

**Special
Vietnam Edition**

DIRECT ACTION

NO. 19

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10 CENTS

A FORTNIGHTLY SOCIALIST NEWSPAPER

OUR ONE POINT PEACE PLAN: OUT NOW!

EDITORIAL

Nixon's recent decision to blockade North Vietnam's main ports and to extend the air war in the North is the most serious escalation of the war in years. Mining the port of Haiphong was a step at which even Johnson, the major architect of the American aggression in Indochina, had balked. It brings the US into a direct confrontation with the USSR, major supplier of war material to the Vietnamese fighters.

The current offensive of the Vietnamese liberation forces which opened on March 30 has dealt a deadly series of blows to the war plans of American imperialism. "Vietnamisation", the policy of using the Saigon army to do the fighting backed by US air power and logistics support, has clearly failed. A string of bases and district capitals have already fallen. The provincial capital of Quangtri has fallen and the key cities of Kontum and Hue appear on the verge of liberation. There have been numerous reports of the disintegration of the Saigon units in the face of North Vietnamese assaults. The victories of the liberation forces have been won in the face of a tremendous American air assault.

Due to the massive antiwar sentiment in the US, Nixon has been

unable to use American ground troops against the liberation forces offensive. Indeed, on April 12 an American unit mutinied at Phubai base and refused to go on patrol. Opposition to the war is widespread among US troops in Vietnam. Thus, Nixon has had to offset this by massive use of air and naval power. The number of sailors and airmen attached to the Seventh Fleet operating in the South China Sea has risen by 21,000 to 38,000 since the offensive began (this strength is not included in troop totals).

Not for a single moment has American imperialism given up its aim of "saving" South Vietnam from "communism" (i.e. for capitalism). As Nixon put it in his April 26 speech: "We will not be defeated and will never surrender our friends to Communist aggression". Imperialism has merely had to adopt its methods to the situation on the battlefields and the mood of the American people. Hence, on the one hand, the

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Editor: Jim Percy
Assistant Editor: Nita Keig
Business Manager: Steve Painter

All Correspondence to
139 St John's Rd,
Glebe, 2037. Ph. 6606672.

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Contact socialists in your area

NATIONAL OFFICE:
S.Y.A., P.O. Box A581,
Sydney South, 2000.
S.W.L., P.O. Box K186,
Haymarket, 2000
SYDNEY:
S.W.L., S.Y.A., 139 St. John's
Rd. Glebe, 2037 Ph 6606672.
MELBOURNE:
S.W.L., 136 Queensberry St.,
Carlton, 3053. Ph. 3473507.
S.Y.A., 140 Queensberry St.,
Carlton, 3053. Ph. 3473507.
ADELAIDE:
S.W.L., S.Y.A., 287 Rundle St.,
Adelaide, 5000. Ph. 234539.
BRISBANE:
S.W.L., S.Y.A., 97 Musgrave St.,
Red Hill, 4059.
CANBERRA:
S.Y.A. P.O. Box 26, O'Connor,
2601. Ph. 486717 (Ian)
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EDITORIAL

(Continued from P.1)

Our one point peace plan- OUT NOW!

withdrawal of US ground troops and greater use of the still reliable air force and navy; and on the other hand, an attempt to use the Soviet and Chinese bureaucracies to pressure the North Vietnamese and NLF to compromise.

The failure of the workers states, most notably the USSR and China, to aid the North Vietnamese and NLF on a scale commensurate with the attack they were under, has been a major factor in helping the US aggression. American imperialism noted very carefully the Soviet and Chinese responses to each of its moves and acted accordingly. The Chinese responses to each of its moves and acted accordingly. The failure of the USSR and China to form a united front together with North Vietnam allowed the US to carry out its aggression all the more easily. The bureaucratic leaderships of these countries put their caste interests above the defence of another workers state under imperialist attack.

Nixon can only have been encouraged in his present decision by the passivity of Moscow and Peking to the escalation of the bombing in North and South Vietnam in recent weeks. As the April 25 editorial in the "Washington Post" noted:

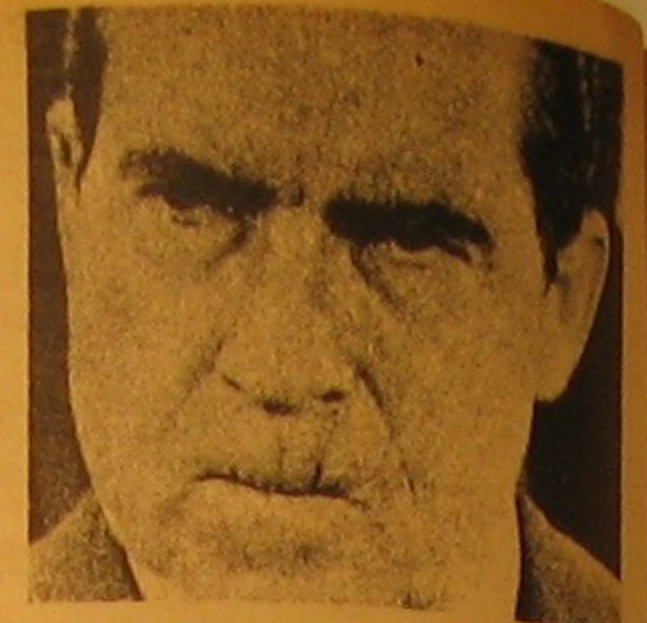
"The Kremlin, by limiting its reaction and by continuing preparations for the pending summit, has shown itself hopeful that the President will succeed in his evident attempt to bring the North Vietnamese offensive to an end before the summit begins. For the moment, Moscow seems to regard its provision of hardware to Hanoi, including hardware used in the South, as proof enough of its great-power and socialist credentials alike. It is not 'blinking'."

American imperialism's new escalation of the war directly involves the Soviet Union and China. It also places in question Nixon's trip to Moscow. It would be the height of Stalinist myopia if the Soviet and Chinese bureaucracies accepted this new escalation. This would not only place in jeopardy the Vietnamese revolution but ultimately will only encourage imperialist aggression against other workers states, even the USSR and China. To this imperialist blackmail there is only one principled response - form a united front of workers states for an all out defence of the Vietnamese revolution; no secret diplomacy.

At all events, blockading North Vietnam will not affect the current offensive. The supplies for this have been accumulated and moved South over many months. The military position in the South will continue to deteriorate for the imperialists. However, if the workers states do not live up to their responsibilities, there is no doubt that the liberation forces will be much handicapped in the future.

There is no doubt that the Vietnamese will continue their long and heroic struggle to determine their own destinies, for which so many of their brothers and sisters have fallen. The peoples of the world who support their struggle have a role to play, too. We must organise the most massive, sustained antiwar actions internationally until the imperialist aggression is ended. We must demand that all imperialist troops, material and aid is withdrawn from Indochina immediately - "Out Now!". We must also call on the workers states to stand firm against imperialist blackmail, solidly behind the Vietnamese revolution.

Immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all US troops, bases and matériel from Indochina - OUT NOW!
End the bombing now!
Victory to the Vietnamese revolution!
For a united front of workers states to defend and aid the Vietnamese Revolution!
No secret diplomacy!
Smash the Blockade!



QUICK RESPONSE TO ESCALATION IN AUSTRALIA

All centres have already responded quickly to the latest escalation by Nixon. On the day of the announcement actions were held in Brisbane, Canberra, Melbourne and Sydney, and Adelaide students marched a day later.

Five hundred Brisbane students marched to Du Pont headquarters and voted to go on strike till the end of term. A larger protest is planned for Friday.

In Canberra 150 demonstrators picketed the US consulate. A vigil has begun and will continue until the mass protest on Friday.

In Melbourne 2,000 demonstrators gathered in the city square from where they proceeded to the offices of Pan Am. Here, police viciously attacked the crowd and two arrests were made. The march then proceeded back to the city square.

At Pan Am several windows were broken. This was unfortunate as it gave police an excuse to attack the march and the media the opportunity to divert attention from Nixon's offensive and onto the issue of law and order.

In Sydney 1,000 demonstrators assembled outside the US consulate in Pitt Street and shouted slogans demanding the US get out of Indo-China. Further action is planned in Sydney for Friday.

In Adelaide 1,000 student demonstrators marched through city streets. Several smoke bombs were thrown and a couple of demonstrators were arrested. Further protests are planned.

In Brisbane the Queensland Trades and Labour Council has called for a complete black ban on all U.S. shipping to be imposed by the A.C.T.U. This follows threatened action by seamen and wharflies and certainly points the way forward for industrial action against the war.

The following motion has so far been passed by the Sydney Antiwar Coalition, a meeting of protesters at Adelaide University at a front lawn meeting and by the Macquarie University Student Council Executive:

This meeting condemns the provocative actions of the United States government outlined in President Richard Nixon's speech of 9 May. We repeat our demand for the immediate withdrawal of all US troops and matériel from Indochina as the only way to end the war. We appeal and offer our full support to those workers who have already taken strike action as a response to the latest escalation, and call upon all sections of the Australian community to voice their opposition to the dangerous and criminal policies of the United States, by taking part in demonstrations, ... (as called by the antiwar movement.)

We further call upon the workers' states, in particular the Soviet Union and the Peoples Republic of China, to jointly defend the struggle of the Vietnamese people against this latest provocation. We call upon the leaders of the workers' states to jointly demonstrate publicly their solidarity with the struggle of the Vietnamese by refusing, at this time of crisis, to engage in any form of secret diplomacy with the government of the United States, and to jointly state to that government that the workers' states will not allow the military might of the United States to trample on the self-determination of the peoples of Indochina.

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THE ANTIWAR MOVEMENT - WHAT SHOULD WE DO NOW?

Nixon's current exercise in brinkmanship raises anew the need for the antiwar movement here and internationally to assess the situation and respond massively to the new aggression against Vietnam. The current escalation by Nixon shows clearly that none of the basic aims of imperialism have changed: it still seeks a military victory. Only the rhetoric and means change as one method after another of achieving these basic aims is shown to be futile.

So with the basic nature of the war remaining unchanged it follows that the basic role of the antiwar movement that has developed over the last seven years remains unchanged. In fact the key point to understand is that we need to do what we have been doing for the past several years but to do it now with a greater sense of urgency.

Unfortunately the "peace" rhetoric of the past few months confused sections of the movement. After this attempt by SYA-SWL in Sydney to continue the protests in the form of the highly successful moratorium were sabotaged by the AICD-CPA forces who wished to take unilateral action on their own - in one case public meetings, in the other so-called "advanced actions" - at the same time castigating the SYA-SWL proposals as "sterile debate" and "needless talk". But what was really happening was this: the AICD-CPA forces had been sucked in by the dropping away of the liberal-pacifist section of the movement and had come to believe along with them that the antiwar movement was "winding down."

A parallel phenomenon occurred in Melbourne where the Taft led CPA forces supported the Worker Student Alliance "multi-moratorium" idea. This was a concept of "enlarging" the moratorium protest to cover social services, Niugini, black struggle, unemployment etc. etc. Because they were confused about what was happening in the war, they were unable to mount the necessary campaign to educate the movement and its sympathisers nor to plan and mount the necessary mass action by which this propaganda activity is complemented.

Similar confusion occurred in other centres with the necessity for forming completely new committees in Hobart and Adelaide under SYA-SWL initiative which were responsible in the April 20-22 period for rebuilding the movement in these centres.

SPECIAL EDITION OF DIRECT ACTION

As soon as we heard the news of Nixon's escalation we began preparation of this special edition of Direct Action. The situation was serious enough in our opinion to warrant dropping all other plans and responding with all our resources to this latest aggression.

The article "Vietnam: Three decades of imperialist counterrevolution" has been reprinted from *The Militant*, a revolutionary socialist newspaper published in the USA.

We have held over all our usual features: our In Brief column, Women in Revolt, The World Revolution. We have no news this issue on the Labour movement and the developments of the past two weeks: this will be printed in our next issue. The second half of the struggle at Latrobe University has been held over till our next issue. Also in our next issue will be a report on the May Day demonstrations, an analysis of the Niugini elections, and an article by a long-time CPA activist on internationalism and the failures of the CPA in this aspect of revolutionary politics.

Along with these features will be much more as we return to our regular 16 pages/colour format to continue as the biggest, cheapest and most widely read left paper in this country.

Our next publication date is May 22 - to make sure of your copy, subscribe now!

No one is confused any more! At last life itself clarifies the situation for those who won't learn from history. At last we can be confident of rallying old and new forces to defend, once again, at this crucial stage the struggle of the Vietnamese for liberation.

What was it that made the antiwar movement successful in the past in forcing the partial victory of withdrawal of Australian combat troops? At this point a summary of the things that made the antiwar forces strong is necessary:

Firstly the building of mass demonstrations on the streets has kept the movement independent of political parties and has enabled massive numbers of people to take action on their own behalf against the government. This has raised consciousness and combativity and stopped the movement from being sidetracked into compromises and betrayal. Besides, it is the most effective way of getting our views to a massive number of people and demonstrating the size and confidence of the movement.

Secondly, the demand of immediate withdrawal of all US and Australian troops from Vietnam as the central organizing slogan of the movement.



December 15, 1969 demonstration in Sydney marked new upturn in antiwar movement after lull and Nixon's "plan".

DRIVE FOR 500 NEW SUBS WELL AHEAD AFTER THIRD WEEK

Direct Action's drive for 500 new subscriptions is well ahead at the end of the third week. Sydney still remains far in advance of other centres so a concerted drive is still needed in these areas to catch up. Sydney looks like fulfilling its quota by the end of the fourth week. The drive will last for another five weeks during which time the special subscription rate of 15 for \$1 will operate.

of this special Vietnam issue has put a heavy financial burden on our resources: we didn't plan on Nixon's escalation. But we felt a quick response was necessary and to make this possible when the occasion arises next we need your support now.

So send us your sub now and any donation you might care to make towards the cost of this issue.

Totals received to date are as follows:

AREA	SHOULD BE	NEW SUBS	QUOTA
Sydney	56	133	150
Melbourne	56	59	150
Adelaide	23	13	60
Brisbane	23	5	60
Hobart	11	11	30
Canberra	8	3	20
General	11	8	30
	188	232	500

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THE ROLE OF THE WORKERS STATES

The international character of the war in Indochina has caused the involvement of other countries. Because of their common ties with Hanoi, Moscow and Peking were directly challenged from the beginning. Both China and the Soviet Union were the ultimate target of the assault launched by the Pentagon, as, of course, were the East European workers' states, as well as North Korea and Cuba. The role played by these countries has always been closely watched by the US administration as was evident in the Pentagon Papers. At all stages the administration sought to avoid a direct confrontation with either China or the USSR.

During an earlier stage of the war in 1954 both the USSR and China were responsible for a previous defeat when they forced the Geneva Accords on the Vietnamese. Even though Vietnamese liberation forces controlled most of Vietnam the country was partitioned into two sections until free elections could be held. The elections were never held and the US established a firm base against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and China.

In the period since 1954 the role of the workers states has been ambivalent. On the positive side has been the aid given to the revolutionaries. While Australian government figures show total aid of \$1000 million from the Soviet Union and \$300 million from China more recent figures indicate that in 1971 only \$100 million came from the Soviet Union and only \$75 million from China. This aid is undoubtedly quite meagre and when it is compared with the US military expenditure in Indochina for the same period of \$9 billion, the Soviet figure comes to only one ninetyth of the US effort.

The weaponry supplied to the Vietnamese for the current offensive can be seen for what it really is: insufficient and delivered too late.

So Vietnam has been a testing ground for all forces and tendencies in world politics. In the case of Moscow it will be recalled that in the beginning the Brezhnev-Kooygin leadership made rather forceful statements denouncing the US imperialist aggression in Vietnam. Stalin's heirs even permitted expressions of solidarity with the Vietnamese, including some demonstrations in front of the US embassy in which stones and bottles of ink were thrown at the building. The tab for the damage was, of course, picked up by the Soviet government. This activity was soon curtailed, however, and brought into proportion with the flow of material aid that the Soviet bureaucracy doled out to the Vietnamese with an eyedropper. Above all, Moscow avoided any action in any other theatre that might have given the Pentagon cause to reconsider its aggression in Vietnam and to retreat.

At the same time, the Kremlin maintained its understanding with Washington and through secret diplomatic channels played the role of a go-between, putting pressure on the Vietnamese and doing everything possible to bring them to the "negotiations table" set up by the imperialist aggressor.

In the current offensive the bureaucratic leadership of the USSR has played the same ambivalent role: on the one hand it has supplied Hanoi and the NLF with more sophisticated armaments and on the other hand it played an extremely complacent role. When Russian ships were attacked recently they did not cancel Nixon's trip to Moscow. Not too long ago the Soviet press rallied at Peking for toasting Nixon while Washington rained death and destruction on Indochina. Now the bombing has been extended to Hanoi and Haiphong, the country has been blockaded and up till today the Russians have not cancelled the visit, preferring to engage in secret diplomatic talks with Henry Kissinger, Nixon's chief adviser.

Peking's policy was no less perfidious than Moscow's. In the beginning, the Mao leadership staged giant rallies, denouncing the US imperialist aggression and voicing solidarity with the heroic Vietnamese. There was even talk of readiness to send volunteers to participate in the fighting. The Mao regime did furnish material aid, particularly in the form of small arms and ammunition.

However, all of this was discounted by the Pentagon in view of the Sino-Soviet dispute. Neither Moscow nor Peking proved capable of closing this breach, the main reason being that they placed their narrow national bureaucratic ahead of interests of the world socialist revolution.

On top of this, the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution that Mao opened up in a bid to liquidate his rivals, or potential rivals, in the bureaucracy was taken by the Pentagon as sufficient assurance that the ruling caste in China was so deeply divided internally as to be incapable for the time being of offering any serious resistance to intervention on the mainland of Asia even though the American military machine became implanted within striking distance of the borders of China.

Early last year Peking issued grave warnings to the US during the abortive invasion of Laos when fighting threatened to come closer to the Chinese border but then Nixon's response to Mao's long term efforts for "peaceful coexistence" showed the reality behind Peking's empty rhetoric. "Chairman Mao's Revolutionary Diplomatic Line" turned out to be a policy of class collaboration. In particular the Chinese bureaucracy collaborated with Nixon when they invited him to Peking. The Chinese invitation had a multifold effect. It set back the international anti-war movement considerably by creating illusions of "peace" and an end to the conflict in Indochina. Whether or not the Chinese bureaucracy is able to force the Vietnamese to settle on Nixon's terms he is able to use this possibility as a cover while he continues to seek a military victory.

Events since the Nixon visit have confirmed the fears of a sell out. Less than 48 hours after Richard Nixon's "Journey for Peace" had concluded, US planes renewed the air war against North Vietnam. Peking's statements in the period since then have been extremely moderate. The New York Times commented in its February editorial:

"On the most acute questions of Indochina and Taiwan, the negotiators chose to be purposefully vague, but Peking's hard line has unmistakably given way to a new flexibility. The war with Saigon is no longer portrayed as a fight to the bitter end. Premier Chou considers negotiable the peace proposals now on the table. His exclusive mention of the offers by the National Liberation Front may even contain a hint of strained relations with Hanoi."

The most elementary duty of both China and the USSR to the Vietnamese, who are struggling to defend their revolution against the American assault, is a joint public call for an international united front in defense of Vietnam.

This does not mean that the Chinese and the Soviets must give up their differences. The debate on these questions could continue between the two governments and parties, and with other tendencies in the world Communist movement. Lenin's conception of the united front was to bring together for specific aims all tendencies in the working-class movement, despite fundamental disagreements on other questions.

It would be criminal to engage in diplomatic manoeuvres or sectarian denunciations when what is needed is common action.

By DICK ROBERTS

Washington's central objective in Vietnam has remained the same for over 15 years — since President Dwight Eisenhower's administration took over from France after the battle of Dienbienphu in 1954.

The task, as the U.S. rulers see it, is to crush a peasant-based revolution under the leadership of Communist forces and thereby to stabilize a pro-Western regime in Saigon.

But this peasant revolution had been advancing for at least 15 years even before Dienbienphu. Ho Chi Minh and his followers first established the "League for the Independence of Vietnam" ("Viet Minh" for short) in 1941, during the Second World War Japanese occupation of Indochina. And the Viet Minh had come to power in Indochina in 1946, following Japan's defeat.

The years of repression before 1946; the nine-year war against the French, which lasted until 1954; the brutal, reactionary South Vietnamese regimes of the 1950s; the last 10 years of U.S. occupation and slaughter — in short, three decades of imperialist counterrevolution — have produced in Indochina a deeply entrenched and widely supported revolutionary struggle.

To crush this revolution today requires crushing its base in the populace, that is, destroying the people of the countryside — destroying their homes, villages and towns, destroying their crops, destroying their forests, and forcing them into heavily-guarded concentration camps.

This is Nixon's "Vietnamization" plan. Its roots go back to the "counterinsurgency" programs of the Kennedy administration, and before the U.S. occupation of Vietnam, to the colonial policies of the French.

Knowledge of this history can be a powerful weapon of the antiwar movement. It underlines unambiguously that Washington's basic strategy in Indochina is what used to be called *scorched earth*: the terrorization of a people through unrelieved destruction and repression. From the very start, the antiwar movement has had the responsibility of exposing for the American people the real character of Washington's war in Southeast Asia. This is an important part of the crucial job of mobilizing millions and millions in the struggle once and for all to bring an end to the war.*

Indochina as a French colony

"Indochina is, from all points of view, the most important, the most developed and the most prosperous of our colonies," Albert Sarraut, colonial minister of France, declared in 1923.

This lush land was the third most important exporter of rice in the world. It exported rubber and corn. It had mineral and timber wealth: anthracite coal, which was exported, iron ore, tin, zinc, phosphates, manganese, and tungsten.

"In order to economize on space, many of the sources for the information in this article are not given. However, all of the quotations and source material unless otherwise noted have been taken from the following five books, all of which are paperbacks in print, and which, in addition, are indispensable reading for antiwar activists:

The Struggle for Indochina, 1940-1955, by Ellen J. Hammer, Stanford University Press; **Vietnam: Between Two Truces**, by Jean Lacouture, Vintage Books; **How the United States Got Involved in Vietnam**, by Robert Scheer, Fund for the Republic; **The Indochina Story**, by the Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars, Bantam Books; and **At War with Asia**, by Noam Chomsky, Vintage Books.

VIETNAM: THREE DECADES OF IMPERIALIST COUNTERREVOLUTION



French economic policy typically favored development of the raw materials for export and suppressed domestic industrial development. "In Tonkin," Ellen Hammer writes, "Vietnamese were employed in French textile industries and in French mines. Vietnamese laborers also worked the French rubber plantations in Cochinchina. Many of the plantation workers were recruited the villages of Tonkin . . . and sent far from their homes to work in a semimilitary system."

Most of the land was owned by absentee landlords. In the long Delta, out of a population of four million, only 225,000 owned land. In one province, 9.6 percent of the landowners held 65.5 percent of the cultivable land. Most of the land existed as penniless tenants tied to the absentee owners and taxes.

Long before the organization of the Viet Minh, Vietnamese nationalists chafed against imperialist domination. As in North Africa and the Middle East, revolutionaries met in the Crescent, revolutionaries met in the Foreign Legion, whose members ordered whole villages to be destroyed in reprisals for individuals (a policy only later to be adopted by Hitler and perfected by the Pentagon). The years 1930-31 saw average repression of rebellion in Indochina in which thousands were killed and many thousands imprisoned, including Communists and nationalists of other revolutionary groups.

Paris maintained its hold on Indochina during most of the Second World War, despite Japanese occupation, through the maneuvering of a pro-Vichy regime. While Japan held the ports of Haiphong and Vinh and the air bases it controlled as the springboard for attacks on the Philippines, Malaya, and the East Indies, the French administration occupied itself with quelling Vietnamese resistance. The Viet Minh called upon the French to join them against the Japanese occupiers. They were met with the bullets of the French occupiers.

1945: Viet Minh betrayed

But the end of the war brought a new upsurge of struggle. By the summer of 1945, the revolution had full sway under Viet Minh leadership. In the northern provinces of Indochina, revolutionary forces took pot out a shot being fired. In other

places, they were meekly opposed by Japanese troops. "People's Committees" sprang up throughout the countryside abolishing the old "Councils of Notables" that had been fostered by the French.

The Democratic Republic of Vietnam was established in August. The flexible emperor Bao Dai negotiated with the People's Committee in Hue: in return for support for the new republic, Bao Dai was promised state protection of the temples and tombs of the Royal Family.

"Never before had Vietnam seemed so united," Ellen Hammer writes. "Emperor and people, Catholics and Confucianists, conservatives and Communists, they all seemed to support the new republic. In Hanoi, now the capital of Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh reorganized the National Liberation Committee, bringing in a Catholic and several more moderate nationalists to form the Provisional Government of the new republic. . . . Sept. 2 was Independence Day for Vietnam. The people of Hanoi cheered wildly. It looked to them as if the war were over and Vietnam were free."

But this proved to be short-lived. On one side, as a result of reformist illusions of the Viet Minh Communist leaders, and on the other side, as a result of machinations by British armies and French administrators, the imperialists were able to regain a military foothold in Saigon within a few months and subsequently to launch the long counterrevolutionary war against the new Vietnamese government.

The big powers that emerged victorious from the world war — Britain, the U.S., and the Soviet Union — determined that the defeated Japanese forces in Vietnam should be disarmed, north of the 16th parallel by Chinese armies and south of it by British troops.

Revolutionary socialists in the Viet Minh, as well as others, warned against this imperialist maneuver. They urged against any negotiations with the imperialists and refused to give up their own weapons to the British and Chinese troops, which were supposed to be there only to disarm the Japanese.

But Ho and the other Communist leaders of the Viet Minh bent to Moscow's pressure for "peaceful coexistence" with the imperialist war victors. This meant cooperating with the Chi-

nese and British disarmament and ultimately negotiating a status for Vietnam within the French Union.

The Trotskyists and the Cao Dai and Hoa Hao groupings, who denounced the British troops and demanded guns for the people, were ruthlessly crushed by Communist Viet Minh forces. "The Viet Minh closed in on Trotskyites who belonged to the 'Struggle' group as well as to the International Communist League, and a number were killed," writes Ellen Hammer. This included the prominent revolutionary leader Ta Thu Thau, who was murdered despite his acquittal in three trials by local People's Committees.

On Sept. 22-23, a British coup in Saigon displaced Vietnamese rule and reestablished the nucleus of a French administration. (In northern Vietnam, there was no such move against the Viet Minh on the part of the Chinese. Chiang Kai-shek had no wish to restore Hanoi to his imperialist rivals in Paris. This gave Vo Nguyen Giap time to consolidate and extend the arena of Viet Minh control.)

The French then stalled for time, conducting a series of negotiations with Ho. Just over one year later, in November 1946, Paris was ready to launch its counterrevolutionary war. This was precipitated by an air bombardment and naval artillery shelling of Haiphong, Nov. 23, in which some six thousand Vietnamese were killed — thus employing once again the classical model of imperialist colonial warfare: destroying the populace in order to "save it."

Franco-Vietnamese war

The nine-year-long "dirty war" followed. Its details, which in many respects were repeated on a bigger scale in the latter half of the 1960s, need not be considered here. The French raised an army of over 400,000 (in addition to the Saigon army which came to number about 200,000).

Napalm bombing of civilians was frequent and there was an extraordinarily high rate of infant mortality. . . . all the Viet Minh could offer its adherents was more of the same misery and the continuing prospect of an unending and destructive war," Hammer writes.

"In view of the terrible circumstances of life in the Viet Minh zones, the striking fact is not the number of people who left, but the number who

stayed behind. They seemed dedicated to a single purpose. 'All the prisoners we question are unanimous,' Nguyen Van Tam, prime minister of the Bao Dai government, said; 'they are fighting for the independence of Vietnam.'"

Three points about the Franco-Vietnamese war, however, should be stressed. One of these points is the almost complete lack of support of the world Communist movement to the Viet Minh. Just the opposite of the cold war myths that Democratic and Republican administrations have repeated down to this day, the Indochinese revolution was above all a national revolt against foreign domination. It received little help from outside.

The Stalinist policy of "peaceful coexistence" has taken a deep toll on the Vietnamese revolution. The Communist Party of France supported "its" government in the suppression of the revolution. On July 24, 1946, the French CP newspaper *L'Humanite* asked: "Are we, after having lost Syria and Lebanon yesterday, to lose Indochina tomorrow, North Africa the day after?" And Maurice Thorez, the CP vice-premier of France, co-signed with the Socialist Premier Ramadier the orders sending French troops against the Viet Minh. These "revolutionaries" consequently never questioned why Moscow refused anything close to sufficient aid to the Vietnamese — and is still far from providing the measure of economic and military aid the Soviet Union is capable of producing.

When Mao came to power in China in 1949, the Viet Minh looked hopefully to the new Communist state on their boundaries for desperately needed help. And they did get some aid from Peking as they have since. But it also has been far less than is needed: "Perhaps the most significant aspect of this aid was . . . what it failed to bring," Hammer states. "Most conspicuously lacking was Chinese help in building and supplying a Vietnamese air force, without which each Viet Minh offensive was bound to end in a bath of blood. . . ."

The second general point that should be made about the Franco-Vietnamese war concerns the character of the Saigon regime. It was not until June 1949, almost four years after the establishment of the DRV, that the French were able to patch together a Vietnamese government in Saigon — with the still flexible Bao Dai as its

head. The former emperor had very little support.

Even men like Ngo Dinh Diem refused to join the Saigon government. They recognized it wouldn't last a minute without French support and they feared associating themselves with the hated colonialists.

So from its very inception, the government in Saigon — which is the same one that Nixon is defending today — has had no base among the Vietnamese masses; in fact, it was set up by France as a means of combatting the independence forces. It has always existed solely through repression of the masses with the financial and military aid of foreign imperialism.

The third general point is that U.S. recognition and aid to the Saigon regime began immediately after its inception, that is, during the Truman administration. A June 1949 State Department document welcomed the formation of Bao Dai's regime, describing it as "the new unified state of Vietnam" which would "form the basis for the progressive realization of the legitimate aspirations of the Vietnamese people."

From then on, the flow of dollars to back one after another Saigon regime steadily increased. From \$150-million in 1950, it soared to \$1-billion four years later. By 1954, Washington was underwriting 80 percent of the cost of the war being fought by French troops. On April 6, 1954, in the middle of the battle of Dienbienphu, Washington announced that in the next fiscal year it would increase its aid to \$1.33-billion.

1954: Geneva accords

When the French forces finally collapsed after the famous 55-day siege, it was evident that the Viet Minh was more deeply rooted in the countryside than it had been nine years earlier at the war's outset. The journalist Joseph Alsop traveled in Viet Minh-controlled areas of the Mekong Delta in the winter of 1954:

"I would like to be able to report — I had hoped to be able to report — that on that long, slow canal trip to Vinh Binh, I saw all the signs of misery and oppression that have made my visits to East Germany like nightmare journeys to 1984. But it was not so. . . . At first it was difficult to conceive a Communist government's genuinely 'serving the people.' I could hardly imagine a Communist government that was also a popular government. But this is just the sort of government the palm-hut state actually was while the struggle with the French continued. The Viet Minh could not possibly have carried on the resistance for one year, let alone nine years, without the people's strong, united support."

Dwight D. Eisenhower recalled the same period in his memoirs. Eisenhower was "convinced that the French could not win the war. . . . I never talked or corresponded with a person knowledgeable in Indochinese affairs who did not agree that had elections been held as of the time of the fighting, possibly 80 percent of the population would have voted for the Communist Ho Chi Minh as their leader. . . ."

Yet the Eisenhower administration seriously considered intervening to save the French at Dienbienphu and possibly even using nuclear weapons to do the job. In a trial-balloon speech April 7, 1954, the then vice-president Richard Nixon stated: "The United States as a leader of the free world cannot afford further retreat in Asia. . . . If this government cannot avoid it, the administration must face up to the situation and dispatch forces."

But a surge of opposition from the

1954 Geneva Conference partitions Indochina with help of China and Soviet Union



American people, pressure from the U.S. Congress, and disagreement with the intervention plan by the British government as well as important sectors of the French government persuaded Eisenhower and John Foster Dulles to hold back.

What the imperialists could not win militarily, however, they succeeded in winning diplomatically with the help of Moscow and Peking. This is the main significance of the 1954 Geneva accords. By artificially dividing Vietnam into two regroupment spheres along the 17th parallel, north of it for the Viet Minh forces and south of it for the French, the imperialists won a crucial breathing spell to once again attempt to stabilize their hold in Saigon.

The fact that the accords also promised elections for two years later in 1956 and reunification of the country, could not be taken seriously under the circumstances. Douglas Pike, a former USIA officer, writes in the Center for International Studies publication *Viet Cong* (MIT Press) the following:

"Only the Viet Minh, the winners, lost. Or were sold out. Ho Chi Minh somehow was persuaded—apparently by a joint Sino-Soviet effort—to settle for half the country. . . . The shock of understanding that they had been betrayed, when it came a year later to [the] North Vietnamese, must have been great indeed—nine years of sacrifice in the name of independence and unity washed down the river of abstraction."

Ngo Dinh Diem

Diem, following his refusal to take part in the Bao Dai government of 1949, spent some time in the United States and gained influential backing, particularly from the Catholic Church, of which he was a member.

Senators John F. Kennedy and Mike Mansfield (who became an important architect of the Kennedy administration's Vietnam policies) saw in Diem a pro-Western Vietnamese leader who could provide an alternative to both France and the Viet Minh by forming an "independence" government that would exclude the Viet Minh.

In a speech at the time of Dien-bienphu, Kennedy said that his concern was "for the security of the free world, and for the values and institutions that are held dear in France and throughout the non-Communist world, as well as in the United States." Such an institution apparently resulted from the Geneva accords, and Diem became its ruler in July 1954, even before the Geneva conference was terminated.

At first he waged war against the politico-religious sects of the Cao Dai, Hoa Hao, and Binh Xuyen, which had at one time fought with the Viet Minh against the French, but many members of which had gone over to the French side in the protracted war. Then Diem turned on the peasant masses, including members of the Viet Minh who had stayed in the South following the Geneva accords.

"Full-scale manhunts against dissidents were organized in the rural areas in 1956," states the Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars. "The pattern of these manhunts is clear: . . . denunciation, encirclement of villages, searches and raids, arrests of suspects, plundering, interrogations enlivened sometimes by torture . . . deportation, and regrouping of populations suspected of intelligence with the rebels, etc."

"Seventy-five thousand or more people were killed in this campaign. As many or more were incarcerated. . . . Conditions in Diem's 'reeducation centers,' brought to light only after his

overthrow in 1963, were sordid indeed. Deliberate starvation, deliberate blinding, deliberate maiming."

The National Liberation Front

Unlike the nationalist religious sects, which attempted unsuccessfully to oppose Diem from 1955 on, the members of the Viet Minh who had remained in the South after Geneva attempted to make peace with the new Saigon regime.

This was because Hanoi sustained the illusion that Diem would eventually live up to the Geneva accords. Elections, if held, would certainly bring about a reunification of the nation favorable to Hanoi. Ho also apparently believed that it would be possible to get desperately needed economic help from the Saigon government.

But no such aid was forthcoming. The terror was stepped up, with a "guillotine on wheels" traveling from village to village. Jean Lacouture, a French journalist familiar with the Vietnam of this period, describes Hanoi's dilemma: "The installation of the fanatically anticommunist Ngo family in Saigon, Washington's unrestrained support of that dictatorship, and the constant increase of American forces in the southern zone made it clear to the men in Hanoi that they faced . . . a final partitioning. . . and moreover a platform was perhaps being established in the South from which some day a military action might be launched against them."

"The pitiless 'witch hunt' conducted against their comrades in the South, resulting in the latter's pathetic appeals for help to Hanoi leaders . . . led them, after 1959 and five years of honest application of the Geneva Agreements, to intervene progressively in the South. . . ."

In March 1960, a small group of old resistance fighters met in eastern



South Vietnam and issued an appeal to patriots to regroup with a view toward ultimate collective action. A letter was read from Nguyen Huu Tho, a Saigon lawyer serving a five-year prison term as president of the Saigon "Committee of Peace," which called for resistance.

In September 1960, a Congress of the Lao Dong (Workers [Communist] Party) in Hanoi called for the liberation of South Vietnam from American imperialism. On Dec. 20, 1960, about 100 persons who had gone underground in South Vietnam an-

nounced the formation of the "National Liberation Front of South Vietnam."

Pacification: 1955-1964

" . . . at the beginning, pacification was not a response to rebellion. On the contrary, rebellion was a response to pacification," the Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars writes. That is central to understanding the present conflagration in Southeast Asia. At no time in the last three decades has a regime existed in Saigon that has had the support of the Vietnamese peasant masses. Their sympathies have been on the side of those fighting against imperialism.

The Viet Minh did not even completely abolish the absentee-ownership plantation system, it did not give all the land back to the peasants, it did not succeed in eliminating rents, and it had to inflict heavy taxes in order to pay for the endless war. As at Geneva, the Viet Minh subordinated the needs of the Vietnamese revolution to the interests of Stalinist world policy.

But the peasants supported the revolution and still support it because it offers fundamental improvements and it is fighting to end oppression; it is not the oppressor. The rule by terror comes from Saigon. There is no other way to impose the oppressive rule of capitalist property relations on revolutionized masses.

Whether directly in the form of bullets and bombs, or thinly veiled in the form of pacification, terror has come to be known by whole new generations of young people in Southeast Asia as the only thing to expect from Saigon and its Washington backers.

Averell Harriman, the powerful ruling-class diplomat influential in six administrations, has admitted in his recent book, *America and Russia in a Changing World*, that ". . . the Diem government was entirely dependent on

others have done an excellent job of showing the paths from the Ivy-covered Southeast Asia institutes of various U.S. campuses to the State Department and the Pentagon and then to the battlefields where the pacification projects reach bloody fruition. The "strategic hamlet" program, initiated in 1961, is described by the Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars:

"The peasants were forced to work in the 'hamlets,' digging moats and ditches, etc., while the crops in their own fields wasted away either from lack of care or from the first effects of the chemical crop destruction program, which began in 1961. The burning down of peasant homes outside the 'hamlets' was continued and increased. Peasants were not reimbursed for their burned homes, nor were they compensated for their forced labor. . . . Many thousands suffered hunger and starvation."

To guide and oversee such operations, Kennedy had set up a "Special Group for Counterinsurgency" on the top level of his administration, headed by General Maxwell Taylor.

Diem's fall and U.S. escalation

Building an army in Saigon capable of maintaining a pro-Western regime has always been an object of imperialist policy.

By 1960, the U.S. had helped to build up the so-called South Vietnamese Army to 350,000 troops—armed, clothed, paid, and trained by Americans. By 1965, the year of Johnson's major escalation, the Saigon army numbered 500,000, and it had grown to nearly 800,000 at the end of Johnson's administration. Nixon has built it to about one million—in a country of about 14 million people!

The growth of the Saigon army was one of the causes of Diem's collapse in 1963. The fact that Diem had destroyed the bases of rival factions in Vietnam contributed all the more to the power of the Saigon military. Buddhist groupings showed the world how much the Vietnamese hated Diem's regime, with their demonstrations and horrifying self-immolations in the spring and summer of 1963, but the Buddhists never offered a strong political alternative to Diem or to the subsequent military regimes.

It was logical for the Kennedy administration to orient toward unadorned military dictatorship and to dump Diem when world public opinion rose so sharply against him as a result of the Buddhist protests—and Madame Nhu's remark: "I would clap hands at seeing another monk barbecue show."

Diem was assassinated in November 1963. There followed one and a half years of coups and countercoups until June 1965 when Gen. Nguyen Cao Ky emerged as the first durable successor to Diem.

In this period, Saigon's rule had steadily deteriorated. However, there was still no substantial infiltration from North Vietnam." In June 1964, Thomas Hughes, State Department director of intelligence, declared that "by far the greatest part of the Viet Cong forces in South Vietnam are South Vietnamese, the preponderance of Viet Cong weapons come not from Communist countries but from capture, purchase, and local manufacture."

Johnson ordered the massive escalation of the war in the spring of 1965, the continuous bombing of North Vietnam, the attack on South Vietnam by U.S. combat troops, for three essentially related reasons: in the first place in order to stave off the imma-

nent collapse of the regime in Saigon; second, to demonstrate to revolutionary movements throughout the world the cost of armed uprising against imperialism; third, to stabilize imperialism's hold in Southeast Asia and to provide a military base in order to "contain and roll back" the advance of revolution in Asia—ultimately, perhaps, in China itself.

James Reston wrote in the Aug. 27, 1965, *New York Times*: "The U.S. bases and supply areas are being structured on a scale far larger than is necessary to care for the present level of American forces. . . . In fact, the U.S. base at Cam Ranh . . . is being developed into another Okinawa, not merely for the purposes of this war, but as a major power complex from which American officials hope a wider alliance of Asian nations, with the help of the U.S., will eventually be able to contain the expansion of China."

Noam Chomsky has commented on this explanation of U.S. motives in Vietnam, "The phrase 'contain the expansion of China' must be understood as code for the unpronounceable expression 'repress movements for national independence and social reconstruction in Southeast Asia.'"

The truth of Chomsky's observation is all the more apparent on the rare occasions when the unpronounceable is blurted out. Gen. Maxwell Taylor told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Feb. 17, 1966: "Like the Communists, we have secondary objectives derived from the basic one. We intend to show that the 'war of liberation,' far from being cheap, safe, and disavowable, is costly, dangerous, and doomed to failure."

The war: 1965-1968

Former Army Chief of Staff General Matthew B. Ridgway has stated, "The Korean War taught that it is impossible to interdict the supply route of an Asian army by airpower alone."

Bernard Fall, the late expert on Indochina, wrote in 1967 before his death: "What changed the character of the Vietnam war was not the decision to bomb North Vietnam: not the decision to use American ground troops in South Vietnam: but the decision to wage unlimited aerial warfare inside the country at the price of literally blowing the place to bits."

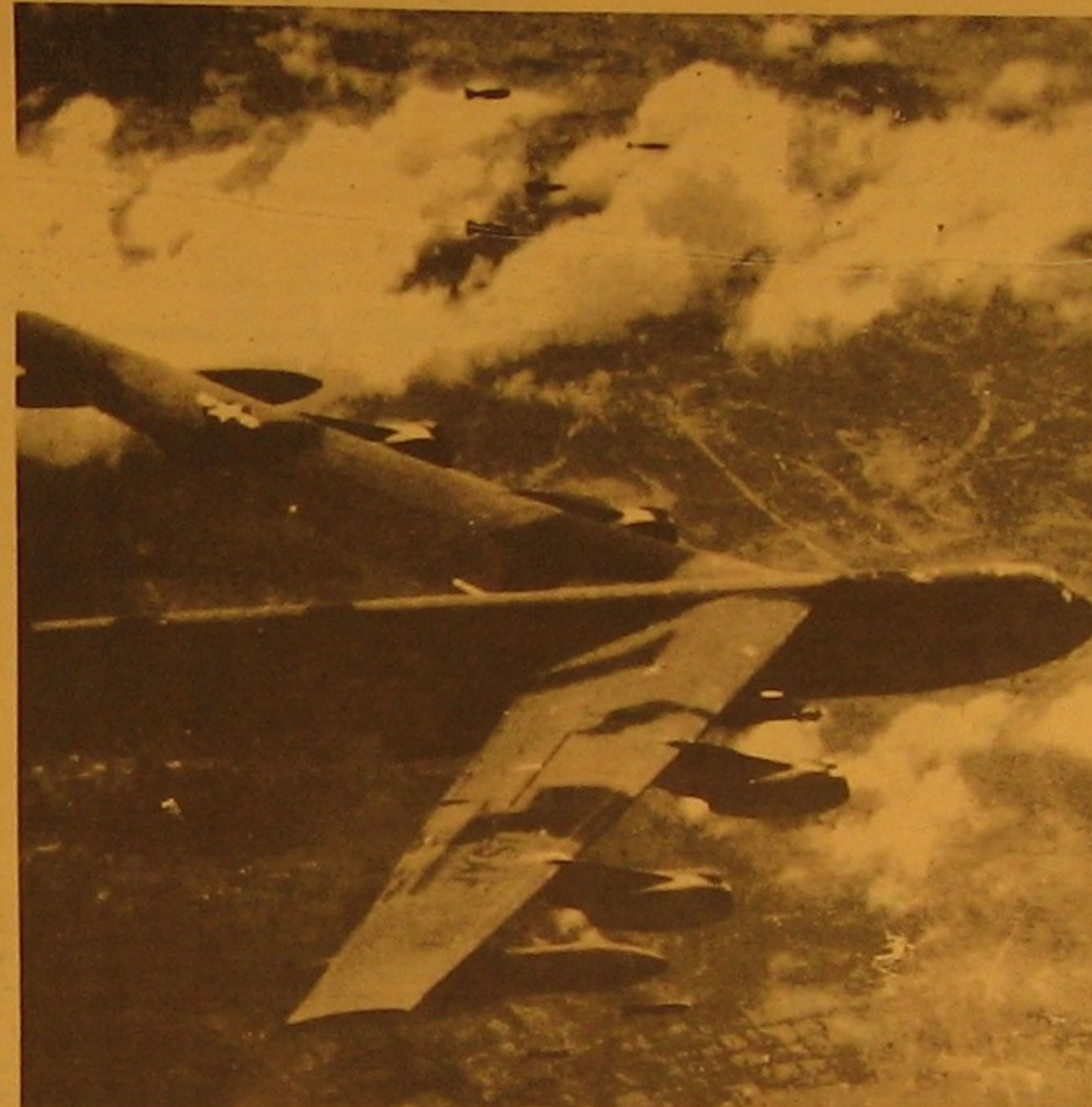
Colonel James A. Donovan in *Militarism, U.S.A.* (from which the two previous quotations are taken), writes that "at the end of October 1968, when bombing of the North halted, the total bomb tonnage dropped in both North and South Vietnam was given as 2,948,057 tons. (Total tonnages dropped by U.S. aircraft in World War II, in both European and Asiatic theaters, was 2,057,244.) So we dropped 50 percent more bombs on Vietnam than in both Europe and the Pacific. . . . Only about one-fifth of the total bomb tonnages were dropped on North Vietnam. . . ."

"It has been generally agreed," Donovan writes, "that the psychological effect of the heavy bombs falling from unseen aircraft has probably been tremendous: they have terrorized the enemy, the inhabitants, and even nearby friendly troops. . . . In the populated coastal provinces of South Vietnam . . . approximately 70 percent of the villages have been destroyed by our bombing, artillery shelling, and fire."

A leaflet that was sometimes dropped on villages before they were destroyed declared: "U.S. MARINES WILL NOT HESITATE TO DESTROY, IMMEDIATELY, ANY VILLAGE OR HAMLET . . . USED AS A VIET-CONG STRONGHOLD TO FIRE AT

OUR TROOPS OR AIRCRAFT." Once the village was destroyed, another leaflet was sometimes dropped. It declared that the survivors should turn to the Saigon government, which will "help you to live in peace and to have a happy prosperous life."

Based on news dispatches of the time, "Operation Cedar Falls," one of the bigger "search and destroy" missions, was described in *The Militant*, Jan. 23, 1967: "In essence, the campaign is designed to demolish every single hut, including four villages, in a 60-square-mile area 30 miles north-



west of Saigon. . . . the area has first been bombed by an undisclosed number of B-52s for a considerable period of time; it is daily bombed by aircraft supporting the ground troops; and it is saturation shelled in addition by ground artillery. Following massive bombing and shelling, troops have moved into the villages, murdered most of the men, removed the women and children to refugee concentration camps, and finally burned the villages to the ground."

Towards the end of 1967, after a full year of "search and destroy" missions in the same area northwest of Saigon ("War Zone C"), Westmoreland announced that the NLF was "through forever in War Zone C." Shortly after, however, the NLF launched the famous "Tet offensive"—the largest attack of the war—whose main thrust came from War Zone C.

The NLF demonstrated that despite the years of terror and the holocaust of bombs, the revolution was still strong—perhaps stronger than ever. It had the support of the people in virtually every town and city of South Vietnam. In brutal retaliation, Washington made the people pay a horrifying price for this courageous demonstration of solidarity.

Former Undersecretary of the Air Force Townsend Hoopes describes the U.S. retaliation in *Limits of Intervention*: In Saigon, "artillery and air strikes were repeatedly used against densely populated areas of the city, causing heavy civilian casualties; in Hue, 80 percent of the buildings had been reduced to rubble, and in the smashed ruins lay 2,000 dead civilians. . . . Three-quarters of the city's people were rendered homeless. . . ."

The war since 1968

Tet forced Washington to undertake

a major tactical turn. It was forced not only by the heroic stand of the Vietnamese revolution but also by the cry of horror which swept the world at Washington's murderous counter-attack.

The long work of the American antiwar movement to bring out ever larger and broader forces had a major impact too. By early 1968, not a single leading architect of the war could show his face in public. The president grandstanded to closed army bases—and there were indications that GIs might put a stop even to that. Further, the antiwar movement here had

years, the U.S. has carried out one of the most sustained bombing campaigns in history against essentially civilian targets in northeastern Laos. The area is a carpet of forest dotted by villages and a few towns. Refugees report that the bombing was primarily directed against their villages. Operating from Thai bases and from aircraft carriers, American jets have destroyed the great majority of villages and towns in the northeast.

"Severe casualties have been inflicted upon the inhabitants of the region, rice fields have been burned, and roads torn up. Refugees from the Plain of Jars report they were bombed almost daily by American jets last year. They say they spent most of the past two years living in caves or holes."

But the counterpart of the attack on Cambodia was the biggest student antiwar strike in history. And this even further limited the Pentagon's military options. Thus the present invasion of Laos cannot openly make use of American combat troops on a large scale even for several weeks. It is, however, a "search and destroy" operation making use of Saigon ground forces and perhaps an even more intense artillery barrage and aerial bombardment than in earlier campaigns.

It sometimes seems to escape the notice of the war-makers in Washington that in the last analysis every intensification of the war effort in the 30-year history of the war has failed. This is because terrorization is not designed to win the masses of people to political support of the Saigon regime. The horrendous slaughter of millions has not convinced those who are still alive that Washington and Saigon really want peace and democracy.

Those who remain, like their sisters and brothers who have fallen in struggle, continue to wage what must be counted the most courageous and most inspiring stand of a people against oppression in history. One important testament to what they have accomplished is the deepening worldwide radicalization of young people, which owes its origins above all other factors to the example set in Vietnam.

But the vital task of once and for all ending imperialist oppression in Southeast Asia remains to be fulfilled. The antiwar movement, coupled with the struggle of the Vietnamese liberation fighters, has limited Washington's room for maneuver and this has begun a process of withdrawing some U.S. troops.

But the process is not irreversible. The present lashing out into Laos, for example, (and it could soon be followed by a similar thrust into North Vietnam) brings the war dangerously close to China's boundaries.

Can anyone guarantee that Washington would not attempt to seize some pretext for "armed reconnaissance missions" against China? Can the danger of a third world war that this would risk and nuclear annihilation be ruled out so long as Washington is continuing its aggression in Southeast Asia?

Short of this ominous danger, is an incontrovertible fact that Washington has once again expanded the boundaries of slaughter. This is the inevitable logic of a war whose central purpose is to liquidate a revolution based in and supported by the masses. But that is Washington's aim. And Washington will continue to prosecute that aim until it is compelled to withdraw all military forces from all of Southeast Asia. This is the task of the antiwar movement here and around the globe.

Laos has been bombed even more intensively than Vietnam. The *Far Eastern Economic Review* of April 16, 1970, declares: "For the past two

THE VIETNAMIZATION FRAUD

As the article by Dick Roberts in this special issue on Thirty Years of US Aggression in Indochina points out, Nixon and the US ruling class have not changed either their basic aims or their long term strategy in that period - their aim is to win the war in Vietnam, prop up their puppets and retain US control, and their method is to do it by military means.

Roberts' article, written over a year ago, analyses the tactical changes Nixon had to make under pressure from the worldwide antiwar movement, especially in the US itself. The troop withdrawals, however, did not mean that the imperialists had given up the perspective of winning the war. "What was unclear to many Americans a year ago is becoming increasingly obvious now: Nixon's 'secret peace plan,' 'Vietnamization,' 'gradual withdrawal,' etc., etc., are all nothing more than a hoax designed to keep US troops in Indochina indefinitely. The basic aim in Washington remains what it was from the start: to crush the revolution."

What was clear over a year ago is now glaringly obvious with the latest acts of reckless escalation.

When Nixon realised the political impossibility of maintaining over half a million American troops in Vietnam, he thrashed around for alternative military means.

Under cover of "withdrawal", he escalated the war into Laos and Cambodia. For the US soldier, the withdrawal was merely a change of station - some to Laos, Cambodia and Thailand - others to bases nearby in the Philippines and Okinawa. The attack on Cambodia in 1970 prompted a massive response from antiwar forces around the world, and although attempts were made to suppress news of the invasion of Laos in February last year, that also was met by renewed protests. American puppet forces defeats in Laos and Cambodia, and the continued pressure of the antiwar movement, indicated that as in Vietnam, Nixon's prospects for victory through large numbers of ground forces were very dim. Under cover of "Vietnamisation" and "withdrawal", Nixon further escalated the war with the resumption of massive bombing raids on North Vietnam in September last year, forcing government officials in Washington to abandon the pretence that the U.S. is abiding by the "bombing halt" declared by Johnson in 1968.

"We are making unusual efforts to avoid

having the American young man stand toe-to-toe, eyeball-to-eyeball or even rifle-to-rifle with the enemy!" With this statement, U.S. Army Chief of Staff William C. Westmoreland summed up the military implications of the Vietnamization policy. To reduce U.S. casualties to a level that would allow for indefinite prolongation of the war, the Pentagon has shifted U.S. military operations from infantry actions to the most highly automated, aggressive warfare in the history of the world. An additional aim of the new strategy is to reduce reliance on the strongly anti-war G.I.'s.

Computerised weapons systems, with acoustic and seismic detectors are being used increasingly, eliminating the need for extensive ground forces. Saturation bombing, directed by computers, indiscriminately slaughters anything in a wide area. The most common anti-personnel device now in use is the CBU-24. Each of these, often dropped on heavily-populated areas, sprays 250,000 pellets over a 45,000

square foot range. Giant 15,000 pound concussion bombs are also being used. These instantly kill all animal life within a 760 acre area.

A look at the figures for bombing shows that despite Nixon's claim to be 'winding down the war', he is in fact escalating it. "Vietnamisation or not, the war... has got worse" - the verdict, even several months ago of Jacques Decoury of *Le Monde*, probably the most impressive western journalist covering Indochina. His view is backed up by the conclusions of a report by Cornell University's Centre for International Studies, which found that more bombs were dropped on Indochina in the first three years of Nixon's administration than in the last three years of Johnson's. "In 1971", the report stated, "as much bombing is being done in Indochina as was done in all theatres in World War II."

The March 23 announcement that Nixon was in effect cancelling the Paris neg-

otiations on Vietnam merely confirmed what has been pointed out many times before: Nixon has no intention of ending the war except on conditions that leave a puppet regime in power in Saigon. This came after the publication on March 16 of a Harris poll finding that: "a majority of 56 to 26 percent would favour a U.S. policy which just announced one day that all U.S. participation and help in the war was over".

Then on April 15-16 this year, US planes, including B-52 bombers bombed Hanoi and Haiphong. In response to this escalation, Anthony Lewis, writing in the *New York Times*, April 17, stated: "The truth is now impossible to escape if we open our eyes. The United States is the most dangerous and destructive power in the world. And its political leadership seems virtually immune to persuasion by reason and experience."

"It is seven years - seven years! - since Lyndon Johnson began bombing North Vietnam. Literally millions of tons of American explosives have been dropped on Indochina since then, but the peninsula is no more 'secure' - secure for the American system we want to impose on it. Only a fool or a madman could believe, now, that more bombing will bring peace to Indochina."

"Why are we bombing? To keep Nguyen Van Thieu in Saigon. To make sure that Nixon is not the first American president to lose a war. To teach the Russians a lesson about supplying arms to our enemies."

"Those are some of the reasons that are advanced... none of them could remotely justify the disproportionate cost of the bombing in human or political terms."

That assessment was valid before Nixon's latest act of aggression. How much more valid it is now, with the blockading of North Vietnam and the mining of North Vietnamese ports.

With these acts, Nixon's fraud is totally unmasked for what it is - a last-ditch attempt by the American ruling class to retain their control of South Vietnam. Vietnamization has been shown to be merely a way of escalating the war by other means. It is up to the antiwar movement around the world to ensure that this act of recklessness does not succeed - organise demonstrations to demand an immediate end to US military operation in Indochina!



INTERNATIONAL PROTESTS

Reports from all over the world indicate that antiwar forces everywhere understand the implications of Nixon's latest manoeuvres. They understand the need for solidarity in the face of US imperialism's increasingly desperate attempts to stave off the victory of the revolutionary forces in Vietnam. They understand that now more than ever the international antiwar movement must stand firmly behind the Vietnamese liberation forces in resisting the attempts of imperialism to batter the people of Vietnam into submission.

Since the beginning of Nixon's latest offensive hundreds of thousands of people all over the world have come into the streets to demand an end to US aggression in Vietnam. From Caracas in Venezuela to Oslo in Norway demonstrations and protest meetings have been held demanding the withdrawal of US forces and an end to the bombing of North Vietnam.

THE UNITED STATES

The April 22 antiwar actions mobilized 100,000 people in New York, 30,000 in Los Angeles and 25,000 in San Francisco. Besides these actions thousands of students on hundreds of campuses across the country have gone on strike, and smaller actions have been held in other centres. At Danbury Prison in Connecticut, prisoners climbed a 175 foot water tower on April 20, unfurled a banner calling for an end to the war and remained on the tower until April 22.

The demonstrations in the United States contained contingents of Vietnam veterans, high school students, disabled war veterans, unionists, gay liberationists, Irish Republican clubs, GIs, Asian Americans, Vietnamese students, Iranian students, blacks, women and Chicanos. Prominent actors and entertainers Country Joe Mac Donald, John Lennon and Yoko Ono, Ben Gazzara, Dick Gregory and Jane Fonda

addressed the antiwar meetings. The New York march brought out 100,000 people despite a news blackout by the media, constant heavy rain and bitter cold. Speaking at the New York meeting, Andrew Pulley, black militant and Socialist Workers Party candidate for Vice President of the United States said:

"They (the Vietnamese) are not my enemy. Are they your enemy? Have these people ever attacked our country or bombed our cities and farms? Was it the Vietnamese who shot down black people in Augusta and Baton Rouge? Are the Vietnamese putting Angela Davis on trial for her life? Is it the Vietnamese who deny equal rights to women in this country? Did the Vietnamese freeze your wages?" After every question people roared "No!" Pulley went on to say: "Our enemy is in Washington D.C...."

Speaking in Los Angeles, a war veteran crippled from the waist down, said: "We saw that we were not helping the Vietnamese; we were destroying them. The same people who sent us there threw us in their garbage pails of despair when we got back."

The rallies all over the United States have been spirited but orderly, the bulk of the participants rejecting attempts by police and provocateurs to divert attention from the issue of the war and onto "violence in the streets." In New York the most popular slogan was for a "One Point Peace Plan - Out Now."

At the time of writing actions are still continuing in the United States. Antiwar actions of some kind have been going on continuously for three weeks now and their momentum is growing rather than declining.

FRANCE

A demonstration of 10,000 people was held on April 15 in Paris after the banning

by the government of the planned April 22 action left the organisers of the action only one week to publicise the April 15 march. There were also actions in some of the smaller cities. A city wide high school antiwar action was held in Paris on April 19.

SWEDEN

Anti war mass meetings have taken place in 138 cities and antiwar actions in 47 cities. The biggest of these actions were: Stockholm, 11,000 on April 15 and 2,000 April 22 and 2,000 in Goteberg on the same day. The central demand of the Swedish May Day actions was: "US Out Now".

DENMARK

10,000 people marched in Copenhagen on April 15, the following day a demonstration of 1,000 was held outside the US consulate.

NORWAY

There has been a rally of several thousand people in Oslo.

WEST GERMANY

Actions were held throughout West Germany on April 22, the largest of these actions was in West Berlin, where 10,000 people rallied.

BELGIUM

2,000 people attended an antiwar teach-in at Brussels on April 20 and 1,500 marched in the industrial city of Liege on April 22. Vietnamese students staged a hunger strike in Brussels during the week prior to the teach in.

SWITZERLAND

2,000 people marched in Zurich on April 22 and 2,500 on April 23.

ITALY

The Metallurgical Workers' Federation in Turin has condemned the latest US aggression, called for the withdrawal of US forces and expressed solidarity with the April 22 actions in the US. Meetings and/or demonstrations have been held in Milan, Bari, Livorno, Rome, Turin and Naples.

SPAIN

Demonstrations were held in Tarrasa and Barcelona on April 22. The Barcelona demonstration has been estimated at 600 by conservative sources. The same sources reported the Tarrasa action at 250, however a Paris radio station reported the same action as being several thousand strong. Both demonstrations were quickly broken up by police and soldiers, as left wing demonstrations are illegal in Spain.

VENEZUELA

500 people attended a meeting in solidarity with the Indochinese revolution. The meeting was held in the Plaza de la Pastora theatre in Caracas. The organisers see the meeting as a preliminary step towards organising further mass actions against the war.

BRITAIN

Demonstrations of 400 in London and 500 in Glasgow were organised on April 22.

FINLAND

5,000 people marched in Helsinki on April 17, protesting US bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong.

BANGLADESH

On April 16 a rally of 4000 people in Dacca denounced the US presence in Vietnam.

In many areas actions were hastily called as an immediate reaction to Nixon's new escalation of US aggression in Vietnam, nevertheless the response everywhere was firm and militant. In the United States, where the main actions were planned for April 22, actions have continued past that date and show no sign of stopping. All over Europe, thousands of people were mobilized at short notice to defend the Vietnamese revolution.

The militancy and determination displayed by the antiwar movement all over the world indicates that the present wave of actions is only a preliminary response to be quickly followed by larger and better organised mobilisations.