LE DUAN
SELECTED WRITINGS

THE VIETNAMESE REVOLUTION
FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS
ESSENTIAL TASKS

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INTRODUCTION

During the long process of struggle to build and defend their country, our heroic people developed a national consciousness at an early date and evinced extremely ardent patriotism. Under French colonialist rule, which lasted nearly a century, they refused to resign themselves to servitude and repeatedly rose up in arms against the aggressors and the traitors. However, all those early movements to oppose French rule and save the nation eventually failed.

In the nineteen-twenties, after the Can Vuong insurrections had been stamped out, the seething national-liberation movement faced a serious crisis as to which line to follow. The French colonialists on the one hand severely repressed and terrorized the patriots, and on the other, strove to sow capitulationist ideas and left no stone unturned to encourage various reformist and collaborationist tendencies. The people were confused concerning the revolutionary line to follow in order to liberate the nation. An acute conflict developed among the patriotic forces between two main tendencies: one, of the young proletariat, the other, of the national bourgeoisie. Each put forward its own political programme to try to win over the masses.

It was at that juncture that President Ho Chi Minh, with his genius and his revolutionary activity, supplied a timely

1. Monarchist patriotic movement, also called the Scholars' Movement (Tr.)
answer to those pressing exigencies of history. Overcoming of the nationalism of the literati and the bourgeois-oriented revolutionaries of those times, he embraced Marxism-Leninism at an early age and took the road of proletarian revolution. He said: “In order to save the country and liberate the nation, there is no other road but that of the proletarian revolution.”

The first tremendous achievement of President Ho Chi Minh was to link the Vietnamese revolution with the international workers' movement and to guide the Vietnamese people over the road he himself had taken, which led from patriotism to Marxism-Leninism. It was the only path to liberation, one that was opened by the Russian October Revolution to the toiling people and oppressed nations of the whole world.

To the Vietnamese people, Marxism-Leninism was like “food and drink for a hungry and thirsty traveller.” It powerfully drew the Vietnamese patriots to the road of the proletarian revolution and stirred up a vigorous national and democratic wave throughout the country, in which the working class became an independent political force. The combination of Marxism-Leninism, the most revolutionary ideology of our times, with the fierce struggle put up by the working class, the most revolutionary class and the close ally of the peasantry, and with the patriotic movement of the nation in full revolutionary effervescence, led to the founding of our Party on February 3, 1930.

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2. Ibid. p. 652.
That extremely important event marked a fundamental turning-point in the history of the Vietnamese revolution. The propagation of Marxism-Leninism to our colonial and semi-feudal country was the first necessary preparatory step which led to the most glorious insurrectionary period and the greatest leap forward in the evolution of the Vietnamese nation, beginning with the August 1945 Revolution and the setting up of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam.

The history of our Party and our people over the past forty years is a splendid record of revolutionary struggle.

It is the history of repeated revolutionary upsurges and many valiant insurrections: the 1930-1931 revolutionary high tide, that of 1936-1939, and the patriotic wave of 1940-1945, which led to the triumph of the August Revolution.

It is the history of two protracted wars of resistance waged by our heroic people against the French colonialists and the American imperialist aggressors in order to bring the struggle for national liberation to completion, defend the fatherland, and contribute to the great battle waged by the world's people for peace, national independence, democracy and socialism.

It is also the history of two great revolutions of our times: the people's national democratic revolution and the socialist revolution. Over the past ten years, under the leadership of our Party and the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation, these two revolutionary tasks have been closely co-ordinated and aimed at common objectives: to liberate the South, defend the North, and advance to the peaceful reunification of the country.

Under the leadership of our Party headed by our great President Ho Chi Minh, the people throughout our country
have written the finest pages in the history of our nation and ushered in an era of independence and freedom — the era of socialism.

Our Party and President Hồ Chí Minh, who have given guidance to the Vietnamese revolution all along these last forty years, have brought our people into the world arena as one of the first colonial and dependent nations to have successfully carried out a national liberation revolution and won power throughout the land; as one of the first to have defeated old colonialism, thus opening the process of piece-by-piece collapse of the colonial system of imperialism; as a vanguard fighter who is knocking down the neo-colonialism of American imperialism, the imperialist chieftain and the international gendarme.

By their magnificent victories over imperialism and feudalism and by the socialist revolution they are carrying out in the North, our working class and nation, led by our Party, are bringing the most active contribution, side by side with the peoples of the fraternal socialist countries, to the historic process of change now taking place in the world.

The brilliant successes reaped by our people over the past forty years originate from the clear-sighted leadership of our Party, a party absolutely loyal to the supreme interests of the working class and the nation.

Every step forward of our revolution and our people is a triumph for Marxism-Leninism, the invincible revolutionary doctrine, the shining truth of the new era.

Our great successes are the results of the invincible militant unity of our toiling people and our entire nation in their struggle for independence and freedom, for socialism.
The achievements recorded by the Vietnamese revolution over the past forty years are closely associated with the progress of the world revolution in the new era—the era of transition from capitalism to socialism on a world scale—which began with the Great Russian October Revolution. These achievements are bound up with the magnificent victory of the Soviet Union over the German-Italian-Japanese fascist coalition; with the splendid success of the Chinese revolution; with the overwhelming superiority of the socialist camp, the decisive factor in the evolution of human society; with the powerful national-liberation movement, the intense struggle of the working class and toiling people in the capitalist countries, and with the democratic and peace movement sweeping the world.

In order to attain those glorious achievements, our Party and people have had to face countless hardships and trials. Under the Party's banner, many cadres and Party members, many civilians and fighters, have laid down their lives. They displayed the heroic spirit of the vanguard class and the nation, and evinced boundless loyalty to the fatherland, to the cause of the people's liberation, and to ever-victorious Marxism-Leninism. These examples of heroism will for ever be remembered by our people, our Party, by the present generation and all generations to come.

On this anniversary day so full of meaning, our hearts are filled with infinite sorrow: our venerated and beloved President Ho Chi Minh is no more.

Our entire Party and our entire people feel eternal gratitude to our great leader.
President Ho Chi Minh was the first to sow the seeds of Marxism-Leninism on Vietnamese soil, causing the Vietnamese revolution to blossom and bear fruit. He spent much effort training a host of elite cadres for our Party and devoted his care and energy to building it into a united, unified and solid whole. Founded, led, and forged and tempered by President Ho Chi Minh, the teacher of the Vietnamese revolution, the great national hero, and the outstanding internationalist militant, our Party quickly became a new-type party of the working class, one with a great wealth of experience and a splendid record of struggle.

Every step forward of our people and our Party over the past forty years was bound up with the infinitely active and noble revolutionary life of President Ho Chi Minh. His work and the achievements of our people and our Party make up the immortal epic of the Vietnamese revolution.

President Ho Chi Minh was the great leader of the Party and the great leader of our nation. He embodied the close union of the ideal of independence and freedom with that of socialism and communism, of ardent patriotism with genuine proletarian internationalism.

He represented the essence of the spiritual values of our people all along their 4,000-year history. In him, the best qualities of our nation were blended with Marxism-Leninism, the loftiest ideology attained by mankind in our times.

President Ho Chi Minh's life was as pure as light. He set a magnificent example of unflinching revolutionary resolve, determination to safeguard independence and sovereignty,
humanity and deep love of the people, total dedication to the public interest and complete selflessness, modesty and simplicity.

President Ho Chi Minh's lofty mind and noble virtues will for ever remain a source of spiritual enlightenment and moral inspiration for us. His resplendent banner will for ever show us the way to march forward.
PART ONE

THE PEOPLE'S NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION

CHAPTER ONE

PROBLEMS OF REVOLUTIONARY STRATEGY

In the light of Marxism-Leninism, our Party, as soon as it came into existence, had a clear and complete conception of the necessary path of development of the Vietnamese revolution. Its Political Theses of 1930 pointed out that the Vietnamese revolution must go through two stages: first, the national democratic revolution; then, a direct passage to socialist revolution, bypassing the stage of capitalist development. The ultimate aim of the Party remains the realization of communism. Guided by this programme, the Party has worked out a concrete line for each period and led the people through successive stages—each beset with difficulties, hardships and complexities—to the present glorious triumph.

Once the French colonialists had conquered our country, we lost our independence, freedom, right to live and even our national culture, which had taken shape in the course of thousands of years of history. To drive out the imperialist aggressors, liberate the nation, win back independence and freedom for the fatherland, bring the people a decent standard of living and happiness, and restore the cultural and spiritual values of the Vietnamese man—such were the deepest aspirations of all Vietnamese patriots.

But those national aspirations were thwarted by the imperialist aggressors, and in league with them was the feudal
class. That collusion between imperialism and feudalism is the characteristic feature of colonial regimes. That is why the contradiction between our people and aggressive imperialism is tied up with their opposition to the feudal regime, the prop of imperialist rule and exploitation. And so the anti-imperialist task cannot be separated from the anti-feudal task. The national-liberation revolution must necessarily have a democratic content.

At all times, a genuine national movement must have a definite democratic content, for any class wishing to regain national sovereignty or to “become a nation by itself” cannot but satisfy certain democratic claims of the popular masses, the forces which secure the victory of the national movement.

Our country is an agricultural one, with over 90% of its population made up of peasants. Imperialism relies on feudalism to exploit our people, essentially the peasantry. That is why to liberate the nation means first and foremost and essentially to liberate the peasants. Democracy here means first and foremost and essentially democracy for the peasants. The eager aspiration of the peasants is that the nation should be independent and the tillers should have land, and that they should be freed from the twofold oppression of imperialism and feudalism. They can only escape from oppression and exploitation at the hands of the landlords if imperialism—the defender and protector of feudalism, and at the same time the worst enemy of our nation and of the peasantry—is toppled. To free the peasants from the yoke imposed on them by the feudal landlords, to bring them land—such is the basic content of the democratic revolution; at the same
time, to do so is to meet the exigencies of the cause of national liberation, for “the national problem in the colonial countries is in essence a peasant problem.”

Holding firm and aloft the national and democratic banner with its two strategic slogans, “National Independence” and “Land to the Tiller,” our Party has succeeded in making large masses of the peasantry follow the lead of the working class, mobilizing other popular strata and taking them along with the workers and peasants to the battleground of the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal struggle. In the course of the revolution, basing ourselves on an analysis of concrete class relations and the possibility of dividing the ranks of our imperialist and feudal foes, we have embodied those strategic tasks in concrete objectives suited to each period in order to concentrate the fire of the revolution on the most dangerous enemy at the moment. However, in all periods, the concrete objectives and political tasks set forth by the Party have been fundamentally national and democratic in their content and closely bound up with both the anti-imperialist and the anti-feudal tasks.

After the August Revolution, during the war of resistance against the French colonialists, while directing the spearhead of the revolution essentially against the imperialist aggressors and their agents, the Party step by step carried out the tasks of the agrarian revolution. In 1953, as the war of resistance entered a most decisive stage, the Party mobilized the masses for a drastic reduction of land rent and for land reform, in implementation of the watchword “Land to the Tillers.” Thanks to this, the spirit and power of resistance of millions of peasants were intensified, the worker-peasant alliance was
reinforced, the people's power and the National United Front were strengthened, the fighting ability of the people's army rose at an unprecedented rate, and all activities of the resistance were impelled forward. This drive decisively contributed to the great Dien Bien Phu victory. To carry out land reform while the war of resistance was going on was a very judicious policy of our Party, one with a creative character.

At present, the invincible strength of the revolution in South Viet Nam is due to the fact that the Southern people, whose bulk is made up of over ten million peasants, have been given genuine national and democratic rights by the revolution, and that the Southern revolution has, in an imaginative way, coupled the two tasks, the national and the democratic, in the struggle against the neo-colonialism of the American imperialists.

What characterizes neo-colonialism is the fact that it is effected not through direct administration by the imperialists, but through a servile native regime representing the interests of the feudal landlord class and the comprador bourgeoisie with a "national democratic" cloak. Under these circumstances, the revolution cannot but vigorously attack the puppet regime to topple it and thus knock down the prop used by imperialism to practise neo-colonialism. By overthrowing the Ngo Dinh Diem administration, the people of the South dealt a mortal blow at the American imperialists' neo-colonialism, triggering off a period of unending crisis for the puppet regime. In mid-1965, refusing to accept defeat and mulishly persisting in their design, the American imperialists massively introduced American troops into South Viet Nam in
the hope of retrieving the situation. But the South Vietnamese people, far from stepping back, resolutely marched forward and concentrated the blazing fire of the people’s war on the American aggressive troops, at the same time continuing to strike hard blows at the puppet army and administration. Determined to fight both the Americans and their puppets until “the Americans quit and the puppets topple”, the people of the South, fired by their victories, are rushing forward, resolved to achieve at all costs their immediate fundamental objective: an independent, democratic, peaceful, neutral and prosperous South Viet Nam, leading to the ultimate peaceful reunification of the country.

While struggling shoulder to shoulder with our Southern fellow-countrymen with a view to bringing the national democratic revolution to completion, our people in the North, under the leadership of the Party, set about building socialism as early as 1954, after the victory of the war of resistance against the French colonialists. This is in strict implementation of the first program of the Party and in conformity with the irresistible trend of the national-liberation movement in our times, when national democratic revolutions proceed direct to socialist revolutions, bypassing the stage of capitalist development. This is the only way guaranteeing complete victory for the national liberation cause, genuine independence, and uninterrupted progress and prosperity for the peoples hitherto kept in backwardness by the yoke of imperialism and colonialism.

The socialist revolution which has been going on for the last ten years and more has reaped only initial results so far.
But these results are none the less extremely important: they have changed and are changing the face of the North in a fundamental way in all fields: political, economic, social and cultural, turning the North into an ever stronger base for the completion of the national democratic revolution throughout the country. By building socialism, completely frustrating the war of destruction waged by the American imperialists, fulfilling the duties of the great rear area to the great fighting front in the resistance to American aggression, for national salvation, our people are supplying a vivid illustration of the greatest truth of our times: in the present era, national independence, democracy, and socialism are inseparable.

Over one hundred years ago, Marxism came into being with a rousing battle cry: “Workers of all countries, unite!”

Developing Marxism in the era of imperialism, when capitalism had not only become an intolerable yoke on the proletariat and the toiling people of the “mother countries” but had also clamped the fetters of servitude on the colonial peoples, Lenin called out: “Workers of all countries and oppressed peoples, unite!” The strength of this strategic watchword lies in this fact: it points out that in the present era, the revolution aimed at overthrowing capitalism and taking mankind to socialism can only carry the day by associating in one single drive the struggle put up by the proletariat in all countries and that waged by the colonial peoples against imperialism. The battle for national liberation, independence and democracy fought by the people of colonial and dependent countries can only end in total victory if it becomes part and parcel of the world proletarian revolution, in conformity with the necessary trend of development of human
society in the present era: advance to socialism. As President Ho Chi Minh asserted: “Only socialism, only communism, can free the oppressed nations and the toiling people of the world from servitude.”

As capitalism sinks into its final decay, the problems of national independence and democracy do not rest solely with the people of colonial and dependent countries but are also the responsibility of the communist and workers’ parties in developed capitalist countries in the struggle for socialism and communism. Indeed, at present the monopoly capitalists holding sway in those countries have sold out and are selling out national sovereignty piecemeal to the American imperialists, the international capitalist organizations, and the supranational aggressive military blocs, while intensifying the exploitation and oppression of the working class and labouring people in their own respective countries, curtailing and even in many instances trampling upon all democratic liberties, though they are but bourgeois democratic liberties. For this reason the Communists now must seize hold of the national democratic banner and march forward, as had been pointed out by Stalin.

To hold high the national and democratic banner and advance direct to socialism, bypassing the stage of capitalist development: this strategic line of our Party has been proved to be wholly correct by the realities of the Vietnamese revolution over the past forty years and those of the world

revolutions as well. The victory of the Vietnamese revolution is the victory of Marxism-Leninism applied in a creative manner to the conditions of a colonial and semi-feudal country.

Thanks to its judicious line, our Party has succeeded in rallying round it all patriotic classes and strata and building a strong and large revolutionary army fighting for the liberation of the nation and the people.

The first crucial problem of the revolution is correctly and fully to assert the leading role of the working class. Because of its economic, political, and historical position, the working class has become the representative of the progress of human society in our epoch—the only class capable of making the toiling people masters of their own destiny. Although young in age and small in number, the Vietnamese proletariat is a very resolutely revolutionary class. Born before the Vietnamese national bourgeoisie came into existence, it had hardly grown up when it absorbed the revolutionary light of Marxism-Leninism and quickly became a conscious political force, unified throughout the three parts—North, Centre, and South—of the country. Its close ties with the pauperized toiling peasantry, from which it sprang, created favourable conditions for the setting up of a firm worker-peasant alliance. Furthermore, the Vietnamese working class entered the political arena at a time when the Great Russian October Revolution had scored a triumph which reverberated throughout the five continents and when in neighbouring China, after the treason of the bourgeoisie, the Chinese proletariat...
had stepped forward and taken hold of the national democratic banner. This historical background added to the political prestige of the Vietnamese proletariat. The above-mentioned traits gave the latter the immense strength and moral ascendancy which helped it win a pre-eminent position and take over the leadership of the Vietnamese revolution after the failure of the Yen Bai insurrection.\(^1\)

President Ho Chi Minh said: "The \textit{working class} is the most courageous and revolutionary class, which unflinchingly and fearlessly stands up to the imperialists and colonialists. Armed with a vanguard revolutionary doctrine and the experience of the international proletarian movement, our working class has proved itself to be the most deserving and trustworthy leader of the Vietnamese people."\(^2\) The reason why our Party has steered a correct political course throughout all periods and has led the Vietnamese revolution from one victory to another is because it holds firm to the stand of the working class and has a thorough grasp of Marxism-Leninism, the revolutionary doctrine of the working class.

Besides the proletariat, the leading class, the peasantry is the most active opponent of imperialism and feudalism. The peasants make up the majority of our population and the greatest force in the national democratic revolution. That is why to make them follow the lead of the working class,

\(^1\) Insurrection staged by the Quoc Dan Dang nationalist Party in February 1930. (Fr).
develop their great revolutionary potential to the utmost, and build the *worker-peasant alliance* is the basic condition ensuring victory to the revolution.

Being a strategic principle of Marxism-Leninism, a universal necessity for all revolutions led by the proletariat, the problem of the worker-peasant alliance assumes particular importance in such a country as ours. Under the colonial and semi-feudal regime, the proletariat of our country, though small in size, displayed a strength out of proportion to its numbers. Besides following a correct revolutionary course, it had won over a natural ally, an extremely reliable one, who was possessed of powerful forces and high revolutionary mettle: the peasantry. Immediately after coming into existence, our Party was able to establish itself as the leader of the revolution for it had succeeded in building a worker-peasant alliance at an early date. The political prestige of our Party and its leadership of the revolution are absolute and indisputable because they stem from the invincible strength of the Party’s grassroots support, the worker-peasant masses.

In the present era, a movement for social emancipation and national liberation can only be truly revolutionary when its core is made up of the workers and peasants, when it develops with the power of the worker-peasant alliance and under the leadership of the working class. If revolution is the work of the masses, then in the conditions prevailing in such a country as ours, a truly revolutionary movement must be one whose main force includes two components: the workers and the peasants. Only by realizing a worker-peasant alliance and relying on that firm foundation will
the party of the working class be able to broaden the ranks of the revolution to include other classes and strata with a national and democratic leaning. There can be no National United Front without the worker-peasant alliance. Our people's democratic State born of the August Revolution reflects broad national union, but it is first and foremost a worker-peasant power under the leadership of the working class. This explains why the people's democratic State could set about discharging the responsibilities of the dictatorship of the proletariat immediately after the basic completion of the national democratic revolution in the North, without having to go through another political revolution. Without the worker-peasant alliance, one cannot proceed to the socialist revolution, bypassing the stage of capitalist development. Likewise, the revolutionary army, a very important instrument of violence in the national democratic revolution in our country, can only be a worker-peasant army, a product of the working class and the peasantry, put under the direct and absolute leadership of our Party, the party of the working class.

And so, to have the Party — the vanguard of the working class — and to have the worker-peasant alliance mean to have everything. In the chain of factors ensuring victory for the Vietnamese revolution, one must give top prominence to the leadership of the party of the working class and the role played by the worker-peasant alliance.

Unlike the peasantry in many other countries, the Vietnamese peasants never followed the lead of the national bourgeoisie, which was weak economically and flabby politically. It was because their revolutionary ardour and aspira-
tions went far beyond the bounds within reach of the bourgeoisie. The peasantry is highly revolutionary but cannot lead the revolution, for it does not represent any distinctive mode of production and has neither an independent political position nor an ideology of its own. In the national democratic revolution in our country, it can only join with and be guided by the working class. It cannot even carry out the agrarian revolution by itself. In a bourgeois democratic revolution of the old type, the land problem could only be solved in agreement with the line and the interests of the bourgeoisie. In the new democratic revolution, the agrarian revolution must be carried out under the leadership of the proletariat, according to its standpoint and line. Only then can the peasantry's basic interests, both immediate and long-range, be satisfied. Only by being the companion of the working class will the peasantry become an immense force. While the strength of the working class is increased severalfold for having a great ally, the peasantry, it should also be understood that the latter's power can be brought into full play only in alliance with and under the guidance of the working class.

Our Party is the party of the working class; its political line reflects the stand and viewpoint of the working class, and has answered the peasantry's eager aspirations and vital interests. For this reason, over the past forty years, the peasant masses have faithfully followed the lead of the party of the working class, making the worker-peasant alliance ever firmer and stronger. The Vietnamese revolution proves that a revolutionary movement that adheres to the line of the
working class, of Marxism-Leninism, and has the worker-peasant alliance as its mighty main force is bound to triumph, no matter how powerful its foes and how numerous the trials and dangers it may have to face.

Throughout all periods of the national democratic revolution, on the strength of a firm worker-peasant alliance, our Party has brought together all patriotic and progressive popular strata, and united all nationalities, all religious communities, all forces within the country that could be rallied; it has won over all forces opposed to the common enemy of the nation, brought into existence a broad National United Front, neutralized all forces that could be neutralized, and directed the spearhead of the revolution at the imperialist aggressors and their agents. The successes achieved by the revolution cannot be dissociated from the correct Front policy pursued by our Party.

Experience has shown that in carrying out the Front policy one must guard against and oppose both the rightist and “leftist” tendencies.

The Front is a unity of opposites which includes various classes in league with each other on the basis of a definite common programme of struggle. That is why one cannot conceive of a classless Front. A principled line requires that one should view and solve all problems related to the Front policy from a class stand. There are classes with essentially similar interests; there also exist classes whose interests are linked together only to a certain extent. Each class, for the sake of its own interest and the common interest, joins forces with other classes within the Front. Moreover, the common interest itself is viewed by each class from its own angle.
For the proletariat, on account of its historical position, its class interest and the common national interest are completely at one. But for the other classes, their respective interests and the common national interest converge in some respects, but diverge in others. For this reason, while one must strive to maintain and strengthen the Front's unity, there must necessarily be a struggle between the viewpoints of the various members of the Front, who represent different classes. One-sided unity, unaccompanied by struggle, in practice leads to the disruption of unity and the liquidation of the Front. If one knows how to conduct a principled struggle, i.e. one that is based on the common political programme and aimed at implementing it, far from breaking up unity and weakening the Front, one will have done the only thing that could strengthen unity and consolidate the Front.

Being the leader of the revolution and the author of a political line that fully represents the common national interest, our Party has naturally been recognized as the leader of the Front. The interest of the revolution and that of the nation require that one should constantly enhance and consolidate the leading role of the Party within the Front, firmly maintain the Party's independent political line and organization, and oppose all tendencies to downgrade the Party's role and to dissolve the Party in the Front. The key to firmly maintaining the Party's leadership of the Front and strengthening the latter is ceaselessly to reinforce the worker-peasant alliance. Without the worker-peasant alliance as its firm foundation, there can be no genuine national democratic Front, let alone a broadening of its base.
The petty bourgeoisie in such a former colonial country as ours evinces great revolutionary ardour. In particular, the various strata of intellectuals and students are fervently patriotic and eager to safeguard the nation’s fine cultural traditions and to restore the noble spiritual values of the Vietnamese man which have been condemned by the imperialists and feudalists. They are historically conscious and alive to the trend of events. Awakened and stimulated by the revolutionary upsurge of the workers and peasants, they have joined the revolutionary ranks in growing numbers and played an important role in the people’s struggle, especially in the towns and cities.

The national bourgeoisie, restricted by imperialism, is also patriotic in some respects. To the national struggle for liberation it has made some contribution. Present-day capitalism, which has proved to be utterly outmoded historically, has displayed its odious reactionary features right on our soil, in the form of old and new colonialism. Socialism appears more and more clearly as the inevitable trend of social development. In this historical context and in face of the powerful revolutionary movement of the masses and the great achievements of the revolution, a certain number of intellectuals sprung from the national bourgeoisie and even some national bourgeois, their children in particular, have become conscious of the trend of the times and gradually shown a fundamental shift in their stand; step by step they have gone over to the side of the workers and peasants and have followed the road of national independence and democracy of the new era.

Relying on the basic forces, the workers and peasants, and in each period making an accurate appraisal of the changes
happening in class relations to single out the most dangerous foe to defeat, our Party has applied extremely flexible tactics, unceasingly broadened the National United Front and drawn ever more new forces into the Front's organizations or into various forms of joint action aimed at securing an immediate concrete objective for the revolution.

While carrying out that Front policy, our Party has never failed to take the utmost advantage of the contradictions within the ranks of the enemy, dividing and isolating them to the greatest extent in order to weaken their position and influence, increase the strength of the revolution to the highest degree, and pave the way for its advance.

To turn to account the internal conflicts of the enemy is one of the problems of strategic significance in the proletarian revolution.

The inevitable collapse of capitalism and its replacement by socialism will result from the struggle waged by the proletariat to topple it and also from the internal contradictions within the capitalist system of production and within the bourgeoisie, which sap the capitalist regime.

To work out the strategy of world revolution in the era of imperialism, Leninism started from three fundamental contradictions: that between the proletariat and capital, that between the oppressed nations and imperialism, and that among the imperialists themselves. After the October Revolution, another fundamental antagonism has appeared, that between two world systems: the socialist and the capitalist. The evolution of these contradictions as a whole creates the relation of forces between revolution and counter-revolution on a world scale.
The Communists never harbour any illusions and never passively wait for what may come out of the contradictions within the enemy's ranks. Moreover, we are aware that in face of action by the people, the hostile forces are wont to strive to patch up their quarrels in the hope of "closing their ranks" against the revolution. But there is a more fundamental truth: "Capitalist property disintegrated them, transformed them from allies into savage beasts."\(^1\)

Far from pinning our hopes on the antagonisms within the enemy's ranks, we are fully aware that the development of these contradictions and the extent to which they may be capitalized on are in the last analysis determined by the real strength of the revolution. The experience of all genuinely popular revolutions shows that the stronger the revolutionary forces grow and the higher the revolutionary tide rises, the more the enemy's ranks are rent by contradictions and are likely to split. Ultimately, the time comes when these conflicts have grown so exacerbated as to render all compromise impossible between the various enemy factions. This constitutes one of the unmistakable signs of ripeness of the revolutionary situation; the revolution then breaks out and the enemy's rule is toppled in decisive battles.

One trait of the revolution in our country is the fact that it has always had to face a powerful imperialist foe and, on many occasions, to cope with not one but several enemies at a time. In such circumstances, our Party has applied in a creative manner this shrewd recommendation of Lenin:

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"The more powerful enemy can be vanquished only by exerting the utmost effort, and by the most thorough, careful, attentive, skilful and obligatory use of any, even the smallest, rift between the enemies (...) and also by taking advantage of any, even the smallest, opportunity of winning a mass ally, even though this ally is temporary, vacillating, unstable, unreliable and conditional." ¹

With a view to making capital of the enemy's internal contradictions, dividing and isolating them, our Party, while holding firm to principles, has used various tactics in a very flexible and clever way. Before the August Revolution, our Party took extremely timely advantage of the mortal conflict between the Japanese and the French in order to give a great impulse to the anti-Japanese resistance for national salvation. After the Japanese surrender, it seized the opportunity and led the people in a victorious general insurrection. After the August Revolution, when the revolutionary power was still in its infancy and we were facing serious dangers created by internal and external foes, when the situation could indeed be likened to a "thousand-pound weight hanging by a hair," our Party, headed by President Ho Chi Minh, followed an extremely clear-sighted political line, at the same time rigorous in principle and flexible in tactics, and tided the country over countless seemingly insuperable difficulties. We would at one time reach a temporary compromise with Chiang Kai-shek in order to get our hands free to cope with the French colonialists, only to

do the same later with the French in order to drive out the Chiang Kai-shek troops and wipe out the reactionaries, their agents. We thus gained time to consolidate our forces and prepare for a nationwide resistance to French colonialist aggression, which the Party knew was inevitable. Those extremely perspicacious moves will go down in the history of the revolution in our country as magnificent examples of the Leninist tactics of exploiting contradictions within the enemy's ranks and granting concessions while holding firm to principles.

Boundless loyalty to the revolutionary cause, iron resolve to liberate the nation and the people, firm reliance on the strength of the masses, all these virtues being combined with especial political sagacity and flair—such is what is required for a creative and effective application of this strategic principle: to capitalize upon the enemy's internal contradictions so as to ceaselessly take the revolution forward to new positions.
CHAPTER TWO

PRINCIPLES AND METHODS FOR REVOLUTIONARY ACTION

In order to bring the revolution to victory, it is of primary importance correctly to determine both the general orientation and strategic objective and the specific orientation and objective for each period. But of no less importance than defining the orientation and objective is the problem of how to carry them into effect once such decisions have been made: what road to follow? what forms to adopt? what measures to use? Experience has shown that a revolutionary movement may mark time, or even fail, not for lack of clearly-defined orientations and objectives but essentially because there have been no appropriate principles and methods for revolutionary action.

Methods of revolutionary action are aimed at defeating the enemy of the revolution, and this in the most advantageous way, so that the revolution may attain its ends as quickly as possible. Here, besides courage, one also needs wisdom; this is not only a science, but also an art.

No other field requires from the revolutionary a higher creative spirit than that of the methods for revolutionary action. Revolution is creation; without imagination and ingenuity, a revolution cannot succeed. There has never been and will never be a unique formula, one that is suited to all
circumstances and all times, for making a revolution. One
given method may be adapted to a certain country but unfit
for another. A correct method in certain times and under
certain circumstances may be erroneous in other situations.
All depends on concrete historical conditions. Lenin said:
"Marxism demands an absolutely historical examination
of the question of the forms of struggle. To treat this
question apart from the concrete historical situation be­
trays a failure to understand the rudiments of dialectical
materialism. [...] To attempt to answer yes or no to the
question whether any particular means of struggle should
be used, without making a detailed examination of the con­
crete situation of the given movement at the given stage of
its development, means completely to abandon the Marxist
position."\(^1\)

A method or a form of struggle can only be considered
the best and most judicious one when it fully satisfies the
requirements of a given concrete situation, when it is wholly
suited to the conditions in which it is applied, when it makes
it possible to put on their mettle the revolutionary and pro­
gressive forces and rouse them to action, when it permits a
thorough exploitation of the enemy’s weaknesses, and for all
these reasons, is likely to bring about the greatest successes
possible, given the relation of forces prevailing at the moment.

As a result of more than a century of revolutionary strug­
gle, the international proletariat has amassed a great wealth
of precious experience. If one has mastered the concrete his­
torical perspective and taken the peculiar traits of one’s

country into full account, the more one knows about the revolutionary experience gained in other countries, the greater the possibility for revolutionary inventiveness in one's own country. While carrying on the struggle, our Party knows how to enrich its fund of revolutionary knowledge and ceaselessly develop its imagination and skill in political leadership, not only by constantly assessing, summing up and improving upon the experience gained in our own revolution but also through attentive, careful and selective study of the revolutionary experience acquired in other countries, full attention being paid to the specific conditions of the Vietnamese revolution.

It is a matter of principle that, either in day-to-day policies or in the practice of revolutionary struggle, no matter in what way and under what circumstances, a revolutionary should never lose sight of the final goal. To consider the fight for small day-to-day gains and immediate targets as "everything" while looking upon the final goal as "nothing"—"to sacrifice the future of the movement to the present"—is to display the worst kind of opportunism, which can only result in the popular masses being held in eternal servitude.

However, it is by no means sufficient to comprehend the final objective. While firmly keeping in mind the revolutionary goal, the art of revolutionary leadership lies in knowing how to win step by step, in judicious fashion. Revolution is the work of the millions of people of the popular masses, who stand up to overthrow the ruling classes, which command a colossal machinery of violence together with other material and spiritual forces. That is why a revolution is always a long-drawn process. From the initial steps to the final
victory, a revolution must of necessity go through many stages of struggle beset with difficulties and complexities and full of twists and bends, in order to clear one obstacle after another and gradually change the relation of forces between the revolution and the counter-revolution, until overwhelming superiority is achieved over the ruling classes. To push the enemy back and wrest one success after another for the revolution, and proceed to the total defeat of the enemy and a complete victory for the revolution—such is a law of revolutionary struggle.

For those reasons, on the long road leading to the final goal, one should never fail to give due consideration to the concrete conditions in which the battle is fought in each given period: On the side of the revolution, when and in what circumstances are the masses going into action? In what way are the various social forces arrayed? On the other side, what are the enemy's strong and weak points? How is he manoeuvring and with what aims in mind? Lenin used to demand that the Communists should pay unflagging attention to and view with the greatest objectivity not only the situation at home but also all elements of world economy and politics, all class forces both within the country and throughout the world and the relationships between those forces. Failing full notice of all these factors of changing concrete reality, a revolutionary may at best perceive the ultimate objective of the struggle but he will have no command over the means to achieve it; he will not find the ways, methods, and practical means to reach that goal, and so will be liable to commit serious blunders in his strategic and tactical guidance of the revolution.
To know how to win step by step in a judicious manner means that, in given times and under given circumstances, one should set the most appropriate concrete objectives and, on the strength of objective laws, direct the fight in such a way as to achieve the maximum success. This approach paves the way for further advances of the revolution and opens up the surest prospects for ultimate victory.

Such steps have been taken by our revolution. The triumph of the August Revolution would not have been possible had it not been preceded by the 1930-1931 and 1936-1939 movements and the patriotic wave of 1940-1945.

The greatest achievement of the 1930-1931 movement—a gain that the subsequent atrocious white terror by the imperialists and feudalists failed to obliterate—lies in the fact that it asserted in practice the claim and ability of the proletariat, represented by our Party, to assume leadership of the revolution, and that it infused into the peasantry unshakable faith in the proletariat. At the same time it inspired the worker-peasant masses with confidence in their immense revolutionary stamina. On the other hand, while bearing out the soundness of the revolutionary line of the proletariat and the huge revolutionary capabilities of the workers and peasants, it also exposed the adventurism, reformism, tendency to compromise, vacillations and half-heartedness of the national bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie. At the same time it laid bare the extremely reactionary nature of the landlord class and comprador bourgeoisie before our entire people. That first successful step had decisive significance with regard to the whole subsequent development of the revolution. In fact, had it not been for the earth-shaking class battles
of the years 1930-1931, when the workers and peasants displayed extraordinary revolutionary energy, the upsurge of 1936-1939 would not have been possible.

A period such as the years 1936-1939, when legal and semi-legal actions were coupled with clandestine and illegal activities, is seldom seen in a colonial country. When the Popular Front came to power in France, the Party viewed this as a favourable occasion for pushing the revolution one step forward, and the reason why it was able to turn the opportunity to account was because it had built solid, fundamental combat positions as early as the years 1930-1931. Acting upon Lenin's recommendation: “Concrete political aims must be set in concrete circumstances,” the Party set as immediate tasks for the 1936-1939 period the struggle against the reactionary colonialists (not yet the overthrow of colonialist rule as a whole), against fascism and war, for democratic liberties, a decent standard of living, and peace. The Party was fully aware that those demands were by no means the final goal, that one could never radically change the old social order through reform and that only by eventually standing up to smash the imperialist and feudalist rule through violence and win power for the people would the revolutionary objective be achieved. However, Lenin himself said that without the democratic liberties brought about by the February Revolution (February 1917) it would have been difficult indeed to start the mass struggle of great scope and depth which led to the October Revolution. We may refer in similar terms to the effect of the 1936-1939 democratic movement upon the subsequent triumph of the August Revolution. It was a

period of intense mass agitation without precedent under French rule. Through a multitude of flexible and manifold forms of organization and activity, including the utilization for our benefit of the “chambers of people’s representatives” and “colonial councils” set up by the French colonialists, the Party mobilized and gave political education to millions of people, especially workers and peasants, in political struggles sweeping town and countryside, spreading from factories, plantations and mines to villages and hamlets, and creating conditions for leading the masses into the new, fierce battles of the 1940-1945 period.

After the outbreak of the Second World War, the French colonialists went down on their knees and offered Indochina to the Japanese fascists, and so a twofold yoke was put on our people’s neck. The Party, in that period, held that oppression, exploitation and war would rouse the people to ever more vigorous revolutionary action and that the revolution would inevitably flare up. On President Ho Chi Minh’s initiative, it founded the Viet Minh Front with a view to bringing together the broadest range of national democratic forces; at the same time it set about building revolutionary bases and the first armed units, started a “fight the French, drive out the Japanese” movement, expanded guerilla warfare and multiplied partial insurrections. When, as foreseen by the Party, the Japanese tripped up the French, it took time by the forelock, made a quick shift and triggered off the movement to resist the Japanese and save the nation. This was a period of seething and vigorous mass mobilization, in which political forces developed both in scope and in depth in all areas — rural and urban, plain and hill-forest — shoulder to
shoulder with armed revolutionary forces, and all-round preparations were made for the forthcoming general insurrection.

The glorious triumph of the August Revolution was not only the result of the national liberation movement of the 1940-1945 period but also the outcome of a revolutionary process fostered and prepared through the two full-dress rehearsals of the years 1930-1931 and 1936-1939.

The revolutionary struggle unfolds without cease in all spheres of social life: political, economic, and cultural. Hence, to win step by step means in each arena of combat to mobilize and organize the masses with a view to frustrating the enemy’s successive policies and foiling every one of his schemes and manoeuvres; it means to point out and attain at all costs all objectives that could be attained in a given period or a given battle, thereby impelling the movement forward and bringing it to a higher level. Nothing succeeds like success, and each success in a given field stimulates the struggle in other fields. Starting from scratch, the movement thus develops to ever higher levels, driving the enemy from pillar to post, consolidating its partial gains and unrelentingly expanding the revolutionary battlefield in the direction of total victory. In the Vietnamese revolution, the seizure of power shows the distinguishing feature of evolving from partial insurrections to a general insurrection: this is indeed the application of the method of “winning step by step” to the specific conditions of our revolution.

In short, this method expresses the unity between steadiness of purpose and a clear-headed grasp of changing concrete reality; it is the art of knowing how to combine in a dialectical way firmness of principle with flexibility of policy:
the art of applying to the work of revolutionary leadership the law of development from gradual changes to leaps. One must show boldness and determination in setting new tasks and devising new plans; one must be able to foresee, at least in a broad outline, the results of forthcoming actions and all possible trends of development of the objective situation. In practice new factors and new possibilities keep emerging, and so one must take them into account for changing or correcting one's moves and quickly working out new plans that would ensure that one's strategic and tactical guidance keeps pace with the ever-changing situation. Only then can one fight one's way forward unflinchingly, going through gradual processes interspersed with leaps, big and small—in the revolutionary movement and in the relation of forces—and heading for the crucial bound to final victory.

Lenin firmly opposed subjectivism and voluntarism as well as all manifestations of political passivity. He required that the Communist parties should work out their policies and tactics by "combining full scientific lucidity in the analysis of the objective situation and its evolution with the most categorical recognition of the role played by the revolutionary energy, creativeness and initiative of the masses."1

A revolution is not a coup d'état; it is not the upshot of plots. It is the work of the masses. Hence, to mobilize and rally the forces of the masses, to set up and expand the political army of the revolution, is a fundamental, decisive problem. This task must be attended to in an unflagging and

sustained way throughout all periods, both when no revolu-
tionary situation has appeared as yet and when such a situ-
ation has arisen and matured. To this end, one must mingle
with the masses in everyday life and be active wherever the
masses are, even within enemy organizations; one must keep
abreast of the situation both in the enemy's camp and in ours,
correctly appraise all schemes, moves and capabilities of the
enemy, accurately assess all changes happening in his ranks,
and at the same time be fully aware of the state of mind,
wishes and potential power of the masses. In this way one
will be able to put forward appropriate slogans, both incisive
and timely, which will rouse the broadest masses to action
and take them from the lower to the higher forms of strug-
gle, thereby ceaselessly heightening their political conscious-
ness and building up the army of the revolution both in
scope and in depth.

Before the seizure of power and in the pursuit of that aim,
the only weapon available to the revolution, to the masses, is
organization. The hallmark of the revolutionary movement
led by the proletariat is its high organizational standard. All
activities aimed at bringing the masses to the point where
they will rise up and topple the ruling classes may boil down
to this: to organize, organize, organize. The purpose of
political propaganda and agitation is indeed to organize the
masses; only by organizing them one way or another will
conditions be created for educating them and building up
the immense strength of the revolution, for once organized,
their power will increase one hundredfold. It is for combat
that the masses are organized; conversely, it is through com-
bat that they are further expanded. Therefore, propaganda,
organization, and struggle must go hand in hand, the common purpose being to form and enlarge the political army of the masses in preparation for the decisive leap.

Throughout all periods, our Party has seized all opportunities to organize the masses by appropriate measures and in suitable forms. The Party knows how to get the masses interested in current political happenings, big or small, and rouse them to action so as to drive the enemy into confusion and passivity while building and expanding our own forces. Even when its activity requires the strictest secrecy, it has contrived all kinds of organizations with varied, broad, and flexible forms, aimed at rallying the masses for revolutionary action and guiding them from the lower to the higher forms of struggle, thereby educating them and enlarging the revolutionary ranks. While always taking illegal action as the foundation, the Party skilfully combines it with all possibilities for legal action. In a given situation, it may start an all-out drive for legality, not in order to deceive itself with any illusion about the "legal" road to power and engender such illusions among the masses, but with a view to giving a broader compass to the education and mustering of the masses and amplifying the influence of the revolution. At such times, the Party must oppose hesitation and timorousness, just as it must guard against and combat legalism, the violation of the Party's principle of secrecy in organization, and the neglect of the work of building and expanding the Party and the core organizations of the masses. If one does not watch out for and fight legalism in time, it may lead to very dangerous consequences, when there is a sudden shift in the
situation, when the enemy attacks the revolution, and when the Party has to effect a quick and complete change-over to illegal action.

To organize and to struggle, to struggle and to organize, again to struggle... One battle leads to another, and once the masses have gone into battle, they will grow all the more politically conscious, and their own experience will open their eyes to the truth and teach them which way to act. Here let us note the particular importance of *slogans*. The art of giving strategic and tactical guidance to the revolution, and of directing a struggle as well, is shown first and foremost in sharp-edged and relevant slogans that keep pace with the situation.

One should not hold the oversimplified view that economic slogans are reformist while only political ones are revolutionary. There may be political slogans with a reformist character, and economic ones carrying a revolutionary content. The question is, when, in what connexion, and with what aim is a given slogan put forward? A genuinely revolutionary party, one that is unswervingly devoted to the final goal of the revolution, is able, in one way or another, to put the seal of the revolution on all slogans and on all forms of organization and struggle, including those with the faintest political tinge, which are considered necessary for the purpose of mustering the masses when the situation is not yet favourable to all-out revolutionary actions.

Throughout all periods, and especially in the one preceding the August 1945 Revolution, the Party has skilfully combined action slogans with propaganda slogans in order to couple
immediate targets with fundamental objectives. A slogan that is relevant to the concrete situation makes it possible to fan up a whole movement. One vivid instance of this is the slogan: “Get the stocks of rice and stamp out famine!” put forward by our Party in the period of preparation for the August 1945 Revolution. It was issued at a time when a terrible famine was on the rampage in Bac Bo and northern Trung Bo; it answered the most urgent aspiration of the masses, thereby fanning up the flames of their anger and hatred and rousing them to advance with burning revolutionary fervour towards insurrection and seizure of power.

Distinction should be drawn between propaganda slogans and action slogans in order to avoid involving the masses in decisive battles either too soon or too late. Both propaganda and action slogans must continually be altered to fit the evolution of the struggle, especially action slogans, which are closely connected with the day-to-day effort and so must show extreme flexibility, even changing with each hour. As the situation develops, one must gradually raise the level of action slogans and ultimately, when the right time comes, turn watchwords which are hitherto for propaganda into ones for direct and resolute action. It is dangerous for the revolution to throw the masses into decisive battles either too late or too soon. Under all circumstances, the most important thing, the most basic guarantee against blunders, is a thorough grasp, both in one's general analysis and in every decision one takes for action, of concrete reality. In a revolutionary period, events develop at a very fast pace and in a most
complex way. In this connexion Lenin pointed out: "The substitution of the abstract for the concrete is one of the greatest and most dangerous sins in a revolution." 1

He castigated those who, at a sharp bend of history, fail to adapt themselves to the new situation and cling to old slogans, which were correct yesterday but are meaningless today.

For a revolution to break out and win, a revolutionary situation must prevail. A revolutionary situation is the product of the combination of a whole series of necessary factors, both objective and subjective. One should guard against both the tendency to wait passively for the revolution and the hot-headed inclination to "skip intermediate stations."

Before and after the First World War, revolutionary situations and the outbreaks and triumphs of revolutions were generally connected in one way or another with world wars provoked by imperialism. However, one should not draw the conclusion that war is either the natural source or necessary condition of revolution, and that one should consequently wait for war to start before making revolution. A revolution is first and foremost the result of class contradictions exacerbated to the extreme in a given country. Formerly, when imperialist wars were inevitable, these wars had the objective effect of accelerating the revolutionary crises in various countries. Taking advantage of this situation, the Communists advocated the "transformation of imperialist wars into revolutionary civil wars."

The present international situation differs radically from that before and after the First World War. Now that the world socialist system and the forces battling against imperialism with a view to transforming society in a socialist way are shaping the essential content, orientation, and characteristic features of the historical development of human society, the possibility of breaking the weak links in the remaining part of the imperialist chain has increased to an unprecedented degree, at the same time as appears the practical feasibility of preventing a world war. The fundamental interest of the proletariat, the people and the nations of the world lies in safeguarding world peace while pushing forward the revolution in various countries. These two objectives are organically linked together, each being the premise of the other, and both are perfectly attainable once the Communists, thoroughly conscious of the strategically offensive posture of the world revolution, succeed in setting up a united front bringing together all currents of the world revolution, all forces fighting for peace, national independence, democracy and socialism, and are resolved to defeat all aggressive wars triggered by the imperialists, foil every one of their warlike moves and schemes, drive back imperialism step by step, knock it down piece by piece, and eventually overthrow it in its entirety.

The revolution in the South of our country illustrates such a correct way to march forward. It proves that in the absence of a world war, while indeed world peace has to be defended, a revolution can none the less flare up and be crowned with success. To intensify the anti-imperialist revolution, far from being incompatible with the defence of peace, is proved in
practice to be a very fundamental way in which to attack imperialism in order to safeguard the peace of the world in a truly effective manner. Conversely, to prevent a world war, to defend peace, is also a very important way in which to attack imperialism and create more favourable objective conditions for the revolution to progress in all countries.

The South Viet Nam revolution also proves that no fascist dictatorship can prevent the outbreak of a revolution. When the puppet administration in the South of our country had to resort to the most barbarous fascist measures against the people, this meant that they had suffered crucial failure in the political field, that a revolutionary situation was brewing, that the revolution could break out — and in fact it did break out.

That a revolutionary situation prevails means that the problem of seizure of power is immediately at hand. How power can be won depends on the specific conditions of each country. However, under all circumstances, the only road to power lies in revolution, not reform.

Revolution comes as a climax of class struggle and is always accomplished by pitting the violence of the oppressed classes against the ruling class with a view to settling the problem of political power. Violence may manifest itself and be exerted in various forms. In a nutshell, one may say that revolutionary violence must rely on two kinds of forces: armed and political, and include two forms of struggle: military and political, and the combination of these two. The experience of the Vietnamese revolution demonstrates that for the revolution to win, one must have armed forces besides political
forces and must know how to carry out military and political action cleverly and in accordance with the concrete situation prevailing in a given place at a given time. If one does not keep one's forces, including one's armed forces, in proper trim, one will not be able to resist the fierce onslaught of the enemy. However, violence does not rest solely upon armed forces, nor does it assume the only form of military struggle. Political forces and political struggle are indispensable. Failing the political forces and political struggle of the masses, success cannot be won by military action and armed forces. It goes without saying that not all forms of political struggle mean violence. The only actions that may be so considered are the revolutionary actions undertaken by the masses outside the bounds of the state laws of the ruling class and directly aimed at overthrowing its rule and seizing power for the people, once the question of political power has been raised.

The revolutionary violence aimed at toppling the ruling class must necessarily be that of the masses, of the broad masses that are oppressed and exploited. Under the leadership of the Party, they can display their strength and resolve in countless ways. The best, most revolutionary method is one that can create and organize forms of violence that are the best fitted for the circumstances, one that can mobilize the power of the masses to the highest degree and hurl it at the ruling class and bring about victory for the revolution in the most favourable conditions. Either not to dare to start a military struggle when the need arises, or conversely, to engage in such an effort under unfavourable circumstances, is a serious mistake.
In the August 1945 Revolution, our Party applied in a creative way the law of violent revolution and insurrection in order to win power. The August Revolution combined political with military struggle, and elaborate preparation of political and military forces with quick seizure of the opportune moment for rousing the masses to action to topple the rule of the imperialists and feudalists. Born and nurtured in the vast revolutionary movement of the masses, the armed units for national salvation and for liberation, whose prestige far outstripped their numbers and the size of their engagements, had contributed a very important share to building up the patriotic high tide of the masses in the 1941-1945 period. When the Soviet Union's resounding victory over the Kwantung army of the Japanese fascists forced the latter into unconditional surrender, the Party quickly seized that unique opportunity to launch a general insurrection. Relying on the political forces of the broad rural and urban masses and combining them with the revolutionary armed forces, we smashed the enemy's key organs in the capital and other cities, liquidated the whole of his administrative network in the countryside, and seized power in all the country.

One must have a thorough grasp of revolutionary violence, build up overwhelming superiority for the revolution, marshal the broadest masses of the people on the basis of a truly firm and strong worker-peasant alliance. At the same time one must strive to divide and isolate the enemy to the utmost, cripple his power of resistance, break up the State apparatus of the ruling class, and establish the people's power. As evidenced by the experience of all revolutions, one very
important question, besides the preparation of political and military forces, is to *seize the opportune moment*. This moment may be brought about either by revolutionary forces at home or by conditions abroad. Without sufficient revolutionary forces, one will not be able either to create a favourable opportunity or to take timely advantage of it should it develop. Therefore, the crucial thing is to exert sustained efforts aimed at tipping the scale in our favour and achieving decisive superiority for the revolution with regard to both posture and strength. Now, when will the fire of revolution blaze up? What spark will set off the powder keg? Once the revolution has acquired firm posture and strength and the enemy has been driven to the wall, the daily political and social life will supply us with every favourable opportunity and circumstance to fan up a great movement, the problem only depending on the leaders’ clear-sightedness and political flair. As Lenin said, history as a whole, and the history of revolutions in particular, is always richer in content, more varied, more multiform, more lively and ingenious than is imagined by even the best parties and the most class-conscious vanguards of the most advanced classes. That is why in the course of a revolution, it often suffices that the leaders are in full possession of the fundamental orientation and certain basic factors and conditions and that they dare to act. As action evolves things will reveal their possibilities and trend of development, and at the same time the boundless creative power of the masses, the makers of history, will provide us with the orientation and methods for solving all practical problems.
CHAPTER THREE

THE REVOLUTION IN SOUTH VIET NAM
AND THE PEOPLE’S WAR AGAINST U.S.
AGGRESSION. FOR NATIONAL SALVATION

Immediately after winning power in the whole country, our people had to engage in a war of resistance against the French colonialists who, with the help of the American interventionists, again invaded our land. This first holy war of resistance was the continuation of the August Revolution; it was a war for the liberation of the nation and the defence of the fatherland waged under the leadership of the working class, represented by our Party, according to a correct political and military line. This line advocated a war fought by the entire people, an all-sided and protracted war in which we relied mainly on our own forces, combining the powerful political forces of the revolutionary masses with the armed forces. The political forces served as a foundation on which to set up and expand the people’s armed forces, whose three categories of troops were the core of the entire people’s resistance to the enemy. Armed combat was the main form of struggle. It was combined to a certain extent with political struggle in areas behind the enemy lines. At the same time great attention was paid to the fight on the economic front. We were thus able to bring into full play our people’s absolute political and moral superiority while making the
most of the favourable factors of the new era in order to overcome the difficulties and weaknesses besetting a small country with a backward agricultural economy and scant armed forces, which was initially surrounded by imperialism on every side. Finally, after nine years of extremely glorious struggle, our armed forces and people defeated a professional army of aggression, nearly half a million strong, of a powerful imperialist country.

That was the epic of a prodigious people's war whose most outstanding exploit—the great Dien Bien Phu battle—will go down in national history as a Bach Dang, a Chi Lang, a Dong Da\(^1\) of the 20th century, and will be recorded in world history as a brilliant feat of arms which breached the citadel of the system of colonial servitude set up by imperialism.

The revolution in South Viet Nam has developed to the fullest extent the experience gained in the August Revolution and the war of resistance against French aggression and applied it to the new conditions.

Towards the close of 1959 and the beginning of 1960, the oppressive regime in the South sank into a deep crisis. Although still relatively strong in the towns and cities, the enemy was no longer able to exercise his ordinary rule over the people in vast rural areas: the puppet administrative apparatus at the base grew weak and impotent in one section after another. For their part, the popular masses, especially the peasants, were boiling over with revolutionary fervour.

\(^1\) Three brilliant and decisive victories won by the Vietnamese people over foreign invaders, in the 13th, 15th and 18th centuries respectively (Tr.).
and were determined and ready to engage in a life-and-death struggle with the enemy. Conditions were ripe for rousing up the rural people to stage *partial insurrections* and smash the weakest link in the enemy’s administrative system.

The “concerted uprisings” which broke out in that period marked an important leap which shifted the revolution to an offensive position and expanded the revolutionary high tide all over South Viet Nam. Armed combat was coupled with political action. As the revolution developed into a fierce war, military struggle increased with every passing day and played a very important role. To defeat the enemy militarily is indispensable for the victory of the resistance and the revolution. *Armed struggle is a fundamental form of struggle which directly and decisively contributes to the annihilation of the enemy’s military forces and consequently to thwarting all his military and political schemes.* However, it is always closely co-ordinated with political action to assist the masses in their continued uprisings, break the enemy’s grip, win and maintain sovereignty for the people, and impel the revolution forward. Together with military struggle, *political struggle by the masses is also a fundamental form of struggle with a decisive effect throughout all stages of the revolution in the South and with regard to the success of this revolution.* The political forces not only serve as a foundation for the armed forces but are also built up into an organized political army of the masses, the core of the political struggle spearheaded against the enemy right in areas under his control, including places where his military, political and economic forces are concentrated. *Military struggle coupled*
with political struggle is the fundamental form of revolutionary violence in the South, and the combination of the two is the fundamental rule of revolutionary methods. These two extremely effective prongs of attack make up an immense aggregate strength; they multiply the forces of our 14 million fellow-countrymen in the South severalfold and enable them to foil every military and political scheme and move of the Americans and their puppets, thereby shaking and eventually breaking the aggressive will of the American aggressors. While practising these two fundamental forms of struggle, the Southern people have also given a strong impetus to political work among enemy troops aimed at enlightening the soldiers in the American army of aggression and especially those of the puppet regime, so as to win them over to the side of the revolution and frustrate the American imperialists' extremely perfidious policy of "using Vietnamese to fight Vietnamese." This, too, is a strategic prong of attack, a fundamental point in revolutionary work in South Viet Nam aimed at bringing into effect the slogan, "Workers, peasants and soldiers, unite!" overthrowing the neocolonialist rule and defeating the war of aggression of American imperialists.

Mass uprisings combined with revolutionary warfare, such is the process of development of the revolution in South Viet Nam, initiated by partial uprisings in the rural areas. In subsequent steps, mass uprisings continued with increasing vigour and in close co-ordination with the revolutionary war. They enlarged the people's field of action, built up their forces, and caused the revolutionary war to expand and gain ever-wider prestige. Conversely, the more the revolutionary