 1944-45, the French Republic (which had come out of the resistance) had already established the French Expeditionary Corps for the Far East in preparation for its return to Vietnam. In the Potsdam Agreements it was decided to send Chinese troops north of the 16th parallel and British and French troops south. This decision is officially explained as a "technical measure" to disarm the Japanese troops still present in the area. After a series of bloody incidents between the occupation troops and the population, in March 1946 an agreement was signed between the DRV and France. According to this agreement, France formally recognized the DRV as an independent state, but French troops could establish themselves in the North to replace Kuomintang troops. On his return from the negotiations, Ho Chi Minh, in a proclamation to the people, presented these agreements as a victory and called on them to be "courteous to the French

military, conciliatory towards French citizens", to take "democratic political forms" in action and to "unite closely without distinction of party, class, or religion" (Ho Chi Minh, op. cit.).

But the substance of the agreements is well explained by General Giap: "The problem then before the French Expeditionary Corps was to know whether it would be easy for them to return to North Vietnam by force. It was certainly not so, because our forces were more powerful there than in the South". And how did the French manage to get their troops into the North? Through those very negotiations.

Once they'd settled in, the French resumed their repression, massacres, and looting with increasing brutality: the bombing of the port of Haiphong caused about 6000 deaths (remember that, in this period, the PCF was part of the French government that "came out of the resistance"). The government of the DRV, faced with these organized massacres, limited itself to making appeals to the French government asking for a change of policy in order to avoid war. It is only on December 20, when resistance spontaneously spread throughout the country, that the government calls for a general insurrection, while continuing to invite the government in Paris to resume negotiations (!).

At this point, according to General Giap, "[our troops], after fierce street-combats in the big cities, beat strategical retreats to the countryside on its own initiative in order to maintain its bases and preserve its forces". The strategy of the so-called "long term resistance" was adopted, which is nothing but the strategy of the peasant war. This strategy triggered some opposition: Giap recalls the opposition against this strategy in the following terms: "These were subjectivisms, loss of patience, eagerness to win swiftly which came out in the plans of operations of a number of localities at the start of the Resistance War which were unwilling to withdraw their force to preserve our main force, and in their plan of general counter-offensive put forth in 1950 when this was not yet permitted by objective and subjective conditions" (op. cit.). The Vietnamese army, almost intact, reorganized into small formations. According to Jean Chesneaux, some large units are even disbanded to reorganize them into small guerrilla bands. The same author affirms that, due to the great difficulty of communication, it was "impossible to maintain true centralization; it became necessary to stick to general directives, and leave a wide margin of initiative to regional and local authorities. To this end, the country was divided into fourteen military zones with wide autonomy".

It is a conduct of war that appears, at the very least, renounced and defeatist, and all these facts would seem to indicate that it deliberately left the urban proletariat to the tender mercies of the French. What's certain is that only the workers remained to defend the cities. In Hanoi, a regiment of proletarians resisted for two months before surrendering. The French troops thus crushed the proletarian movement that had been rekindled in the summer of 1946.

The DRV government had retreated into the countryside; at this point, faced with the necessities of war, the problem of agrarian reform took on decisive importance. Could the war be sustained without the support of the peasants? Could the war be fought without soldiers? General Giap, as head of the army, had already had to come to grips with this reality: "A general mobilisation of the whole people is neither more nor less than the mobilisation of the rural masses. The problem of land is of decisive importance. From an exhaustive analysis, the Vietnamese people's war of liberation was essentially a people's national democratic revolution carried out under armed form and had twofold fundamental task: the overthrowing of imperialism and the defeat of the feudal landlord class... In a colony where the national question is essentially the peasant question, the consolidation of the resistance forces was possible only by a solution to the agrarian problem" (op. cit.). Now that cannon fodder was needed, the need for agrarian reform was supported, while before, in the name of national unity, the ownership of land had always been defended.

But Giap himself, after the war, would repudiate these positions: "Our country was a colonial and semi-feudal one. The two basic contradictions in our society were the contradiction between imperialism and our nation and the contradiction between the feudal landlord class and our people, chiefly the peasantry; of these two contradictions, that between imperialism and our nation had to be considered as the most essential. That is why the revolution in Vietnam, which was a national democratic revolution, had two fundamental tasks: the anti-imperialist and the anti-feudal task. Among these two tasks, the anti-imperialists task, the task of wiping out imperialism to liberate the people, had to be regarded as the most essential" (op. cit.).

In order to achieve the above-mentioned goals, in 1950 interest rates were reduced; uncultivated lands were distributed free of charge and ownership was guaranteed within two years on condition that they were cultivated; the lease contract was also regulated by prohibiting the subletting of land and stating that the contract must last at least three years; an attempt was made to increase cooperation by inviting peasants to form "work exchange brigades" etc. The new civil code stated that "property is respected, but... it is forbidden for owners to leave land uncultivated".

In the same year the Vietnamese go on the offensive and inflict a series of defeats on the French. Also in 1950, the DRV government, which before, as the Pentagon Papers reveal, had repeatedly but unsuccessfully asked the US for help against the French, turned towards the Soviet bloc: the USSR and the People's Republic of China officially recognized the DRV. In 1951, the clearly pro-Soviet "Vietnam Workers' Party" was founded, which, according to Ho Chi Minh's expression, "adopted Marxism-Leninism", which meant not a return to the struggle for communism, but merely the entry of the DRV into the Soviet bloc.

On the other hand, the USA actively supported the French. According to the figures reported by Giap, American aid, which in 1950-51 covered 15% of the costs of the war, rose to 35% in 1952, to 45% in 1953, to reach 80% in 1954. As Giap rightly states, this was a war "backed by the American dollar and French blood".

However, the internal situation in the countryside under the control of the DRV was still critical: the measures mentioned above, aimed at obtaining an increase in production and the support of the masses of peasants, were to no avail, so much so that in 1951, the government cited the poor results achieved in the villages.

According to figures reported by Phan Van Dong, in 1952, out of 3,000,000 ha belonging to landowners and settlers, only 156,000 (5%) had been subject to the reduction of rents and only 230,000 (8%) had been distributed.

Also according to Phan Van Dong, in December 1953, the distribution of land was as follows:

- Lands belonging to landowners: 50%
- Communal lands (in reality hoarded by the landowners): 10%
- Land occupied by the remaining 9/10% of the peasant population (more than half of whom were totally landless): 30%
- Lands belonging to settlers and the church: 10%

Faced with the need to increase production and end the war, the government had to seriously address the problem. After having publicly denounced the state of misery of the peasant masses and the fact that the feudal forces continued, "behind a curtain of bamboo", to exercise their power, after having attacked the "reactionary landowners" who in many cases collaborated with the enemy, in April of 1953 the agrarian decree was issued. This decree, for the type of measures to be adopted, does not differ much from those of '45 and '49 (reduction of rents, interest, division of the land of the colonists, etc.). However, this time its execution is no longer entrusted, as then, to the local administrative apparatus, where the influence of landowners predominates, but to the peasant unions and agricultural committees, that is, to the organized peasants themselves.

Net 1953, Ho Chi Minh explained what the government was aiming at with its reform: "By promoting land reform, we will influence our fellow countrymen who live beyond enemy lines, encourage them to fight more vigorously for their freedom and to support the democratic government of resistance with more ardor. At the same time we will cause the break-up of the additional formations of the puppet army, the majority of which are composed of the peasants living in the occupied zone".

In launching the reform, however, it is stated that it must be carried out "in stages", and different criteria are indicated for its implementation depending on the areas: "The agrarian policy" – Ho Chi Minh continues – "will be applied to the guerrilla zones and the provisionally occupied areas, when these are liberated. In places where the mobilization of the masses for a rigorous reduction of rent rates has not yet been organized, it will be necessary to go through this first stage before committing to agrarian reform. Where the mobilization of the masses has not yet been decided by the government, it is absolutely forbidden for the local authorities to promote it on their own initiative".

Furthermore, the directive is to be applied with differentiated measures according to the political position of the landowners: "We must, in carrying out agrarian reform, make a distinction between landowners according to their political position. In other words, we must apply a whole range of measures: expropriation, requisition without compensation, purchase by authority, instead of a general expropriation or requisition" (op. cit).

The government, with the usual duplicity, while on the one hand tries to deceive the peasants to get them to fight, on the other hand has no intention to break with the landed bourgeoisie, Phan Van Dong states: "The interests of the landowners, of those who have not compromised with the enemy, and above all of the democratic personalities and of the resistant landowners will not be prejudiced" (from J.Chesneaux, op.cit). According to J.Chesneaux, "to the French colonists the lands are purely and simply confiscated and so are the other assets. On the contrary, lands and goods of "traitorous, reactionary landowners and nobles who have been guilty of cruelty" are confiscated only "in proportion to the sins committed". As for the "democratic personalities", they are compensated for their lands, capitals and agricultural tools, while the other goods are left. The measures adopted towards the "wait-and-see" landowners living in the occupied zone will depend on their political attitude towards the resistance".

As we can see, Ho Chi Minh's government certainly did not intend to push agrarian reform all the way to the end; the primary purpose of these measures was to use the peasants' impetus in the anti-French war; but to do this they had to be deceived at least until the end of military operations. That purpose was fully achieved, as General Giap explains: "There were errors in land reform but they were, in the main, committed after the restoration of peace and thus did not have any effect on the Resistance War. It should be added that not only was land reform carried out in the North, but in south Vietnam, land was also distributed to the peasants after 1951. " (op. cit.)

The great victory of Diem Bien Phu in 1954, in which the French expeditionary corps was annihilated, was largely the result of this half-hearted agrarian reform: in fact, as is well known, the victory obtained by the Vietnamese on the battlefield turned into a defeat at the negotiating table.

The Geneva Accords of July 1954 established a "provisional" division of the country along the 17th Parallel. The respective forces were to be withdrawn north and south of this demarcation line, and the parties pledged to hold general elections by 1956. In the aftermath of the victory at Diem Bien Phu, the French forces were virtually annihilated; yet the DRV government did not want to take advantage of the situation.

According to Chaliand Gérard. (op, cit.), "in the hour of Vietnam's greatest triumph, the victory of Diem Bien Phu (achieved the very day before the opening of the peace negotiations in Geneva), Phan Van Dong, Foreign Minister of the DRV, assumed a modest as well as magnanimous attitude towards the French, emphasizing the desire of his government to maintain, despite everything that had happened, friendly relations with France". "Naivety?" "Love of peace?" Nothing of the sort! Impotence and complete subservience to the decisions of the great imperialist giants. At the negotiating table, military prowess did not weigh in; the dollar was what mattered.

The Geneva Accords, the violation of which everyone traces back to the cause of the subsequent war, already contained the premises for a new war. With them, not only was the conflict interrupted in a phase of overwhelming Vietnamese superiority, but it was established that the French troops would concentrate in the north and then retreat beyond the 17th parallel, and that the Vietnamese troops would do the same in the south. Thus, the French were able to recover their divisions encircled in the Red River delta, and secure the withdrawal of 100,000 men of the Vietnamese army from the south, leaving the southern peasants, who had just begun to divide up their lands, practically helpless and at the mercy of fierce repression.

Part Two

Balance of the Agrarian Reform

The agrarian reform launched in 1953 to meet the needs of the war and increase production was inevitably going to let the class struggle in the countryside loose.

Despite the hopes of the government, which indicated a range of measures differentiated according to the political position of the landowners, the action of the poor peasants was exercised in an uncontrolled manner. They did not follow "political criteria", but "economic criteria", and struck indiscriminately at the landowners, whatever their ideas, and also at the rich peasants. While the government had hoped to contain the movement within the narrow limits of its needs, both military and economic, it "took over" the organs of the DRV and went far beyond the boundaries within which they wanted to imprison it.

In 1956 (after the war with the French) the government of the DRV had to backtrack, beginning what was called the "orgy of self-criticism". The main "errors" committed during the reform are reviewed. Above all, they denounce the "extremist tendencies" and the large number of "innocent victims".

The Vietnamese scholar Lê Châu, author of an analysis of Vietnam's economic structures, summarizes the "errors" as follows: "poor classification of landowners and of the different categories of peasants, of enemies and friends.... Non-application of the preferential treatment reserved for the [resistant] owners with respect to the other owners... attack on religious freedom", and adds: "The errors of the agrarian reform have had a harmful influence on the politics of the United National Front. This influence has resulted in an extremely tense situation in the countryside.... The support of the masses seems to be soured by these trials" (Lê Châu, Socialist Vietnam).

As for the lands belonging to the church, which in 1953 still constituted 10% of all land, at the beginning of the reform, officials were ordered to abide by the decisions of the peasant assemblies in the villages and to absolutely refrain from giving imperative orders (it was dangerous, at that time, to upset the peasants). In 1955, the government, anxious to secure the support of the various churches, issued a decree aimed at the "Protection of Religious Freedom", which states:

"...Bishops, curates, bonzes, pastors, religious tari, who have personally owned lands to rent, like landowners, are not classified as landowners.... In order to ensure the exercise of worship by the people and to help the religious, the government makes solicitous efforts to relieve agricultural taxes on lands and paddy fields left in usufruct to churches, pagodas, shrines" (reported by Lê Châu).

Starting in 1956, the government undertook a series of measures to "correct the errors" committed during the reform. To this end, the Tenth Session of the Party's Central Committee decided, among other things: "...to rectify the classification of peasants and compensate innocent victims"; "the land reform committees...no longer have the right to leadership, but become study bodies...;" "the special people's courts are abolished; religious freedoms and those of the national community must be respected".

In 1958, official Truong Chinh, in a report to the National Front Congress, described some of the results of this "correction" campaign; "In 3,501 villages we have taken steps so that the beneficiaries of land reform allow compensation for innocent victims. The results obtained are valued at about half the value of the expropriated lands. Livestock has been compensated to the extent of 38.5%, 64% of real estate has been returned... Religious communities, who had been left with insufficient land, were given new land" (quoted by Lê Châu).

According to the figures reported by Lê Châu, in the North, 810,000 hectares of land, 107,000 draft animals, had been distributed to 2,200,000

families composed of 9,000,000 people (72% of the rural population) with the reform.

<i>Average land allocation per mouth to feed - Before and after reform</i>		
	Sqms before	Sqms after
Landowners	6.779	825
Rich peasant	2.116	2.159
Medium peasant	999	1.565
Poor peasant	343	1.372
Wage-earning rural worker	-	1.421

This data is certainly not very reliable; furthermore, the determination of the area of land per mouth to be fed is a very dubious figure, of little significance and difficult to determine. It is certain, however, that big land ownership suffered a severe blow: which, of course, does not mean that social inequalities in the countryside had been eliminated.

The abolition of the burden of absentee land ownership was the indispensable premise for the development of productive forces. The Vietnamese state, like all "third world" states, faced with the world market without a basic industry, had to draw all its resources from the land, and moreover had to do so with rudimentary means. Only by producing a surplus of agricultural products and exporting the products of the mines could they acquire on the world market the machinery and everything necessary to build a national industry. The development of the economy imposed a huge productive effort in the countryside, but this would inevitably lead to the strengthening of the class of rich peasants.

Who could accumulate productive surpluses? Certainly not the poor peasant, but only those who possessed the best land, draft animals and agricultural tools. Given the individual management of the land, it was therefore necessary to pass through the concentration of land, livestock, agricultural tools in the hands of a layer of rich peasants, which further impoverished and proletarianized the poorest peasants.

The action of the poor peasants, during the reform was directed not only against the landowners, their past exploiters, but also against the rich peasants, their future exploiters. The conditions of the poor peasants worsened in such a way that in the region of Nghe An, in 1956, a major insurrection broke out that was harshly repressed by the DRV army (Nghe An is the same region where, in 1930, the soviets were established).

“Agricultural Collectivization”

In order to boost production, the North Vietnamese government also tried to concentrate agricultural means of production through the cooperative form. There are three forms that cooperatives can take: "mutual aid brigades", "semi-socialist cooperatives", "socialist cooperatives".

The "mutual aid brigades", or labor exchange brigades, are based on a traditional practice (also widespread in China), that is, mutual aid that peasants lend to each other during periods of increased work. In this form, the means of production remain as private property; it is the work that is pooled; at the end of the day, the work provided by each is calculated according to a system of points.

In "semi-socialist cooperatives", or lower-form cooperatives, the peasants hand over their main means of production, as shares, to collective management. Each, however, remains the owner of the land, livestock and tools, which they rent to the cooperative. The product, after deducting a share of accumulation for social funds, operating expenses, reuse, and rent of the means of production, is distributed to members in proportion to the work provided by each. The distribution of income in this type of cooperative is very difficult to achieve: the peasants will leave their land and their tools to the collective management, only on condition of obtaining a profit at least equal to that which can be obtained from free renting. For this reason (according to what Lê Châu reveals), the cooperative pays for the rent of the land a rather high quota, equal to about 25-30% of the total gross production. On the other hand, the rent of the estimate and tools is calculated on the basis of current local market prices.

In this type of cooperatives, the total gross production is divided on average in the following parts: 28% rent of land, livestock and tools; 5% social funds of accumulation; 6% operating expenses (purchased raw materials, taxes, etc.); 1% products re-used in the co-op; 60% remuneration of labor.

The members are not only remunerated as workers, but also as owners of land and working capital; nothing else could induce them to hand over their goods to collective management. Of course, within cooperatives, considerable inequalities persist between those who own the best land and the most cattle and those who derive their income more from their labor than from the rent of their property.

"Socialist cooperatives", or higher-form cooperatives, correspond to Soviet *kolkhoz*. The overall income is distributed among the members according to the principle "to each according to his labor". Small plots of land remain individually owned, but these must not exceed 5% of the average area per inhabitant in the municipality.

In 1959, "socialist" cooperatives accounted for just 2.4% of agricultural production units, while semi-socialist cooperatives covered 43.01% of production units. The area of land collectivized in both forms represented 37% of the total.

Agricultural collectivization did not have the desired results. The rich peasants had no interest in joining the "socialist" cooperatives, where the distribution of income was based on the work provided, nor in the "semi-socialist" ones, where free rent was higher than that paid by the cooperative.

They could profit from the ruin of the poorest peasants, either by exploiting them as wage earners or by buying their land and spare capital for a pittance.

The Vietnamese "Socialism"

After the Geneva Accords, the already weak North Vietnamese industry had lost 85% of its production capacity.

In the large cities, the permanence of the French expeditionary corps gave impetus to many activities. The withdrawal of the French immediately caused a high degree of unemployment. There was also a vertiginous increase in prices; for example, in 1957 pork cost 4.5 ND per kg on the free market; the monthly salary of a worker was then 30 ND; and with 30 ND one could buy less than 7 kg of pork.

Given the non-existence of a class of bourgeois entrepreneurs, industrialization could only happen in one way: in the form of state capitalism. Therefore, North Vietnam proclaimed itself a "socialist state": in 1958, a resolution of the Central Committee of the Party of Labor "establishes" that: "North Vietnam has entered the phase of transition to socialism" and "must ensure its march towards socialism on two solid bases: a socialist industry and agriculture organized in cooperatives" (quoted by Lê Châu).

Agricultural cooperatives and State monopoly in industry and foreign trade; this is socialism for the North Vietnamese leaders and for all affiliates of the Russian or Chinese bloc.

The "socialism" they smuggle in is a socialism established by decree, a socialism in which the wages, profit and the market continue to prevail.

Could a small country like North Vietnam possibly escape the laws of the world market? Certainly not. Even in the revolutionary Russia of 1920, wage labor continued to exist and a considerable part of the products was destined for the market. It is clear that, in an economically backward country, it was not possible to move suddenly to the elimination of capitalist relations of production; it was necessary to proceed to a gradual transformation of the economy. But this

took place under the strict direction of the proletarian party. The Bolshevik party (and Lenin first of all) never dreamed of declaring the relations of production in force at that time "socialist"; on the contrary, it repeatedly affirmed that the development of state-owned industry and the creation of cooperative farms in agriculture were not socialism and should not be called such. The shame of the leaders of the DRV is not in being subject to the strict laws of economics, but in declaring capitalist relations of production to be socialist, in an economy still dominated by small-scale production, and in attaching the label of "socialist" to a State that knows only the needs of capital accumulation.

In 1958, the government of the DRV launched a three-year plan that foresaw an increase of 12.7% in agricultural production. In 1960, however, agricultural production had decreased by 10.9% compared to 59. This fact, of course, had repercussions on all other productive sectors, with their development much slower than expected. For agriculture specially, the plan was an abject failure, as can be seen from the following table (taken from Lê Châu, op. cit).

Forecast and achievements of the three-year plan in agriculture				
<i>Annual production per inhabitant</i>	<i>1957</i>	<i>Forecasts for 1960</i>	<i>Realizations in 1960</i>	<i>% in relation to forecasts</i>
Kg of paddy (rice)	271	500	227	-55,6%
Kg of staple foods	285,7	600	315	-47,5%
Irrigated surfaces (million of ha) for collective networks	1,527	2,100	1,990	-5,0%
Livestock:				
Cattle (millions of heads)	2,144	2,730	2,295	-19,0%
Pigs (millions of heads)	2,950	5,530	3,750	-32,5%

The so-called "aid from the socialist sister countries" (USSR and co) is no better than the "aid" provided by the USA to the countries they control. North Vietnam is forced to import more and more machines and products of heavy industry and to export products of mining, agriculture, handicrafts, light industry (textiles, shoes, etc.).

Steel production, which in 1939 was 130 thousand tons, in 1964 halts to just 50 thousand. Coal mining, on the other hand, went from 2,615 thousand in 1939 to 641 thousand in 1955 and to 3,200 thousand in 1964. The share of inputs in total imports was 20% in 1939, 44.7% in 1955, 85.3% in 1959, and 91.1% in 1960. In 1959 compared with 1957, the export of mining products had

increased by 25%, that of forest products by 731%, that of agricultural products by 99%.

Under these conditions, it is ridiculous to talk about the DRV's "national independence", and infinitely more ridiculous to talk about socialism!

Part Three

The Fight in the South: The Viet Cong

South Vietnam was (and still is) the region with the most concentrated ownership of land. After the launch of land reform, during the anti-French war, the peasants had driven out the landowners and occupied their land. After the Geneva Agreements, the Vietminh forces had to withdraw from the south and leave the field open to the return of the landowners and the bloody repression that accompanied them.

The Diem government, created by the USA, immediately began the restoration of the large landed estates. The peasants had to abandon the lands they had occupied after the launch of the agrarian reform (about 2,000,000 hectares), and this was achieved through a series of bloody expeditions in the countryside.

In 1956, Diem forbade the villages from electing their own representatives according to the tradition of the communes, and appoints governmental village chiefs (the Ac On). The puppet government also establishes traveling "special courts" to wage terror in the countryside.

The restoration of the landowners gives good results; suffice it to say that in 1957, 1% of the owners had 44% of the surface cultivated with rice, while in 1934 1% of the owners had 358% of the same surface.

The guerrilla movement, with which the peasants tended to defend themselves from repression, began spontaneously, long before the formation of the "National Liberation Front", aka the Viet Cong; according to what Jean Chesneaux writes (op. cit), "for five years, from 1954 to 1959, the peasants of the villages of the South suffered through the searches, the reprisals, the acts of terrorism of the police and the army of Diem. All of this was named, in Saigon, the "witch hunt", i.e. the persecution against the old members of the resistance and against anyone suspected of having more or less close relations with them".

On the part of the DRV, there was no material or propaganda support to the insurrection; on the contrary, the Vietminh leaders who were still in the South argued that any recourse to violence should be avoided, in order not to be accused of violating the Geneva agreements. One of the exponents of the Front, Quyet Thang, declares about this period: "Very strict directives were issued in

view of a very strict compliance with Geneva: we never went beyond the legal political struggle.... This cost us hard losses, our best comrades. And it took us a whole year to explain and convince everyone that it was the right line" (quoted by Lê Châu).

The opportunist press generally tends to emphasize this position of the North Vietnamese government, and happily hypes it up as a demonstration of its "good will for peace" and the aggressiveness of the Americans. The position held by the DRV, on the other hand, showed that, in line with the decisions of the great powers, it had now accepted as definitive the partition of the country into two. On the other hand, this "will to peace" was certainly not a merit when dealing with a stronger adversary.

The NFL, formed in 1960, is a continuation of the policy of the Vietminh; it frames and directs a movement of armed struggle with a program that remains below the limits of what a movement with the same bourgeois objectives could demand. This, of course, does not detract from the valor and heroism of the Vietcong, but the violence of the struggle juxtapose with the "mildness" of what the Viet Cong is struggling for.

The Front, in the same way as the old Vietminh, agitates the ghost of national unity: "The force that guarantees the fulfillment of the task of fighting against American aggression and saving our country is unity of our great nation. The National Liberation Front of South Vietnam constantly advocates the unity of all social classes and strata". It aims at the overthrow of the puppet government, the proclamation of free elections, and the creation of a "democratic government of national union that includes the most representative personalities of the various social classes".

Is it not typical of the bourgeoisie to claim that it wants to exercise power in the name of all social classes? Revolutionaries have never hidden that they represent the interests of only one class and that they want to take power in the name of *only one* class!

On the economic level, the Front proclaims, on the one hand, the confiscation of the property of the Americans "and their cruel agents" and the need to "guarantee the workers and employees the right to participate in the management of enterprises"; on the other hand, the will to "protect the right of ownership of the means of production by the people".

Regarding the question of land reform, it declares that it wants to put the slogan "the land to those who work it" into effect. The measures that are indicated are, however, as always, ambiguous: "Confiscate the lands of the *American* imperialists, and of the *cruel and unrepentant* agrarians (?) their servants, and distribute them to the peasants without or with little land... The State will deal with the purchase of land from landowners who own more than a

certain limit depending on the situation." Lands belonging to "absentee landlords" will be turned over to the peasants... Adequate measures will be taken in this regard at a later date bearing in mind the *political attitude of each landowner*". "Finally, owners of industrial agricultural cultures and orchards must be encouraged to manage them. *Respect the legitimate rights over land ownership of the church, Buddhist clergy and the Caodaist Holy See*".

Regarding the workers, the NLF declares that it wants to implement the eight-hour day and also, with a distinct sense of humor, that it wants to "create conditions for rest and enjoyment", but the really serious part is this: "Create a system of wages and incentives for increased productivity".

And here is the attitude of the Front towards workers' struggles: "settle disputes between employers and workers through negotiations between the two sides with the mediating action of the democratic national government".

We can hear these words from the ministers of every bourgeois state: - Why resort to strikes? - The contrasts between labor and capital, will be resolved by peaceful negotiation, with the mediation of the State... of capital.

The Front does not explicitly state that it has accepted as final the partition of the country into North and South; however, by proclaiming that it wants to constitute an "independent South Vietnam", it shows that it does not want the reunification of the country (the formation of a Provisional Revolutionary Government in 1969 confirms this): "The reunification of Vietnam will be achieved little by little and by peaceful means, on the basis of negotiations between the two zones, without either side exerting pressure on the other and without foreign interference" (1965 Program, reported by Lê Châu).

Finally, it should be noted that the word "socialism" is never found in this program (even if it has become a completely meaningless, innocuous word these days).

In 1959, the Diem regime organized the so-called "agrovilles", concentration camps in which peasants were grouped together and kept under strict police surveillance. In 1962, the Americans and their puppets attempted to implement the "Staley-Taylor plan", according to which the entire rural population of South Vietnam is to be concentrated in thousands of concentration camps.

This plan ends in complete failure; the guerrillas score some brilliant military victories in 1963 (at Ap Bac) and 1964 (at Binh Gia), while the puppet army is decimated by desertions.

The living conditions of the proletarians of the south are those of pure starvation; suffice it to say that, in 1962, 40% of the working population was registered in the employment offices. The invasion of U.S. goods, the famous

"aid", quickly liquidated the weak local industry. In the textile industry, one of the most important, 80% of the workers had been laid off.

In the fall of 1963, Diem, by then compromised, was assassinated by the CIA. Throughout 1964, coups and counter coups occurred between the various bands of officials.

In 1965, the bombings and massive U.S. intervention begin.

The bombings don't have exclusively military objectives, as their purpose is also to wage terror; as such, special bombs are used (cluster bombs) specially designed not so much to destroy buildings, bridges, etc., as to make the greatest number of victims and to terrorize the population as much as possible.

The most recent facts are well known: in 1968, the Viet Cong obtained a brilliant victory, the so-called "Tet offensive"; during its course, according to the figures provided by the NLF, 380 thousand enemy soldiers, 4400 airplanes and helicopters, 4560 armored vehicles, 700 cannons, 500 naval units, 500 warehouses of war material were put out of action.

In May 1970, the U.S. launched an offensive through Thailand and Cambodia. It soon failed, and the Front, in its counterattack, destroyed the entire Cambodian air force.

The offensive in Laos, launched in February 1971, is suffering the same fate.

In this war, the Americans have made use of their enormous financial means with a cruelty and cynicism never seen before; every single day there are reports of massacres of inhabitants of entire villages, destruction of forests, torture inflicted on prisoners. The former judges of Nuremberg have learned the craft of the Nazis (their former defendants), which is to say, the technique of extermination, and they apply it with a hundred times greater means than the Nazis ever had.

But while the American military has outstanding means of destruction, the morale of the soldiers is less than zero: the troops are held together only by terror and by the force of money. No psychological element induces the American soldier to fight "willingly": - The "defense of the Homeland and of the American people"?...But where? Thousands of miles away from his own country and against a weak and badly armed enemy? - The "defense of the Western World and the values of democracy and freedom"?...But how? With torture? With the massacre of the civilian population?

The propaganda of the US government can say all it wants, but the attempts to paint this greedy war of plunder with "noble ideals" appear more and more ridiculous.

Forty-five percent of US military personnel in Vietnam use drugs (in 1970 alone, 11,000 U.S. soldiers were arrested for drug use). Soldiers often refuse to leave for war operations; there are cases of open mutinies, as well as fraggings – shootings and killings of officers. The colonel of the "marines", Robert Heinl, in an article in the "Armed Forces Journal", writes: "Our army that now remains in Vietnam is in a state approaching collapse, with individual units avoiding or having refused combat, murdering their officers and noncommissioned officers, drug-ridden, and dispirited where not near-mutinous " (quoted by the Unit of 7-7-71).

In 1970, there were 35 officially recognized cases of insubordination (but many more remain unreported).

The most hated officers have bounties of \$50 to \$1,000 placed on their heads. In 1969, a \$10,000 bounty was placed on the head of Colonel Weldon Honeycutt, who had ordered bloody suicide attacks. According to Colonel Heinl, 14 "pacifist" organizations operate in the army; 140 underground newspapers are distributed among the US troops; one of them launched this watchword: "Don't desert. Go to Vietnam, and kill your commanding officer".

In 1970 alone, there were 65,000 desertions among Americans.

* * *

The Vietnam War has become the prototype of anti-imperialist struggles: it is not an isolated case, and valuable general lessons can be drawn from it.

For many decades, practically the only movements of rebellion against exploitation that take the form of armed violence are those that occur in the so-called "Third World".

What are the reasons for this? Has the proletariat of Western countries definitively repudiated armed violence? Is this a confirmation of the "Third Worldist" theory of the "countryside besieging the city"? The Third Worldists limit themselves to noting a fact: that is, that the Western proletariat, for many years, has not left the legal struggles. But, instead of explaining the reasons, they accept this state of affairs as a permanent fact, and they draw the conclusion that the Western proletariat is now "gentrified" and that the vanguard of the world revolution is no longer in the West (in the "city"), but in the anti-imperialist struggles taking place in the underdeveloped countries (in the "countryside").

Che Guevara, in the preface to Giap's book *People's War, People's Army*, said: "This work... raises questions of general interest for the world in the struggle for its liberation. They can be summarized as follows: the feasibility of armed struggle under particular conditions that have nullified the peaceful methods of the liberation struggle". Guevara therefore admits the possibility of a

"peaceful way" while he envisaged armed struggle only "in particular conditions" in which the "peaceful way" was not possible.

In fact, for over 50 years now, the Western proletariat has been fighting in a "peaceful way". What are the results?

Today, as a result of the crisis of regime of capitalist economy, the living conditions of the working class in the West are getting worse and worse and unemployment is increasing all over the world. The persistence of the Western proletariat on the tracks of peaceful and legal struggle has allowed international imperialism to crush any movement of rebellion of the exploited masses of the "third world". The Vietnam struggle shows how the possibility of victory of any anti-imperialist struggle is inextricably linked to the attitude of the proletariat of the industrialized countries. As long as the Western proletariat keeps fighting in a "peaceful way" like how the opportunist organizations linked to Moscow and Beijing try to keep it, none of these struggles will have any hope of success.

However, opportunism carries out its action not only in the West, but also in the "Third World", where it tries to bind the proletariat to the claims of the national bourgeoisie and to prevent it from forming an autonomous organization separate from the other classes.

Today, in spite of the advancing economic crisis, the western proletariat still only shows some mild signs of life and imperialism maintains its positions all over the world. Should we draw the conclusion that imperialism is invincible and that the US army, the most powerful and numerous ever seen, will always be able to maintain the current social order? Certainly not. Who flies the American planes? Who drives the tanks? Who operates the cannons? How scary will the bombs be when the red pilots refuse to leave? What fear will the mighty US fleet have when red sailors throw their officers overboard? In what direction will the guns of US soldiers fire when the resurrected International Party of the working class exerts its influence on it?

The struggle against imperialism is fought first of all here, in the West, not with "protest" demonstrations and chants, but with the struggle against opportunism and with the re-establishment of the world party of the working class.