

14 Charles Lane
New York, N.Y. 10014
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TO THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE

Dear Comrades,

The attached article on the nature of the Vietnamese CP was written for the pre-world congress discussion in the French section before it was banned. It has not yet appeared in any discussion bulletin, so we cannot print it for wider distribution, but given its character, we thought it would be of interest to members of the Political Committee.

Nikita is the pseudonym for Jean Michele Krivine, the oldest of the Krivine brothers, a longtime member of the French section, and the comrade who writes most of the French section's serious articles and studies on the history of the French CP and Stalinism. He writes under the name of Louis Couturier. He visited Vietnam in the late 1960s as a member of one of the Russell War Crimes Tribunal medical investigating teams. He is a prominent Parisian surgeon.

Comradely,

Mary-Alice

ON THE NATURE OF THE VIETNAMESE COMMUNIST PARTY

by Nikita

For more than thirty years the Vietnamese Communist Party has successfully led an armed struggle that has no equal in history.

With only a few thousand militants under its command (5,000 according to Devilliers), it took power in 1945 and created the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV). It defeated the French army and held the American colossus in check. Its example galvanized hundreds of millions of men and one can even say that the worldwide emergence of a new revolutionary vanguard is directly linked to the events in Southeast Asia.

Our International, which has always been capable of analyzing developing class struggles and contemporary revolutionary experiences, manifested an exemplary sobriety when confronted with the Vietnamese revolution. The back issues of the magazine and the World Congress documents contain an abundance of studies on the Chinese CP, guerrilla warfare in South America, and the Algerian revolution, not to mention Ceylon, Pakistan, and Yugoslavia.

There is almost nothing on Vietnam. It could even be said that Ho Chi Minh and his companions have received unusual treatment: whereas Trotskyist militants have traditionally been criticized for writing theoretical analyses instead of taking action, all the sections of the International led campaigns supporting the Indochinese revolution while zealously keeping to themselves whatever reflections they were inspired to by the leadership of the Vietnamese CP.

In the period between the publication of the 1947 pamphlet (Mouvements nationaux et de lutte de classes au Vietnam), which explained that because of its program the Vietminh could only betray the revolution, and the publication of Pierre Rousset's book (Le Parti Communiste Vietnamien) in 1973, there have been a great number of articles on the Vietnam war but no real study on the Vietnamese Communist leadership nor on the state that it controls.

This is a serious omission. Our primary obligation is to defend the Indochinese revolution, but it is no less important to understand what is taking place and to be prepared for what is going to follow. Activism can bring about successes that inspire enthusiasm in the short run, but paralyzing disillusionment comes afterward.

Two fundamental questions are posed:

(1) What is the meaning of the events that have taken place in Vietnam since 1945?

(2) Who is leading the struggle of the Vietnamese people?

The answer to the first question won't hold us up for very long because all Trotskyists are aware that the workers movement owes the following to the Indochinese revolutionaries:

- the overthrow of capitalism in the DRV;
- the unparalleled stalemate of American imperialism;
- the birth of new vanguards.

But who is presently leading this struggle to which the

world working class owes so much?

We are forced to say that the few comrades who tried to avoid ducking this question seem to feel quite uneasy about it.

Rousset defines North Vietnam as a "bureaucratically deformed workers state" (comparable to a certain extent to the USSR in 1920) [p. 130]. He notes tendencies toward bureaucratization that are linked to objective difficulties and to the programmatic limits of the present orientation of the Vietnamese CP. "But," he says, "it would be incorrect -- and politically dangerous -- to conclude that bureaucratization is inevitable.

"Today it is the fact that they are carrying out a revolutionary struggle that stands as the main factor opposing these tendencies. For this struggle rules out the crystallization of a privileged bureaucratic caste that would escape the control of the masses and would be likely to determine state policy in accordance with its own interests." [Le Parti Communiste Vietnamien, pp. 135-36. Emphasis in original.]

In their article "Some Fundamental Differences Between the PRT and the International Majority," Comrades Ernest, Livio, Pierre, Sandor, Tariq, and Delphin devote several paragraphs to the Vietnamese Communist Party. (International Internal Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 10, No. 7, June 1973.) They more or less take up Rousset's argument and conclude that "the Vietnamese workers state, too, is characterized by a bureaucratic degeneration, even though a crystallized bureaucratic caste enjoying privileges comparable to those of the caste ruling in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe or China does not exist." [pp. 32-33]

Finally, in Bulletin No. 7 ("The Debate on Indochina," International Internal Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 10, No. 7, June 1973), Comrade Sterne polemicalizes with the United Secretariat minority and explains that the Vietnamese CP is neither Stalinist nor Marxist-Leninist; instead it's a "centrist" party, or a party "distinguished by revolutionary empiricism," whose theoretical weaknesses pose a danger for the future of the Vietnamese revolution, "especially as regards the fight against the growth of bureaucratic tendencies." [p. 11.]

The Achilles' heel in the argument of the comrades cited above lies in the fact that their critique of the Vietnamese leadership is essentially an ideological critique. According to them, this leadership's limits and empiricism stem solely from its Stalinist education and from the various philosophical influence on it (French social-democratic humanism and Confucianism). This empiricism is today "encouraged by the very existence of bureaucratic deformations in North Vietnam." [Sterne, p. 11.] But if the international situation evolves favorably and if the Asian revolution undergoes new developments, Comrade Rousset is optimistic that the tendencies toward bureaucratization can in the end be eliminated.

Unfortunately, this is a mythical description of the Vietnamese CP, based essentially on its documents (some of them...) and on its victorious experience with people's war. It devotes no space, however minimal, to a study of the bureaucratic phenomenon.

It's not the Vietnamese CP's empiricism that is today "en-

couraged" by bureaucratic deformations; it's the latter that have given rise to this empiricism.

Moreover, it's not just simple "deformations" that are involved. Rousset admits that "there is no separation between the state and the party," that "the party does not function along the lines of democratic centralism," that there is no freedom to counterpose differing points of view, etc....

The DRV has now been in existence for twenty-eight years with its state apparatus, party cadres, factory managers, various organizations, etc. Twenty-eight years: this compares to the USSR in 1945 and to the people's democracies of today. We concede that eight of these twenty-eight years were spent in the resistance. Twenty years remain....

By what miracle is a state and party that has been affected by the deformations that have been mentioned supposed to have been able to escape the crystallization of a bureaucratic caste? How can those in power possible have escaped becoming privileged if the same leadership has functioned under such conditions for so long a period of time, given the incredible scarcity of technicians, educated cadres, and resources?

If this is really what has happened, if after a quarter century of absolute power the Vietnamese Communist leadership has proved capable of preventing the development of a privileged bureaucratic caste even though it has failed to understand the essential problems of socialist democracy -- the entire Trotskyist theory of the bureaucracy would have to be reexamined.

It so happens that some indisputable facts spare the troubled militant the need to undertake this hazardous task.

The struggle in solidarity with the Indochinese revolution has made it possible to get to know the Vietnamese Communists at first hand, in Vietnam and abroad. Although we don't have a complete picture of the way the Vietnamese leadership lives and acts, we are aware of some elements whose significance is inescapable: just as a good doctor can assert the existence of an illness on the basis of a few typical symptoms (a single indication that is carefully analyzed can be sufficient), a militant who has neither read nor traveled very much can easily recognize bureaucratic gangrene.

-- Hanoi has special stores for government ministers, vice-ministers, and ranking party cadres (one of these stores is near Petit Lac). It functioned normally during the escalation and certain foreign visitors were taken there without anything being thought of it.

-- The DRV has hospitals that are reserved for ranking cadres. These hospitals have a better stock of medical and surgical supplies.

-- As in the USSR or in the people's democracies, government dignitaries (members of the Political Bureau) live in superlative villas surrounded by woodland and staffed by a number of servants.

-- As in all the "socialist" countries, party cadres enjoy privileges that go along with their rank in the hierarchy (automobile supplied by the party, chauffeur, supplementary food rations, etc....).

-- These privileges also exist in the South, though on a more limited scale since state power there has for the moment been established in the jungle. There are no automobiles or villas, but it is possible to discern a minature version of what will spread, as in the North. The leading cadres have their own hospitals, schools for their children, and supplementary food rations.

These material advantages are naturally more modest than those of a Soviet or Rumanian party secretary, but they can only expand when the situation permits. In conditions of general scarcity, a little more rice, a little quinine, and having one's children well taken care of is certainly the equivalent of a black limousine or a vacation on the Black Sea.

Not all the cadres of the Vietnamese CP have the same advantages (the hierarchy of privileges is rigorously codified), and on the lower levels the privileges of the cell secretary have more of a political or moral character: he represents the party, therefore the supreme power, and has something to say about everything.

The Vietnamese CP bureaucracy (in both the North and the South) is socially strictly comparable to its counterpart in the countries of the West. It is a highly structured layer that is conscious of its interests and fears above all having its absolute authority and legitimacy challenged. From this flows the recurring theme of party unity, which crops up in a number of documents (Ho Chi Minh's testament for one); the brutal censorship of news; and the fact that there are no political discussions outside the very restricted circle of the Political Bureau.

This layer is perfectly well aware that it is part of the world bureaucratic camp, and this fact is very much underestimated in the writings of Comrades Rousset, Ernest, etc.... Whatever the conjunctural differences with the Soviet Union, the Chinese, the French CP, or the Mouvement de la Paix [Peace Movement], they still consider each other as allies in the same camp. On the other hand, although they accept support from Trotskyists, leftists, and ex-Communists (and sometimes even thank them publicly), these forces are considered momentary allies who come from another camp.

When a representative of the Provisional Revolutionary Government occasionally adorns meetings of the FSI [Indochina Solidarity Front] or even the Ligue, it is not for principled reasons of proletarian internationalism; it's because the Vietnamese bureaucracy thinks the French CP is rather sluggish, and that some flirting with the left might serve as a stimulant and produce some benefits for the struggle of the Vietnamese people. It takes a calculated risk in doing this, which proves that it's not a cowardly and immobile bureaucracy like those of the traditional Stalinist parties. Mao himself also took a risk in mobilizing the youth against the "bureaucrats" during the Cultural Revolution.

So far as the Vietnamese CP leadership is concerned, Marxism is useful for providing a convincing explanation for whatever empiricism could not foresee and opportunism sought to disguise. It must be admitted that the Vietnamese theoreticians have done rather well in this area, and that they rediscovered

the essential theses of permanent revolution when they undertook -- ten years later -- an analysis of their past. There is, however, no Vietnamese political document that outlines a perspective of passing over to the socialist revolution by eliminating the capitalist stage, a theme that Chinh and Le Duan returned to at some length after 1954. "The Resistance Will Win" by Troung Chinh is an extraordinary document that predicted in 1947 the defeat of the French army. He made this prediction at a time when the Vietminh was mostly armed with machetes, bamboo stakes, and hunting rifles. But this can hardly be considered a statement of a "long-term strategy for taking power." (Sterne, p. 9.) What Chinh actually does is set forth the Vietnamese CP's military strategy (in which political and military factors criss-cross one another). He makes a very sane assessment of the evolution of the relationship of forces between the French army and the Vietminh and concludes that the victory of the resistance movement is inevitable. He shows no interest, however, in the agrarian revolution or in the sort of society to be established once the resistance became victorious.

The Vietnamese Communist leaders have no faith in the creative force of Marxism and distrust original ideas. It's not because they are afflicted with cerebral sclerosis but because they fear, as bureaucrats will, anything that might foster a challenge in their country.

Certain comrades will reply that the picture we have just painted is quite somber, and that it is difficult to understand how a bureaucratic party could have led a struggle as admirable as the one conducted by the Vietnamese people. Sterne answers the minority by stating that the constant pressure of the masses can't explain everything, and that in any event the fact that the Vietnamese CP had responded to this pressure is enough to differentiate it from the French or Italian CPs in Europe.... Sterne believes that the different attitudes of these parties can be explained in large part by the difference in their ties to the USSR.

We would agree with him if he weren't a little too schematic on the question of the contradiction between "orders from the Kremlin" and the development of the Vietnamese revolution.

It may be true that Stalin was suspicious of the Yugoslav and Chinese revolutions, but there were no "orders" not to carry them out. All you have to do is read the writings of Djilas or Dedijer to realize that the militants of the Yugoslav CP felt they had the total support of the Soviet nation. The Vietnamese militants didn't form the Vietminh (League for Independence) in May 1940 against the advice of Moscow. Ho Chi Minh returned to Vietnam in December 1940 after having spent some time in China. It's impossible to know at present what the Kremlin's opinion was at the time of the formation of the Vietminh, but it is certain that Ho didn't think he'd be repudiated for it. All his life Ho was quite adept at avoiding taking positions that would force him into a dispute with Stalin. He carried out the tour de force of residing in the Soviet Union during periods of intense ideological confrontation (1923-24) and massive repression (1934-38) without writing a single line that could compromise him.

We have now come to the factor that gives the Vietnamese CP its originality. In point of fact, the Vietnamese CP closely re-

sembles its founder. Ho Chi Minh was a militant nationalist who understood that under the conditions of Vietnam in the imperialist epoch, only a powerful CP linked to the USSR could bring independence to his country. In all his written works (translated into French) there isn't a single theoretical piece that rises above pedagogic banalities. Compared to him, Mao is a soaring eagle. The decision to dissolve the Indochinese CP in 1945 and to have a biography written in which he is presented as a nationalist leader (with no reference to his Communist past) could not have come from a Communist totally molded by the Comintern. The worst Stalinists have refused to dissolve their CP, even on paper; and the American CP that threatened to do so in 1944 was immediately called to task for it (by Duclos).

Does this mean that the Vietnamese CP has a nationalist leadership comparable to so many others in the Third World? Absolutely not.

To attain its goals, the Vietnamese CP entered the ample bosom of the Stalinist camp. It followed all the turns of the Comintern, where its leaders acquired a certain way of thinking, a certain sort of principles, and certain methods of action and organization.

Sterne is correct to treat as a joke an explanation that says pressure from the masses is the sole factor behind the actions of the Ho Chi Minh leadership. It would be more correct to take into account the pressure from the Third International. When these two pressures pushed in the same direction, the Indochinese CP got some wind in its sails (1930-31); when the directives of the International went against the current of what the workers wanted, the Indochinese CP complied (1936-39) at the risk of being reduced to a sect.

In 1940-41 Ho was capable of carrying out a turn toward armed struggle for national independence. This resolute decision was made at a time when the masses had been crushed by the Franco-Japanese occupation and were in no position to exert any pressure. A decision of this sort implied courage, audacity, and will. At almost the same time (May 1940) the National Front was formed in France. The originality of the Indochinese Communist Party lies in the fact that beneath the mask of opportunist programs and ambiguous declarations, it has always sought to (and managed to) totally control the resistance movement.

It's true, of course, that this testifies to the capacities of its leadership team. But it can with equal justice be attributed to absence of a rival of any serious stature, given the fact that the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalist movements had already demonstrated their ineffectiveness.

Ho Chi Minh was educated by the Comintern in the notion of revolution by stages: first a bourgeois-democratic stage; then, when the time comes, a socialist stage. However, he was Borodin's adviser during the Chinese revolution and was present when the Chinese Communists were crushed by the Kuomintang they had placed their trust in. It seems reasonable to assume that even if he still maintained the necessity of two quite distinct stages, he would at least no longer place any confidence in having the bourgeoisie lead the first stage. It must then be the party that leads it, but since it's necessary to keep from skipping stages and to attract the bourgeoisie, the intellectuals,

and feudal elements, the party will operate clandestinely within a broad front that's under its control.

This praxis still guides the Vietnamese Communists. The party is likened to the working class, but its leading role is kept secret to better deceive the enemy; publicly you conceal what you intend to do in order to be able to rally bourgeois and even feudal elements. Even quite recently Nguyen Huu Tho stressed the importance of establishing industries in the South, respecting the right of private property, encouraging Vietnamese living abroad to invest in the South.... Property rights to land that has already been distributed will be respected; plantation owners may keep their fields (Le Monde, June 6, 1973).

The DRV was compelled to carry out an agrarian reform (1953) and then to collectivise agriculture and socialize industry and commerce in order to first conquer the French and then to keep from being strangled economically.

It seems reasonable to assume that at the beginning the Vietnamese leaders didn't realize how rapidly they'd have to carry out these measures. The objective process of permanent revolution is much more powerful than the empiricism and opportunism of Comintern pupils. Above and beyond this it was also necessary that there be militants fiercely determined to drive out the foreign invader and reestablish the unity of their country. The struggle against the French and then the very question of survival after the Geneva Accords implied a socialist transformation of the revolution (just as the survival of Cuba in America required the overthrow of the socio-economic system we are all familiar with).

At the same time that the Vietnamese CP transformed agriculture and industry, and at the same time that it received manufactured goods and advisers from the socialist countries, it also imported a certain way of leading the state and the party, a certain concept of democracy and internationalism. In the USSR, bureaucratic privileges are the result of the slow degeneration of the party; in Vietnam they are a foreign custom imposed on and accepted by a party in which their appearance was in no way obligatory. The Vietnamese Communists faithfully copied the USSR because they had no political education of any depth and were above all concerned with conducting a struggle for national liberation. In his book on the deserters from the French army (Les Soldats Blancs de Ho Chi Minh), Jacques Doyon describes quite well how the French Communist deserters, who had experienced a great spirit of fraternity and egalitarianism among the resistance fighters of the South, were shocked when they arrived in the North after 1950 and discovered the bureaucratization of the army (with rudimentary dining facilities for the soldiers, separate dining facilities for the junior officers, and still other facilities for the officers and ranking cadres...).

If these customs were at first an import, more than twenty years of state power has made them a substantial aspect of the DRV's social structure. To ignore this amounts to a failure to understand the essence of the Vietnamese Communist leadership: a bureaucratic leadership that is both centrist and pragmatic.

Rousset is certainly not very convincing when he explains that if there had been a bureaucratic caste in North Vietnam in 1959-60, the Vietnamese Workers [Communist] Party would not have

made the political turn toward relaunching armed struggle, and that "in 1965, after the beginning of the U.S. escalation, which called into question the very existence of the North Vietnamese workers state, the Vietnamese Workers Party would have been quick to abandon its aid to the South, in the name of the inequality of forces." [Rousset, p. 136.] The unity of Vietnam is one of the powerful ideas that kept spirits high and inspired the resistance movement since 1945. Furthermore, this idea is based on economic necessity because the two parts of the country are indispensable to one another. It must not be forgotten that after the 1954 Geneva Accords most of the Communist cadres in the South scrupulously returned to the North, and that many of them now have important responsibilities in the DRV and are not prepared to abandon their fellow countrymen.

A "crystallized" bureaucracy can have specific interests of its own that cause it to become opposed for a time to its Soviet or Chinese counterpart, but this can occur without in any way calling into question its social character. The Yugoslav bureaucracy provided a clear illustration of this in 1948, so did the Chinese bureaucracy in 1960. At the time, the Fourth International felt that these bureaucratic leaderships (even though "crystallized") merited critical support since their struggle helped raise the level of consciousness of the workers movement.

The repercussions of the combat carried out by the Vietnamese CP are at least as important as Tito's saying "no" to Stalin or Mao's denunciation of Soviet revisionism. The heroism of the Vietnamese led by the Vietnamese CP canceled out in part the effects of the repeated setbacks suffered by the colonial revolution in Latin America, Asia, and Africa. Even if they had no intention of doing so at the beginning, they proved that imperialism can be stalemated by a small peasant population on the condition that it is led by a revolutionary party and that the power of the feudal elements and of the capitalists, both domestic and foreign, is abolished.

But while it held imperialism at bay and destroyed the old regime, the Vietnamese CP did not install a socialist regime in which working people took their own destiny in their hands. The DRV is an authoritarian transitional state, one in which party functionaries retain absolute and unchecked power.

All of Rousset's reflections on the "broad democratization at the rank-and-file level, attested to by the way the People's Army functions," or of the sort that "the Vietnamese leaders have tried to respond to the problem of bureaucratization, which has confronted them for a long time" -- testify to a strong dose of naiveté. He offers a number of quotations from Truong Chinh, Giap, and even Burchett to convince us that one of the Vietnamese leadership's fondest desires is to democratize the functioning of the party and the army. Unfortunately, facts carry more weight than professions of faith. We would like to call Comrade Rousset's attention to a number of writings that are just as convincing as the ones he mentions, writings covering the same subject and written in the same style by such eminent authors as Stalin, Maurice Thorez, Dimitrov, and Togliatti.

Some of Stalin's attacks on bureaucrats in Foundations of Leninism have an almost "Trotskyist" vigor.

If the escalation compelled the regime to undertake a quite

significant decentralization, the execution of this brought about no change whatsoever in political life. This decentralization brought the cadres closer to the general population and permitted the development of masterful initiatives in the art of resisting the bombing, increasing production, and improving schooling and public health. But it did not permit the masses to have the slightest say over the leadership's political decisions. The politicization of the masses is strictly pedagogic: on every level the cadre simply explain the correctness of the party line. Since the party's strategic line coincides with the population's desire to drive the imperialists out and liberate the South, it has become the mass line.

Allusions as to the necessity of democratizing the party or the state don't carry much weight alongside the continuous declarations of all the leaders on the role of the Vietnamese CP: for them the party represents, by definition and for all time, the working class. The trade unions and the mass organizations are thus assigned the role of serving as vehicles, each in its own sphere, for the directives of the party. This was explained by Le Duan, among others, in "The Historic Role of the Vietnamese Working Class" (1966) and more crudely (to take a more recent document) in the report from the Third Congress of the Front of the Vietnamese Fatherland (1972) which gathered together all the organizations in the DRV: the Workers [Communist] Party; the Democratic Party; the Socialist Party; the trade unions; the organizations of the peasants, artisans, intellectuals, and the armed forces; the youth federation; the women's organization, Buddhists, Catholics, Protestants, etc....

Here is what Hoang Quoc Viet said in his political report: "On the basis of the political line set forth by the Third Party Congress, the Front has focused its efforts on mobilizing the entire population, urging them to successfully carry out the two strategic tasks of the Vietnamese revolution: resistance to American imperialism and building socialism.

"Through patient propaganda work and explanation, the Front has continued to raise the people's level of consciousness of the line and policies of the party, and to the laws and regulations of the state." The various organizations are thus only appendages of the party, set up to provide an organizational framework for diverse layers of the population.

Faulty reasoning thus lies behind criticisms of the Vietnamese revolution that conclude -- on the basis of the opportunist program of its various fronts and their strange amalgam of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois organizations -- that the Vietnamese are making unprincipled alliances.

The Vietnamese CP plays a dominant role in all these alliances, as Rousset illustrates very well. It places its men everywhere, including at the head of such organizations as the Democratic Party or the Radical Socialist Party, which represent the "national bourgeoisie" and the "patriotic intellectuals" in the NLF, whereas the Popular Revolutionary Party is the party of the working class.

Who could be taken in by such a patent hoax?

Not the imperialists or the Saigon bourgeoisie. Those of its members who rallied behind the resistance movement or the Alliance of Democratic Forces did so as a function of a certain

relationship of forces and not because they had any illusions about the broad range of political groups represented in the NLF. However, certain militants in Third World revolutionary movements have fallen for it. They don't realize that the Front won despite its program rather than because of it. They aren't aware that the soothing declarations of class unity, national reconciliation, etc., disguise the Communist militants' total control over the PRG.

Those who wish to imitate what the Vietnamese say they do but who are not capable of doing what they do (that is, who don't have a battle-tested party) are rushing toward a catastrophe.

This is where the Vietnamese CP's internationalism ends. This internationalism has always been centripetal. It is possible, of course, to cite a long list of declarations and statements of greeting by the leaders of the Vietnamese Workers Party on their responsibility toward the international proletariat. But in practice they have always felt that their sole concrete manifestation of internationalism would be to defeat American imperialism in their country and to accept any sort of aid that would make this possible.

When the interests of foreign revolutionaries has run contrary to the line set by the Vietnamese bureaucratic leadership, the latter blithely abandoned those it should have supported:

-- it abandoned (even verbally) the Ceylonese revolutionaries because of the DRV's diplomatic interests;

-- it supported the Soviet intervention into Czechoslovakia (seemingly to discourage eventual Vietnamese admirers of the Prague Spring);

-- it gave total support to the French CP in 1968 in a joint declaration that hailed the French CP's correct line and couldn't pass up the opportunity to arm the Political Bureau against its opponents. At that time the French CP was being widely criticized in Hanoi, but a delegation had arrived and had agreed to drop the slogan "Peace in Vietnam" from their propaganda work in favor of "Victory to the Vietnamese People." That was well worth a communiqué.

We agree with Sterne on the meaning of the Paris Accords and on the considerable benefits the Indochinese revolution can draw from them. Nonetheless, we think that the PRG's present policy of national reconciliation, of giving priority to appeals to the third component while glossing over all class distinctions, especially in the cities, is quite dangerous. Naturally it's true that time works against Thieu, whose regime is maintained by terror and corruption. But the economic power of the USA cannot be compared with that of postwar France, and the seductive charms of neocolonialism can serve as a considerable brake on the development of a mass urban struggle, which alone can permit the PRG to seize power in the entire South and make it possible to unify the country.

Faithful to its tradition, the Vietnamese CP is preparing the future of the South by excluding any mass movement that it doesn't directly control (its influence seems to be modest among the working class in the cities) and by placing its trust exclusively in the political and military pressure exerted by the liberated territories, the infiltration of the puppet regime,

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and the support from the DRV.

Certain problems have only been touched upon in this document. Our sole intention was to compel the militants to examine thoroughly the nature of the Vietnamese Communist leadership.

We have recognized since the Second Congress of the Communist International that revolutionaries must support "any liberation movement in the colonies"; there's all the more reason to do so when such a movement ends up driving out feudal and capitalist elements and stalemating the foremost imperialist power.

The myth of a workers state that has for several decades been subjected to strong bureaucratic tendencies without their ever becoming crystallized must be laid to rest. Our struggle in solidarity with the people who are fighting in Vietnam will not be diminished in the least if we understand who is leading this combat and as a function of what interests.

The "deformations" masked or justified by the state of war are going to appear for what they really are in the eyes of a great number of astonished militants: the behavior of a layer of bureaucratic leaders that is highly structured and very conscious of its own interests. It is high time to prepare these militants for this.

Nikita
June 1973