

people and the world people must fight the American imperialists, stop their bloody hands, punish them severely, annihilate their aggressive forces. Then the American imperialists will no longer be able to foment war and attack other countries. Only in this way can peace be safeguarded."



Our guest went to Thanhhoa, a province south of Hanoi, which had suffered continually from air-raids for twenty months. The provincial capital, and numerous hospitals, schools and market-places, had been destroyed. Not far away was Quynhlap, the leper hospital sheltering 2,600 patients, destruction of which was a typical example of American savagery. Communication line have been attacked without respite, small bridges bombed a hundred times. But hardly had a road or a bridge been damaged or a house burnt down when it was quickly repaired. Transport met with difficulties but was never wholly interrupted. In 1965, agricultural output in Thanhhoa increased 6% compared with 1964, in spite of the bombings. Regional industry continued to develop.

Our guest visited Hamrong, a road and railway bridge spanning a wide river. This bridge has so far been attacked 270 times by American aircraft. Some days, as many as 160 planes have come. McNamara personally directed two air-raids against Hamrong, from the bridge of the aircraft-carrier Independence. To try and destroy Hamrong, the Americans resorted to all kinds of means, including night torpedoing.

But Hamrong continues to be open to both road and rail traffic. So far 76 American aircraft have been downed in its vicinity and a large number of American airmen killed or captured.

Our guest looked attentively at the bridge. She also looked around and saw the tops of the hills at both ends of Hamrong split by bombs, the collapsed peasant cottages, the power plant still functioning, the green lush ricefields, the busy villages near the bridge, the boats sailing on the river. She said:

“We greatly admire your indomitable spirit and your heroic and excellent defence of this bridge. But will you be able to defend it indefinitely?”

“We can't guarantee that we shall safeguard it indefinitely. But we can affirm that the enemy will pay dearly for every attempt to destroy it, and that even if it should become unusable, communications and transport will continue elsewhere. We are ready for all eventualities.”

“I am greatly impressed by your determination to win. But can you win? The Americans' war potential is enormous. Many have been saying that while the Americans won't be able to win a military victory in Vietnam, neither will you be able to defeat them militarily.”

“This question is perhaps best understood by the Americans and ourselves. We have tackled each other on the battlefield, and know each other's strengths and weaknesses through the realities of war. But the Americans dare not confess the truth openly although they

know it, because it is to their disadvantage. As for us, we can say frankly that the **Vietnamese people are perfectly capable of defeating the American imperialists, at every step of their escalation, under all circumstances. The Vietnamese people can in fact defeat them, whatever the number of their troops, the duration of the war, the kinds of weapons they put to use. We can unhesitatingly conclude that in the Vietnam war, the Americans are in a position of weakness.**"

"Excuse my frankness: I say what is in my mind. When you say that the Americans are weak, have you carefully pondered over all the aspects of the problem? Don't you look at things in an oversimplified manner?"

"No. It is those people who say that the Americans are stronger than the Vietnamese who reason from insufficient data, in an unscientific way. One merely has to consult books and statistics to know how many troops, planes, weapons and dollars the Americans have, what kinds of war techniques they possess; if one compares these with the material forces at the disposal of the South Vietnam army and people, one must immediately conclude that the Americans are powerful indeed. But when we affirm that the Americans are weak, this conclusion is drawn from a long and complex process acquired progressively through twelve years of confrontation with their strategies, their aircraft, tanks and modern tactics and techniques. Our conclusion has been drawn from realities, from

experiences on the battlefields. Of course, the Americans' war potential is modern and considerable. But in South Vietnam, **they have to face a people's war**, a war waged with heroism and ingenuity, where modern weapons lose their supremacy. To the American war, the South Vietnamese people have not responded with a modern war, with well-defined frontlines ; they have compelled the Americans to get entangled in a people's war where the people have the supremacy. To use a metaphor, let's say that the South Vietnamese people compel the enormous American tank to drive over a bamboo bridge, narrow and fragile. On this bridge, Vietnamese fighters circulate freely on foot, on bicycle, on ox-carts or small motor vehicles. But the heavier the American tank is, the quicker it will fall through the bridge into the ravine below. The Americans are rich, to be sure. But the people's war can be waged at little cost ; our people can face up to an American war budget of tens of billions of dollars per year. Let's take an example : a mortar shell costing a few dollars falling on an American airbase can destroy one or more jets costing two million dollars apiece... "

" But you should know that the Americans have very modern techniques. Their aircraft bomb and strafe with great precision. "

" Perhaps they do. But this Hamrong bridge which stands before your eyes has been attacked 270 times and is still there. The Americans have modern techniques, but the people's spirit of initiative and resourcefulness is inexhaustible. During the first nine months of 1966, on

the South Vietnamese battlefields, the Liberation armed forces and the people defeated 300,000 American soldiers. The number of G.I.s put out of action has reached 70,000; that of puppet soldiers 160,000. We are giving you exact, carefully-checked figures. In North Vietnam, up to this month of September, the number of American aircraft downed is nearing 1,500."

"So you firmly believe that you will win?"

"Yes we do. The Americans will inevitably be defeated, for their war of aggression is an unjust war which is being resolutely resisted by our entire people — 31 million people united into a single bloc — and condemned by all the world peoples, an unjust war which is meeting with ever stronger opposition inside the United States itself. The Americans will inevitably be defeated for they are fighting a long distance away from their country: 13,000 kilometres. They are running into innumerable difficulties in supply, transport, engineering. American soldiers, if they had to defend their own country, would fight well. But in South Vietnam they make poor soldiers, for they are fighting without an ideal, are deprived of all offensive spirit, and are not used to the terrain. Wherever they go, they are opposed by the entire people up in arms. The hot and stifling tropical climate, the swamps, the jungle, the wasps and mosquitoes are hostile to them. The Americans will inevitably be defeated for they have exhausted their whole panoply of strategies and tactics, used all kinds of weapons, toxic chemicals and poison gases included, without succeeding in stopping the progress of the people's war. The Americans will inevitably be defeated for they are isolated in this war,

without reputable allies, and their prestige with their vassals has greatly suffered.

As for the Vietnamese people, they fight for their country's survival, for their very existence, on the strength of twenty years' experience of struggle against aggressive war. We got the better of both French colonialists and Japanese fascists. We are getting the better of American imperialists. We have won the disinterested support and aid of our friends all over the world. The more we fight on, the more our strength increases, and the more victories we reap. Even if the number of American troops in Vietnam is 300,000 or 400,000, even if it is increased to 600,000, 700,000, one million, or more, we will win. The more American troops, the more resounding our victories and the more humiliating their defeats."



One day our guest paid a visit to an agricultural co-operative, twenty kilometres from Hanoi.

Before us spread a vast expanse of green ricefields, well irrigated, with straight rows of replanted seedlings, and well-kept embankments. The co-op president said:

"Our fields have been re-arranged this year. Last year, they formed a veritable maze: among them were enclaves owned by other co-operatives; paddy dykes followed a very irregular pattern. It was very hard to irrigate or drain efficiently in those conditions. This

year we have carried out exchanges with neighbouring co-ops, and now our fields lie in one piece; this allows us to build a coherent network of paddy dykes. With 300 workers for the whole co-op, we have so far moved 150,000 cubic metres of earth without having recourse to any kind of machine. We have been able to organize a rational irrigation system and widen our lanes for the transport of grain and fertilizers. At the same time, we are building roads for tractors and lining our paths with trees.

This year, we have begun to use semi-mechanized tools for our agricultural work and increased the number of our agricultural implements. We have been able in this way to increase production, with a smaller labour force: many of our men are taking part in national defence, industry, transport, communications and construction. The new arrangements will enable us to set up a modern rural community. Places have been reserved for drying yards, silos, a pumping station, brick-kilns, a silkworm-breeding station, a school, a maternity home, football and volleyball grounds, a cultural club. Although the Americans have intensified their air raids, we have brought in a bumper Autumn harvest. Our winter crop, as you can see, is growing quite well. All our children go to school; more than twenty young people have been admitted to various technical schools and colleges at home and abroad."

Our guest scanned the expanse of fields, then asked:

"Have other co-ops been doing the same?"

“By the end of 1967 at the latest, fields will have been rearranged efficiently in all provinces of the delta and the midlands. In a few provinces of the highlands, local particularities will have to be taken into account. In addition, co-operatives will be extended. Small co-ops grouping 50-100 households will merge into bigger ones, of 250-300 families, so that more manpower, land and capital can be mustered to boost production.”

“Do you think you can give a boost to building work and ensure production in times of war?”

“Certainly. In our opinion, if we are to fight hard and for a long time, we must boost production so as to satisfy the needs of war and of the people’s livelihood. Not only must we do this, but we must also be ready to achieve good results under any circumstances. Of course the American pirates will intensify destructive raids over our agricultural and industrial undertakings. But we are resolved to attain our aims. We have never given way in our struggle against the Americans; we shall not surrender in the field of production. In times of war, there are naturally branches of activity which have to be re-organized or reduced according to circumstances, but others must be developed. Not only must we defeat the Americans, but we must prepare for rapid advance during and after the war. No criminal force, no difficulty can put a brake on our socialist building.”

“What is your greatest difficulty in this work?”

“Of course the Americans have caused us some difficulties: we lose precious time fighting them,

repairing roads and buildings. But these difficulties can be overcome. What preoccupies us most is how to oust old-fashioned methods by improving farming implements, applying new techniques, and struggling against old habits of work which could impair our technical revolution."



We went back to Hanoi. Night was falling. On both sides of the road, long columns of young people were singing as they went to their combat posts. In the fields, co-op members were beginning their night work. Our car soon reached the suburbs of Hanoi. Electric lights were shining. Our guest suddenly asked:

"Do you think the Americans will bomb Hanoi?"

"Everything they can do, they will. We have brought our defences to tiptop condition so as to inflict deserved punishment on them. At the same time, we have made all necessary preparations to live and fight in the worst conditions. Our President Ho Chi Minh, on July 17, launched his Appeal: **"Nothing is more precious than independence and freedom."** Said he: **"When the day of victory comes, we will rebuild our country in an even better shape; we will construct more and finer buildings."** Hanoi is too small. Its streets too narrow. In future, the old Hanoi will remain as a historical and cultural relic. The independent and reunified Vietnam of to-morrow must have a bigger capital city, with all the necessary comforts. We have

already drawn up a plan for our new capital. Thousands of cadres and specialists have been appointed to this end."

"My visit to Vietnam has enabled me to understand your determination to win, in combat as well as in production. I also appreciate the exceptional heroism of the Vietnamese people. But I still don't understand its cause. Why? For what reason have you been fighting so valiantly?"

"For independence and freedom. If you had come here in the French colonial days, or if you had been to South Vietnam to get acquainted with American neo-colonialism, you would have understood why in our minds **nothing is more precious than independence and freedom.** We cite just this single example in connection with the former colonialist regime: in early 1945, under the double yoke of the French colonialists and the Japanese fascists, two million of our compatriots died of hunger within a few months. Hanoi streets were strewn with corpses. In many regions, there were not enough people left to bury the dead. How could we return to such a regime?"

As for the Americans' neo-colonialism in South Vietnam at present, here is the balance-sheet for the past few years: 170,000 people massacred, 800,000 crippled for life by wounds and torture, 400,000 thrown in jail. By 1965, five million people had been penned up in concentration camps dubbed strategic hamlets. To say nothing of the fact that national culture is held in contempt, while depravity and immorality prevail.



In North Vietnam, the entire people engage in production work while standing ready to fight U.S. aggression

If we lose independence and freedom we lose everything. That is why we are resolved to defeat the American aggressors.

We can tell you that the essence of the Vietnamese problem is these two alternatives: **independence and freedom or slavery**, and not: **peace or war**. **If independence and freedom are ensured for the Vietnamese people**, peace will be safeguarded in Vietnam, Indochina, and Southeast Asia, and consolidated in the world."

"We understand you. But independence and freedom are abstract words. The Americans also say that they want an independent and free Vietnam."

"For us, independence and freedom have a definite meaning. In the case of our country, which is being attacked by the Americans, independence and freedom mean that:

a) **South Vietnam must be completely liberated**, freed from occupation by American or any other foreign troops.

b) **North Vietnam must be left free to work in peace**. All bombings and strafings must stop, as well as all attacks by air, naval, and other armed forces, American or other.

c) **Vietnam will be reunified** in accordance with procedures established in agreements between the population of the two zones, North and South, without any external interference.

Those are the legitimate, necessary, intangible rights of our 30 million people. We are determined to

endure all sacrifices to safeguard at any price our rights to independence and freedom. Such is our unshakable resolution."

"So, what are the prospects for this war?"

"There are two solutions: either Washington gives up its ambition to commit aggression on our country, recognizes and carries into effect the 4-point stand of the D.R.V. and the 5-point declaration of the N.F.L.; then one can speak of a political solution. Let the Americans withdraw their troops from Vietnam; let our country win back its independence and peace will be immediately restored.

Or the American aggressors may persist in their adventurous escalation. Their troops will suffer ever heavier and more humiliating defeats. The war will grow more atrocious, but we shall inevitably win. We don't want young Americans and Vietnamese to sacrifice their lives. But this does not depend on us."

"Can some modifications be brought to the 4-point stand of the D.R.V. and the 5-point declaration of the N.F.L.?"

"These are our final position. These points form an organic whole, the embodiment, one and indivisible, of the same will, the same aspirations of our people: genuine independence and freedom, genuine peace. Independence and freedom are not things that can be carved into fragments and sold piecemeal. Genuine peace cannot rest on a "middle-of-the-road" compromise. We demand nothing of the Americans but that they return to the United States

and leave us to settle our own affairs. Every country must have this minimum right. Why should Vietnam sacrifice it?"



Now back at Gialam airport for her departure, our guest seemed already used to this atmosphere of war in Vietnam. She came and went briskly, looking unperturbed under the neon lights which illumined the garden adjacent to the waiting-room, where roses bloomed. The night breeze had driven away the day's heat. Said she:

"What, prior to my visit to Vietnam, prevented me from understanding the Vietnamese people and war in Vietnam, was perhaps the fact that I lived through the Second World War. I knew the old forms of aggression and resistance to aggression. I had preconceived ideas on how wars were waged, and this hampered my understanding of the present war in Vietnam. Can it be said that this is a war of aggression of a new kind and that the Vietnamese people are resisting it by the methods of a new kind of people's war?"

"Perhaps you are right. As for us, we haven't carried the analysis far enough to be in a position to tell you precisely what is new about it."

"Before going home, I would like to ask you a last question. Tell me frankly: what must we do to give you real and efficient support?"

"First, will you please transmit our sincere thanks to the people of those countries which have wholeheartedly supported our struggle and shown us their

solidarity. Although we rely essentially on our own efforts, we think that our friends all over the world have given us support unprecedented in the history of peoples struggling for their independence and freedom. We highly value this support and feel deeply grateful for it. We consider it a contribution to our work and to the common cause of the world struggle against imperialism headed by U.S. imperialism, for national independence, democracy, peace and social progress. We have received contributions in medicines, surgical and other instruments, money, weapons: all these things are very precious for us.

However the essential support we need, which is most important to us, remains your approval, your **political support** for the justice of our cause, our righteous stand. If world opinion is mobilized to the utmost to trigger a world movement of opposition to the American imperialists' policy of aggression, to stop their criminal actions in Vietnam, unmask their design to compel us to surrender through "peaceful negotiations", force them to withdraw their troops, dismantle their military bases, stop their armed aggression in South Vietnam, put a definite and unconditional end to their attacks and destructions in North Vietnam—this will be the most effective way to end the war in Vietnam and restore peace. Let tracts, meetings, marches, demonstrations, speeches, pamphlets, petitions, symposia, teach-ins multiply! Wherever a representative of the American government sets foot, let everyone remind him daily that the American war of aggression in Vietnam is condemned by all. Just as

U.S. aircraft shower bombs on us day and night, men of goodwill all over the world should shower continual protests on American embassies, consulates, and other offices. Let workers everywhere refuse to manufacture, load or unload weapons for the Americans! Let all nations refuse to supply cannon-fodder to the Pentagon! Let young Americans refuse to go to Vietnam to make war! Let men of science and culture use the whole weight of their authority in unequivocal condemnation of U.S. aggression! The world front of struggle against this aggression will consolidate and widen to stop the criminal hands of the men in Washington.

And you can tell your friends that they can be certain about the attitude of our people. The Americans may step as far up as they wish in their escalation, never will we give way, never will we step back in our determination to fight and win. Fully conscious of our sacred duty towards our people and our international obligations towards the national liberation movement to safeguard independence, democracy, and peace all over the world, we will never shrink from any difficulty, any sacrifice, and will resolutely advance towards final victory.

So that our country may reconquer independence and freedom for ever!

So that justice and peace in the whole world may be safeguarded!"

