

THIRTY YEARS OF STRUGGLE OF THE PARTY

BOOK ONE

PERIODICALS & MONOGRAPHS

Indochina Archive
University of California

TO:

D.R.V.

**HANOI
FOREIGN LANGUAGES PUBLISHING HOUSE**

1960

KYAA 110

THIRTY YEARS OF STRUGGLE OF THE PARTY

BOOK ONE

HANOI

FOREIGN LANGUAGES PUBLISHING HOUSE

1960

EDITOR'S NOTE

«THIRTY YEARS OF STRUGGLE OF THE PARTY» was written in commemoration of the thirtieth anniversary of the founding of the Indochinese Communist Party, now the Viet Nam Lao Dong Party.

The present English translation has been made from the Vietnamese text composed by the Central Committee of Propaganda of the Viet Nam Lao Dong Party and the Committee for the Study of the Party's History.

CONTENTS

	Pages
Foreword	7

I — FIRST PERIOD

BIRTH OF THE INDOCHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY, THE PERIOD OF ILLEGAL STRUGGLE OF THE PARTY AND THE AUGUST REVOLUTION (1930-1945)

— Vietnamese society under French imperialists' rule ...	11
— Preparation for the founding of the Party. The Party's revolutionary programme	17
— The 1930-1931 revolutionary upsurge of the Nghe-Tinh Soviet	31
— The low ebb of the revolution and the struggle to restore the movement	39
— The Party founded the Indochinese Democratic Front against fascism and war, against colonial reactionaries, for freedom, food, clothes, and peace (1936-1939)	49
— In World War II, the Party founded the National United Front against aggressive fascism, directed the spearhead of the revolution at the fascist imperialists and Viet- namese traitors	63
— The Party launched the high tide of the Anti-Japanese Movement for National Salvation, prepared the general Insurrection and brought it to success	83

Our Party came into existence in early 1930 and is just thirty years old now. Through thirty years of heroic struggle our Party led the Vietnamese working class and people to carry out the revolution with great success. In August 1945, under the leadership of the Party, our entire people launched the general insurrection and seized State power throughout the country. But French imperialists invaded our country once more. To safeguard and develop the achievements of the August Revolution, our Party called for an all-out, long term Resistance war waged by the whole people and successfully ended the stage of national people's democratic revolution in the North of our country. Since the restoration of peace, the Party has been leading the people to carry out the socialist revolution and build socialism in the North, and at the same time to struggle for national unification and completion of the national people's democratic revolution in the whole country.

The victory of the Vietnamese revolution is the victory of Marxism-Leninism applied to the practical conditions of a colonial and semi-feudal country.

On the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the founding of the Party, let us turn the glorious pages of the history of the Vietnamese working class and people under the Party's leadership and review the experiences of the Vietnamese revolution. Let us see how our Party has correctly combined the general truth of Marxism-Leninism with the realities of the Vietnamese revolution to overcome all difficulties and obstacles, and to go from one victory to another. Such an examination will give us still greater confidence in our people's unbending spirit and in the clear-sighted leadership of our Party headed by President Ho Chi Minh and inspire our struggle for the building of a peaceful, united, independent, democratic, prosperous and strong Viet Nam.

I

FIRST PERIOD

BIRTH OF THE INDOCHINESE COMMUNIST
PARTY, THE PERIOD OF ILLEGAL STRUGGLE
OF THE PARTY AND THE AUGUST REVOLUTION
(1930-1945)

VIETNAMESE SOCIETY UNDER FRENCH IMPERIALISTS' RULE

The birth of the Indochinese Communist Party, now the Viet Nam Lao Dong Party, was the result of the combination of Marxism-Leninism with the working class movement and the struggle for national liberation in Viet Nam. The founding of the Party in early 1930 was not accidental, but was determined by the historical conditions of Viet Nam.

Viet Nam was invaded by French colonialists in 1858. The feudal landlord class whose representative was the Nguyen dynasty surrendered to the enemy. The 1884 Treaty is obvious proof of this. But the Vietnamese people struggled undauntedly, rising against the aggressors and the traitors. Only by the end of the 19th century, did French colonialists succeed in completing their machinery of domination in Viet Nam.

After ending the stage of armed aggression, French monopolists began to exploit Viet Nam.

In the economic field, they carried out a policy of heavy taxes coupled with the setting up of banks to lend money at interest and appropriation of land, thus impoverishing a great number of peasants and creating a market of cheap labour.

In the industrial field, textile, alcohol, paper, match, brick and tile and cement factories, electric power stations, water plants, etc., were built one after the other. It is noteworthy that heavy industry was not

developed. Mining industry developed very slowly while monopolies for metallurgy, engineering, and the key branches of heavy industry, were given to the 'mother country'. Only some branches of light industry, not competing with those of the 'mother-country' were developed to yield the French capitalists the most profits.

In the commercial field, monopoly for both imports and exports was in French hands while Vietnamese capitalists played only a subsidiary role. Customs duties built a tariff wall around Indochina turning Viet Nam, Cambodia and Laos into their private markets. As a result, goods from France were sold in Indochina at high prices earning them colonial super-profits.

In the agricultural field, feudal forms of exploitation were kept up and encouraged, and the policy of settlement carried out. As much as one-sixth of cultivated land in Viet Nam was appropriated by the French to set up plantations under industrial or rice crops. A number of French capitalists became planters at the same time.

In the political field, the name Viet Nam was wiped off the map of the world and the policy of 'divide and rule' was carried out systematically. Viet Nam was divided into three parts with different political regimes: South Viet Nam was a colony, Central Viet Nam a protectorate and North Viet Nam a semi-protectorate and semi-colony. Discord was sown among the people of Viet Nam, Cambodia and Laos, and between minority and majority nationalities in each of these countries. In Viet Nam as well as in Cambodia and Laos, the whole administrative, military and technical machinery was in French hands. The Vietnamese feudal landlord class only played the part of puppets, working as the ruler's henchmen. The other classes had no political rights whatever.

In a word, the whole programme of exploitation by French imperialists in Viet Nam aimed at turning the

country into a market and a source of supply of raw materials for the 'mother-country'. Vietnamese feudal society was transformed into a colonial and semi-feudal society while class relations also underwent changes.

The Vietnamese feudal landlord class worked hand in glove with the imperialists to maintain its selfish interests. French imperialists leant on it to oppress and exploit the Vietnamese people. From the class viewpoint, the landlord class was the object of the Vietnamese revolution. But when the spearhead of the revolution was mainly directed at the oppressive and aggressive imperialists, in the landlord class there were also a number of persons who stood up against French rule, most of them small landlords, intellectuals and students of landlord stock. But they could not represent the whole landlord class.

The Vietnamese bourgeoisie took root right in the heart of the feudal society. Since French invasion of Viet Nam, this class gradually took shape and developed, but due to French oppression it became a class only during and after World War I. Born in a colonial and semi-feudal society, the Vietnamese bourgeoisie developed to some extent then split into two parts: comprador-bourgeoisie and national bourgeoisie. The Vietnamese comprador-bourgeoisie included big capitalists whose interests were closely connected with those of the imperialists. They worked as the imperialists' sole agents buying local products and selling manufactured goods for them, investing money in their industrial and commercial enterprises or building big projects for the colonialists. Like the feudal landlord class, the comprador-bourgeoisie was an anti-revolutionary force in our country.

The Vietnamese national bourgeoisie, composed of middle-sized capitalists whose number and economic force were small, due to the oppression and restrictions of the French imperialists and the feudalists, was unable to withstand imperialist competition. The

national bourgeoisie's interests were in contradiction to those of the imperialists and the feudalists. At the same time they had economic relations with them to a certain extent (the majority of the national bourgeoisie were merchants selling goods for the imperialists and a number of them were landlords at the same time) and waxed rich by exploiting the working class. Therefore the national bourgeoisie had a two-sided nature: on the one hand they were against the imperialists and the feudalists, approving of national independence and democratic freedoms, but on the other, their attitude was unstable, wavering and hesitant. When the imperialists were strong they easily compromised and advocated reforms, but tended towards the revolutionary mass movement when it was on the upsurge. For this reason the national bourgeoisie could not lead the Vietnamese revolution.

The Vietnamese peasantry embraced almost 90 per cent of the population and was very heavily oppressed and exploited by the imperialists and the feudalists (heavy taxes, high land rent and interest, corvees, beatings, land-grabbing from them, etc...). In consequence the peasants were rapidly impoverished.

Those who became bankrupt were driven out of the countryside into the factories, mines, and plantations, and became workers. Others had to go as labourers to the New Hebrides or New Caledonia. Others were unemployed and led a very miserable life. Those who were still able to cling to their rice-fields were continually threatened by the imperialists, the feudalists and natural calamities. Short of land, the peasants, first of all the poor and landless peasants, very energetically opposed the imperialists and the feudalists. The liberation wars in Vietnamese history up to this time were, in essence, peasant wars. In the national people's democratic revolution, the peasants were the biggest force of the revolution and the most reliable ally of the working class.

The Vietnamese petty-bourgeoisie included people of different walks of life: craftsmen, petty and itinerant traders, small traders, owners of small industrial concerns, civil servants, intellectuals and students. Although their living standards were more or less different from each other, their life was in general unstable and always threatened by bankruptcy and unemployment. They usually wavered with the upsurge or ebb of the revolutionary movement, but generally speaking they very enthusiastically took part in the revolution. They were an important force of the revolution and the reliable ally of the working class.

The Vietnamese working class came into being with the development of French capitalism in Viet Nam. After World War I, with the French imperialists' policy of 'increased colonial exploitation', the Vietnamese working class developed fairly quickly and soon became an important social force. The working class were toiling people with no means of production, having to sell their labour power to live and being exploited by means of the wages system. They worked in factories and lived in the towns and industrial areas. They represented the most progressive productive force of the society. For these reasons, the working class was the most revolutionary force whose political consciousness, organizational ability, discipline and creativeness were higher than those of other classes. Besides the above-mentioned qualities common to the international working class, the Vietnamese working class had the following characteristics: born in a colonial and semi-feudal country, the Vietnamese working class had to endure a threefold oppression and was heavily exploited by the imperialists, the feudalists and the national bourgeoisie. Therefore, to liberate itself, it had to fight for the emancipation of the whole nation from all oppression and exploitation. Within the Vietnamese working class there was no section of reformist aristocratic

workers compromising with the bourgeoisie. Its blood ties with the peasantry provided it with favourable conditions to realize the worker-peasant alliance. From outside, it was not under the influence of the reformist ideology of the Second International. On the contrary, being under the powerful influence of the Communists' and workers' movements in the world, especially the influence of the Russian October Revolution, and of socialist construction in the U.S.S.R. and that of the French and Chinese workers' movements, they soon succeeded in assimilating Marxism-Leninism.

Owing to the above-mentioned characteristics the Vietnamese working class though small in number, soon became the leading force of the revolution.

On the basis of the above analysis of the situation in Viet Nam prior to the founding of the Party, it can be seen that the Vietnamese society had two basic contradictions: the contradiction between the Vietnamese nation and oppressive imperialism and that between the broad masses (mainly the peasants) and the feudal landlord class. The Vietnamese revolution had to solve these two contradictions otherwise the Vietnamese society could not move forward. History set the Vietnamese working class the task of leading the revolution in Viet Nam in order to solve these basic contradictions and push the Vietnamese society forward.

PREPARATION FOR THE FOUNDING OF THE PARTY — THE PARTY'S REVOLUTIONARY PROGRAMME

From the day Viet Nam was first ruled by French imperialists to 1929, our people constantly rose against the aggressors and their henchmen: armed uprising in South Viet Nam (1801 — 1868), the Royalist movement (1885 — 1895), the Yen The guerilla movement (1887 — 1913), the Bai Say armed uprising (1885 — 1889), the Dong Kinh Nghia Thuc movement (1907), the campaign against taxes in Central Viet Nam (1908), the Thai Nguyen armed uprising (1917), the patriotic movement for Phan Boi Chau's amnesty and Phan Chu Trinh's memorial service (1925 — 1926), and the Yen Bai armed uprising (1930). So many heroes sacrificed their lives for the country but the result was still a failure. The main cause of this was that the Vietnamese revolution in that period was not yet led by a Marxist — Leninist party of the working class. The revolutionary parties did not as yet put forth a correct political programme aimed at solving the two above-mentioned basic contradictions.

Facing successive failures, several Vietnamese patriots went abroad in search of a path for national liberation, the right path for the revolution in Viet Nam.

One of these patriots, Comrade Nguyen Ai Quoc, our beloved and respected President Ho Chi Minh, was

the first to find this path. He went to Europe at the beginning of this century, prior to World War I. Soon after his arrival in France the world-shaking October Socialist Revolution was successful. That great historical event opened the era of proletarian revolution in the imperialist countries; at the same time it also opened the revolutionary era in the colonies and semi-colonies. It inspired the working class and the oppressed peoples of the world with boundless confidence in the prospect of their liberation. The October Revolution had a very strong influence on Comrade Nguyen Ai Quoc's political activity. It led him to the conclusion that to liberate his country he had to study Marxism-Leninism and to follow the Russian example.

At Tours Congress in 1921, he took part in the founding of the French Communist Party and joined it because he realized clearly that only Marxism-Leninism, only the Communist Party could liberate the oppressed peoples. He thus became the first Vietnamese Communist and began to struggle for the founding of a Marxist-Leninist party in Viet Nam. In the newspapers ***l'Humanité***, ***La vie ouvrière***, ***Correspondance internationale*** and particularly, ***Le Paria*** of which he was the editor, Comrade Nguyen Ai Quoc courageously denounced the crimes of imperialism and discussed the question of colonial revolution from the Marxist-Leninist standpoint. Together with a number of revolutionary fighters from other French colonies, he organized the League of Colonial Peoples in Paris. His revolutionary activity and his articles, especially his book ***Procès de la Colonisation Française*** encouraged the revolutionary movement in the country and enabled many Vietnamese to get an understanding of Marxism.

In 1923, he went to the Soviet Union to attend the International Congress of Peasant Delegates, and the Fifth Congress of the Communist International in 1924.

In December 1924, he returned to China. In 1925 he set up the Union of Oppressed Asian Peoples and established relations with Tam Tam Xa, which was at the time the revolutionary organization of Vietnamese residents in China, using it as a basis for the founding of the Viet Nam Young Revolutionary Comrades Association. At the same time he organized the Communist league in the latter to carry on the preparation for the establishment of a genuine Communist Party in Viet Nam. Training courses were opened in the Whampoa Military Academy (Canton) for youths who came from Viet Nam to study. Comrade Nguyen Ai Quoc was one of the lecturers at these courses. The magazine **Youth**, organ of the General Committee of the Viet Nam Young Revolutionary Comrades Association, introduced to the Vietnamese workers and people the rudiments of Marxism-Leninism. Numerous progressive magazines and books from France and China were then secretly distributed in Viet Nam. The book **The Revolutionary Path** which was written by Comrade Nguyen Ai Quoc and published by the Propaganda Committee of the Union of Oppressed Asian Peoples had a great effect on the revolutionary movement in Viet Nam and in other Asian countries. French imperialists tried to hoodwink the people by all means to prevent them from hearing of the Russian October Revolution and the Soviet Union. Great efforts were made to check the influence of the French Communist movement, the Chinese Revolution, and the Canton Commune from spreading to Viet Nam. But all their schemes and tricks were ineffective. The propaganda work of the members of the Viet Nam Young Revolutionary Comrades Association enabled the Vietnamese people to get a clear understanding of the world revolutionary movement and gain more confidence and enthusiasm in the future of the nation.

For the first time, Marxist-Leninist viewpoints of class struggle, the role of the people in history, etc.,

were disseminated in Viet Nam. Despite its wrong policy 'national revolution first, international revolution after' it was this revolutionary organization which was the first in our country to popularize Marxism-Leninism among the masses of Vietnamese people. Thanks to this propaganda, a Communist group took shape in this organization. The first followers of Marxism in Viet Nam began to be armed ideologically in order to clearly see the true revolutionary path and the flattering and deceitful reformist theories of the imperialists and their henchmen, and at the same time to defeat the tendencies of national reforms and chauvinism of the national bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeoisie.

In December 1927, the workers in Canton (China) rose to seize power and set up the Canton Commune for three days. In spite of its failure, the Canton Commune had a very strong effect on the working class and people in the colonial and semi-colonial countries. Its influence spread to our country and powerfully inspired our working class to struggle. In this situation, the Viet Nam Young Revolutionary Comrades Association developed quickly, and became the most influential revolutionary organization in Viet Nam, while the Viet Nam Nationalist Party and Viet Nam Youth's Highest Aspiration Party which were political organizations with bourgeois tendencies gradually lost influence among the masses of people.

Wherever the Viet Nam Young Revolutionary Comrades Association spread, Marxism-Leninism was disseminated among the masses. But propaganda of Marxism-Leninism only, without the struggle of the workers and toiling people in the country to serve as a social basis for that ideology, could not give birth to a Communist party nor could this propaganda be deeply and widely spread.

The Vietnamese working class became more mature, and the workers' movement of struggle was

increasingly stronger. Many members of the Viet Nam Young Revolutionary Comrades Association took up work in factories, mines and plantations to popularize Marxism-Leninism and lead the workers in their struggles. Thanks to this, the workers' class consciousness was further heightened. First cells of the Association in industrial enterprises were set up and, coupled with them there were trade unions and workers' mutual aid organisations. Workers' struggles broke out in economic centres all over the country. One after the other, workers of the Cement plant (Haiphong), Textile plant (Nam Dinh), Aviat repair workshops (Hanoi) Truong Thi Railway workshops (Vinh), Ba Son factory (Saigon), Phu Rieng plantation (Nam Bo), etc..., went on strike to claim improvement in living conditions: more wages, a shorter working day, abolition of beatings and fines, etc.

The struggle between the working class and French imperialists grew fierce. Workers in many factories began to co-ordinate their struggles. Coupled with the workers' strike movement were the peasants' struggles in some localities. Secret police, country constabulary and armed forces were used by the imperialists to repress the mass movement.

This situation demanded a Communist Party to guide the revolutionary movement of the working class and of the people in general.

By the end of 1928 and in the early half of 1929, there was a campaign for the founding of a Communist Party in Indochina in the Viet Nam Young Revolutionary Comrades Association in North Viet-Nam. On hearing news of the convening of a national congress by the General Committee of this Association abroad, the Communists in the Association in North Viet Nam and northern part of Central Viet Nam actively discussed the question of dissolving the Viet Nam Young Revolutionary Comrades Association to formally establish a Communist Party in Indochina.

In many meetings of the Association at all levels, their proposal met with complete success. In January 1929, following the Preparatory Meeting of the National Congress of the Viet Nam Young Revolutionary Comrades Association, in North Viet Nam, a Communist group of seven persons — among them Ngo Gia Tu, Nguyen Duc Canh, Nguyen Phong Sac, Do Ngoc Du, Trinh Dinh Cuu, etc. — was set up to guide the campaign for the founding of the Communist Party. Why was this campaign begun first in North Viet Nam? Because of two reasons: first, North Viet Nam was the place where the working class was most concentrated, consequently the Communists in the Viet Nam Young Revolutionary Comrades Association in the North were the first to realize the necessity for an independent revolutionary party of the working class to lead the revolution in Indochina. Second: the powerful influence of the Chinese Communist movement spread to North Viet Nam, and the Vietnamese Communists in the North saw clearly the urgency for the founding of a Communist Party in Indochina.

On May 1, 1929, at the National Congress of the Viet Nam Young Revolutionary Comrades Association held in Hong Kong the delegation of North Viet Nam proposed the dissolution of this organization in order to set up the Indochinese Communist Party. In this delegation were Comrades Ngo Gia Tu, Quoc Anh and others. The proposal was rejected by the majority, and the delegation of North Viet Nam left the Congress and returned home. In June 1929, the Indochinese Communist Party was formally founded and its **Manifesto** distributed among the people. The first members of the Indochinese Communist Party were Communists who were members of the Viet Nam Young Revolutionary Comrades Association in North Viet Nam. In spite of its political and organizational shortcomings, the birth of the Indochinese Communist Party met the demand of the objective

situation and the aspirations of the worker-masses. That is why, following the issue of the Manifesto of the Indochinese Communist Party the best members of the Viet Nam Young Revolutionary Comrades Association enthusiastically joined it. The **Hammer and Sickle**, central organ of the Party, and the **Red Trade Union** magazine, central organ of the Trade unions, were published and widely distributed among the masses.

Facing the ever expanding influence of the Indochinese Communist Party, the General Committee of the 'Viet Nam Young Revolutionary Comrades Association' decided to re-organize what remained (most of it was in South Viet Nam) into the Annamese Communist Party.

Nor could the New Viet Revolutionary Party in Central and South Viet Nam maintain its former organization. It re-organized itself into the Indochinese Communist Federation.

Thus in 1929, three Communist organizations came into being in Viet Nam, all claiming to be genuine political parties of the working class and trying by all means to win the recognition of the Communist International. In their activity, propaganda and admittance of new members, these first three Communist organizations indulged in invective against each other and disputed for influence among the masses. It is noteworthy, however, that all three organizations did their best to penetrate the industrial enterprises to agitate among the workers. At the time, there was a proletarianization movement in the Communist organizations in Viet Nam. Numerous Party members who were intellectuals or students of petty-bourgeois stock took up work in factories, mines or plantations to agitate among the masses and at the same time to steel and temper themselves.

Confronted with this situation, the Communist International sent a letter to the Communists in

Indochina pointing out the necessity of ending division and sectarianism and of fusing into a united Communist Party. To implement the instructions of the Communist International, Comrade Nguyen Ai Quoc went to Hong Kong to convene the delegates of the Communist organizations in Indochina to discuss the question of unification of the Party. On January 6, 1930, the Unification Meeting presided over by Comrade Nguyen Ai Quoc was held in Hong Kong. Present at the meeting were delegates of the Indochinese Communist Party and Annamese Communist Party. The Indochina Communist Federation did not have time to send their delegates to the meeting*. After hearing the reports of the delegates and studying the policy of the Communist International, the meeting criticized narrow-mindedness and discord and unanimously approved the unification of all three Communist organizations in the country into one organization named the **Viet Nam Communist Party**. At the same time the meeting adopted the political programme, strategy and shortened rules of the Party, of the Indochina Anti-imperialist Alliance and other mass-organizations. Although they were still rudimentary, these documents laid down a basically correct line for the Vietnamese revolution, that is bourgeois democratic revolution led by the Vietnamese working class, aimed at overthrowing imperialism and feudalism and securing national independence and freedom.

* At the time of the holding of the Unification Meeting, there were in all 211 Vietnamese Communists ranged as follows:

Indochinese Communist Party	85
Annamese Communist Federation	61
Indochinese Communist Federation	11
Vietnamese Communists in Hong Kong and abroad	54
	211

This figure shows that it was ripe for the founding of the Vietnamese Communist Party.

The meeting worked out the plan for the unification of the Communist organizations in Indochina into a single party and elected the provisional Central Executive Committee to guide the whole Party.

The meeting also decided on the development of mass-organizations such as Red Trade Unions, Red Peasants' Association, Communist Youth League, Liberated Women's Association, Assistance Association, Anti-imperialist Alliance (the then National United Front).

The Unification Meeting was tantamount to a Congress and had an extremely important political significance: it succeeded in unifying the working class' revolutionary forces, enabling the working class to have its own genuinely revolutionary party to lead the Vietnamese revolution to victory.

Like all Communist Parties the world over, the Viet Nam Communist Party was a new-type party of the working class armed with Marxism-Leninism. It was the most advanced, most politically enlightened, and at the same time the highest organization of the Vietnamese working class, fully able to lead the other organizations of the Vietnamese working class and people. The Vietnamese Communist Party was, in addition, an organization having close contact with the masses, regarding the masses' interests as its only interests and drawing its strength from the masses. It was a single-minded organization with united action, strict discipline and without sects, using the method of criticism and self-criticism to overcome its shortcomings and promote its strong points.

After studying the documents of the Unification Meeting, the Communist International immediately sent a letter with instructions to the Viet Nam Communist Party amending a number of points in the line and tasks of the Vietnamese revolution and with suggestions about the question of changing the Party's name to Indochinese Communist Party.

In April 1930, Comrade Tran Phu returned to Viet Nam.

To carry out the resolutions of the Communist International and to strengthen the leadership of the seething revolutionary movement, the Central Committee held its first Session in October 1930 to discuss the Bourgeois Democratic Revolution in Viet Nam, the immediate tasks of the Party and the question of changing the Party's name.

The meeting adopted the Programme of the Bourgeois Democratic Revolution (that is the Political Programme) drafted by Comrade Tran Phu, the first Secretary General of the Party. The Programme outlined the outstanding characteristics of the Indochinese situation at the time as follows: « Indochina is a colony whose economy is dependent on the imperialists and could not therefore develop independently. The class contradiction between the workers, peasants and suffering labouring elements on one side and the imperialists, feudalists and bourgeois on the other grows sharper. Owing to this feature, the nature of the Indochinese revolution is 'Bourgeois Democratic Revolution'. The tasks of this revolution are to wipe out feudal remnants, to distribute land to the tillers, to overthrow imperialism and to make Indochina completely independent. Only by defeating imperialism can feudalism be wiped out and only by abolishing feudalism can imperialism be overthrown. The main driving-power of the revolution is the workers and the peasants. The essential condition that ensures the success of the Indochinese revolution is a Communist Party having a correct political line, discipline, close contact with the masses and having matured through revolutionary struggle. To seize national independence and distribute land to the tillers, a « peasant-worker soviet power » must be set up. Once power is won, Indochina will pass over the stage of capitalist development to advance

straight to socialism thanks to the assistance of the proletarian dictatorship in the countries where proletarian revolution has been successful.»

This is the fundamental content of the October 1930 Political Programme. It amended the Shortened Programme of the Unification Meeting passed on January 6, 1930. Like the Shortened Programme, the Political Programme is of great historical significance. For the first time the working class and the Vietnamese people had a relatively overall anti-imperialist and anti-feudal revolutionary programme. The Political Programme laid down the general line of the bourgeois democratic revolution in Viet Nam and henceforth gave light to the revolutionary agitation in our country.

On the situation and immediate tasks of the Party, the Session assessed that the economic crisis in the world and in Viet Nam brought the Vietnamese masses to extreme misery; the masses' struggle against imperialism and feudalism had developed into a deep and broad revolutionary movement which was more and more under the influence and leadership of the Communist Party and divorced from 'nationalist' influence. The Party's immediate political task was to guide the masses to oppose white terrorism, taxes and land rent, capitalist Taylorism, deceitful reforms, imperialist wars, and to support the Soviet Union. Struggle had to be waged against adventurous, dare-devil tendencies and rashness.

Following the Communist International's instructions, the Session decided to change the Party's name to Indochinese Communist Party because 'the Vietnamese, Cambodian and Laotian proletariat have politically and economically to be closely related in spite of their difference in language, customs and race'.

The Session also decided: «The whole Party should take the resolutions of the Communist International and the Party's policy as the basic document for the

Party's internal re-organization, bolshevization of the Party, setting up of Xu * Executive Committees to lead the movement in each part of Viet Nam, increased admittance of workers into the Party, increased proportion of factory workers in the leading organs of the Party and, once the Party's work goes smoothly the National Congress of Party Delegates should be held ».

The resolutions of the October 1930 Session of the Central Committee had the important effect of unifying and strengthening the Party a step further.

1929-1930 were years when the class struggle and national struggle developed to such a point that all revolutionary and anti-revolutionary classes in Viet Nam had to advance their political programmes to win over the masses. The Manifesto of the Indochinese Communist Party distributed in June 1929 succeeded in putting forth the main aspirations of the Vietnamese working class and people.

In 1930, the Shortened Programme of the Unification Meeting and the Political Programme of the first Session of the Central Committee mapped out the revolutionary line in Indochina and highlighted the aspirations of the working class and peoples in Indochina. These important documents armed the Indochinese Communists to oppose the national revolutionary programme of the national bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeoisie (Viet Nam Nationalist Party, Viet Nam Independence Party and Viet Nam Youth's Highest Aspiration Party). At the same time they were the working class' effective weapons to smash to pieces the deceptive reformist theories of the feudal landlord class and comprador bourgeoisie (Pham Quynh's theory of 'the King and the people are both masters', Nguyen Van Vinh's theory of 'direct rule', the programme of Bui Quang Chieu's Constitution Party, and Ngo Dinh Diem's advocacy to come back

* Each of the three parts of Viet Nam: North, Centre and South.

to the 1884 Treaty) and to oppose the national reformism of the national bourgeoisie. (Vu Dinh Di's theory of autonomy and programme of industrialization of Indochina and the theory of 'Constitutional regime' of a number of deputies in Central Viet Nam, etc...). The Political Programme and the above-mentioned documents of our Party made an important contribution to the mapping out of the Party's line and policy in the strengthening of the Party's unity and also in the building and consolidation of the leadership of the Vietnamese working class.

The newspaper **Tien Len** (Forward), central organ of the Viet Nam Communist Party played an important part in the propaganda and organization of the masses of people and in the struggle against the reactionary and erroneous political tendencies in 1930-1931.

THE 1930-1931 REVOLUTIONARY UPSURGE AND THE NGHE TINH SOVIET

Our Party was founded at the time when Indochina as well as the whole capitalist world had stepped into the period of general crisis (1929-1933). The Indo-chinese people were leading an extremely hard life. Factory and office workers were thrown onto the pavement, those who were still at work found their wages cut. The peasants suffered from famine. Paddy was their only resource and its was sold at very low prices. They had, in addition, to pay high taxes and go on corvee. From 1929 to 1933 natural calamities often occurred in our country: droughts were followed by floods, increasing the number of ruined peasants. Numerous petty-bourgeois and national bourgeois went bankrupt. The livelihood of people of all walks of life was under constant menace. This was the material basis of the revolutionary upsurge in 1930-1931. However, correct leadership was essential. Mobilization of the masses into a broad revolutionary movement, took place under our Party's correct leadership in 1930-1931, a deep and broad movement of struggle of the peasant-worker masses, clearly illustrating the worker-peasant alliance led by the working class.

On February 9, 1930, the Yen Bai armed uprising broke out under the leadership of the Viet Nam Nationalist Party. Soldiers in garrison at Yen Bai rose and shot at the French colonialists. Peasants at

Hung Hoa and Lam Thao (Phu Tho province) rose on February 10, 1930, and those at Vinh Bao (Hai Duong province) and Phu Duc (Thai Binh province) on February 15, 1930, in support of the armed uprising of the soldiers at Yen Bai. Within a short time these uprisings were drowned in blood by the imperialists.

Our Party immediately mobilized the masses of the people to oppose white terror, to demand the release of the insurgents and at the same time to advance economic slogans for an improvement of the people's livelihood.

Opening the mass movement led by our Party in 1930-1931 was the strike of 3,000 workers at the Phu Rieng plantation (February 1930) followed by that of 4,000 workers at the Nam Dinh Textile plants (March-April 1930) and that of 400 workers at the Ben Thuy match factory and saw-mill (April 1930). The struggle gradually spread from the factories to the countryside and particularly from May 1, 1930, the high tide of broad revolutionary struggle broke out at the industrial enterprises in Hanoi, Haiphong, Nam Dinh, Hongay, Vinh, Saigon, Cho Lon, etc., and rural areas such as Thai Binh, Ha Nam (North Viet Nam), Nghe An, Ha Tinh, Quang Ngai (Central Viet Nam) Gia Dinh, Cho Lon, Vinh Long, Sadec, Ben Tre, Thu Dau Mot and My Tho (South Viet Nam).

The surging movement of workers and peasants' struggle which started in early 1930 temporarily calmed down at the end of 1931. (There were in 1930 98 workers' strikes and 400 peasants' demonstrations and in 1931 31 workers' strikes and 135 peasants' demonstrations).

The peak of the movement of mass struggle in 1930-1931 was the Nghe — Tinh Soviet.

On May 1, 1930, under the leadership of the provincial Party Committee of Nghe An, workers at the Truong Thi Railway workshops and Ben Thuy match factory, together with tens of thousands of peasants

in the districts around Vinh town went on strike and demonstrated for increased wages, shorter working day, lower taxes, restitution of appropriated land, and against white terror. From then on the movement developed all over the two provinces of Nghe An and Ha Tinh. The movement was under the direct guidance of Comrades Nguyen Phong Sac, Nguyen Duc Canh and Le Viet Thuat.

In collusion with the feudal landlords, the French imperialists carried out an extremely barbarous policy of terrorism. More troops were moved to stations throughout these two provinces. Armed forces and aircraft were used for the repression of the demonstrations. Thousands of people were shot down during the struggle, tens of thousands of people arrested and thousands of houses burnt down.

But under the Party's leadership, the Nghe — Tinh people did not flinch. When one man fell down, hundreds of others rushed forward. By September 1930, the imperialists' ruling machine in many communes and districts in the two Nghe An, Ha Tinh provinces disintegrated. In many localities canton heads and village mayors handed over their seals to the revolutionary cadres. In others, heads of districts took to their heels. The Nghe An Provincial Party Committee gave instructions for setting up of Soviets, a local form of revolutionary power of the workers and peasants. This power carried out democratic freedoms for the people, distributed communal land to the peasants, encouraged the people to learn Vietnamese script and fight bad customs, etc.

Realizing that the use of armed forces alone could not crush the fighting spirit of the Vietnamese people, the imperialist and feudal Court implemented a new policy: on the one hand, repression and persecution were carried on, and on the other, treacherous manoeuvres were used to break the movement. Leaning on the landlords, first of all the mandarins, and

notables, they set up 'The Party of Men of Reason' with the object of 'fighting Communism and stirring up hatred for the Soviet Union'*, digging a gap between the Party and the people, hoping that the people would turn away from the Party. At the same time orders were given to reactionaries under religious cloaks 'to write in newspapers, publish books and do their utmost to carry out reactionary propaganda among Catholic masses aiming at sowing discord among us in order to divide our forces' **.

Other tricks were used to deceive the people: organization of 'Yellow Flag processions', 'Receiving of rallying cards' to play on the minds of the less determined people in an attempt to disintegrate the movement.

Reformist policies were also carried out to undermine the revolution: Relief to the poor, celebration of sacrifices for those who were shot down during the demonstrations, digging of canals, building of dams, etc.

While the movement was thus fiercely assaulted, the Nghe — Tinh area was hit by a grave famine. The fighting spirit of the people fell gradually. The Provincial Party Committee on the one side launched a movement against terrorism and punishing the traitors, and, on the other, led the peasants to claim for loans of paddy from rich families in order to cope with immediate famine. The movement entered a more complicated and more difficult period. Not only had it to stand up against French imperialists and the feudal Court, but also against traitors among the people and inside the Party. At that time, the Committee of Central Viet Nam put forth an incorrect slogan 'to root out all intellectuals, landlords and

* Excerpt from handbills of the Viet Nam Communist Party that gave explanations of the 'Party of Men of Reason', in 1930, in Nghe An province.

** Excerpt from the newspaper Forward number 26, on December 17, 1931.

notables', aimed at strengthening the Party, but in practice it brought about more difficulties for the movement.

The Party's Central Committee launched a nationwide movement of struggle in co-ordination with the Nghe — Tinh movement, opposing white terror and supporting Red Nghe — Tinh. At the same time it sent out instructions on the question of purging the Party and the Peasants' Association. The Central Committee laid stress on the Party's class line in the countryside as follows: « To strengthen by all means the landless and poor peasants because they are semi-proletarians in the countryside; to unite with middle-peasants because they are for the time being a big revolutionary force and a labouring force which will, together with the working class, build socialism once State-power is in the workers' hands. Rich peasants should not be members of Red Peasants' Association, in particular members of the Executive Committee of this Association. But the Permanent Bureau of the Central Committee disapproves of the raising of the question of purging the Red Peasants' Association. It should only speak of readjusting the Red Peasants' Association to conform with its principles. Explanations should be given to rich peasants to convince them to withdraw of their own free will from the Red Peasants' Association and shift to the mutual aid teams* ».

The Central Committee's instructions corrected the deviations of the Nghe — Tinh Party Committee and reflected the Party's correct class line in rural areas in the bourgeois democratic revolution. Besides, the Central Committee gave instructions for the organization of self-defence units to defend the masses in

* Excerpt from the Central Committee's Instructions on Development of Red Peasants' Associations, on January 20, 1931.

their struggle. Therefore, from the Nghe—Tinh Soviet movement emerged the seed of the people's armed forces led by our Party.

Nghe — Tinh Soviets could be set up in a number of localities only. Though there was co-ordinated struggle throughout the country it was not simultaneous and not strong enough. The enemy could still concentrate forces for the repression of the Nghe — Tinh Soviet movement but this was not the only cause of the failure of the movement. It was also due to subjective and adventurous thinking, lack of a thorough understanding of the policy of an Anti-imperialist national united front and neglecting to carry out the strategy of 'more friends and less foes'; and when the movement was at a low ebb, « a withdrawal in good order was not effected ».

However, Nghe — Tinh Soviet had a very important historical significance. It affirmed the leading role of the Indochinese Communist Party towards the Vietnamese revolution. Indeed though new-born, our Party was already fully able to launch a broad mass movement, and especially succeeded in mobilizing and leading the peasant masses. The heroic spirit of the fighters of Nghe—Tinh Soviet further strengthened the tradition of undaunted struggle of the Vietnamese people. During and after the Nghe — Tinh Soviet movement, although it suffered heavy losses, our Party was steeled and tempered in the fire of revolutionary struggle and accumulated experiences in seizing revolutionary power for the people.

While the Nghe — Tinh Soviet movement and the revolutionary movement throughout the country met with many difficulties, the Central Committee held its second session at Saigon in March 1931. The meeting had as its objective the struggle against petty-bourgeois ideology within the Party, for propaganda and education of Marxism-Leninism and working out of plans for the consolidation of the

movement. The session paid particular attention to the struggle against the following erroneous thoughts and viewpoints :

— That the Party is the party of the toiling people as a whole, and not the party of the working class.

— That the working class is divided into blue-blouse workers and brown-blouse workers, saying that the former were technical workers with high wages, thus having no revolutionary spirit ; and only the latter had revolutionary spirit as they were paid low wages and suffered most.

— The idea of ceasing to struggle in order to strengthen the Party internally.

Besides the criticism of the above-mentioned erroneous viewpoints, the session also laid emphasis upon the necessity of struggling against « leftist » and rightist tendencies in the Party. Concerning « leftist » tendencies, the struggle was mainly directed against adventurous dare-devil tendencies, rashness and premature uprising. As for rightist tendencies, the main struggle was turned against the idea of holding back the struggle of the masses or of tailing after the masses, etc.

Following the winding up of the second session of the Central Committee, all the members of the Central Committee were arrested. Numerous Party-members at all levels fell into enemy hands one after the other. The resolutions of the session, however, reached a number of localities, and erroneous viewpoints were corrected.

THE LOW EBB OF THE REVOLUTION AND THE STRUGGLE TO RESTORE THE MOVEMENT

After the end of 1931 the revolutionary agitation in Indochina reached a low ebb. The French imperialists continued repressing and terrorizing, with particular concentration on the Indochinese Communist Party, under the belief that the revolution would be annihilated only after its destruction. Scores of thousands of Party members and revolutionary cadres were arrested, killed, jailed, or exiled. Many villages having communist cells or sheltering communist cadres were burnt down. Any family having connection with the communists was surrounded and closely watched. All disturbances were imputed to the communists and mercilessly repressed and terrorized. Together with the policy of terrorism went that of deceitful propaganda and demagogy. The French imperialists encouraged the development of religious organizations, allowed the founding of «Buddhist Associations» in North and Central Viet Nam, which were put under the control and management of reactionary mandarins. In addition to the religious books and those slandering communism published by the Catholic Mission, a series of books of superstitious character such as books on «physiognomy», «soothsaying», «horoscopy», «evil spirits», «hypnotism», etc., were published and widely circulated. The French imperialists even organized the «return

from France» of Emperor Bao Dai and put out noisy propaganda for the Bao Dai so-called «reformed programme». At the same time they sowed depraved customs and habits, built more gambling-houses, night clubs, opium-dens, brothels, etc..., with a view to corrupting our youth, and intensifying propaganda of the decadent culture of the French bourgeoisie in our country.

The years of low ebb of the revolution were also those of economic crisis which weighed heavily on the Vietnamese people. Trade in all kinds of goods was in stagnation, rice was unsaleable; meanwhile taxes and State loans of all kinds were increasing. The French imperialists squeezed hundreds of millions of piastres out of Viet Nam to subsidize the French monopolistic capitalists in the years of economic crisis. Many peasants went bankrupt, land and fields were concentrated in the big landlords' hands. Scores of thousands of workers were unemployed; the already low wages decreased more and more. Many civil-servants lost their jobs. Small traders, owners of small industrial concerns and members of the national bourgeoisie went bankrupt one after another.

Facing this situation, the feudal landlord class had to cling all the more to imperialism, being aware that without imperialism their interests could not be safeguarded. The Vietnamese comprador-bourgeoisie still co-operated with the imperialists to ask and beg them for whatever they would give. As for the Vietnamese national bourgeoisie, though suffering heavy handed treatment they were bewildered, confused, and also compromised with the imperialists. The feudal landlord class and comprador-bourgeoisie put forth political «theories» and deceitful «reformed programme» to praise the imperialists and embellish their domination, at the same time to maintain or

extend their own interests under any form. As for the national bourgeoisie, they availed themselves of the mass movement to beg for various reforms *.

The petty-bourgeoisie was pessimistic, and had little confidence in the revolution; a number of them fostered an adventurous spirit or became superstitious. During this period, in the cultural field, there was some similarity in the attitude of the national bourgeoisie and that of the petty-bourgeoisie: not daring to struggle against the French imperialists in the political and military fields, they struggled in the cultural field against the feudal power. That is why the humorous and satirical literature was developed attacking in a negative manner the ludicrous and out-of-date acts of the feudal landlord class (See the weeklies **Phong Hoa**, **Ngay Nay**). Besides the humorous literature was the development of the bourgeoisie romantic literature (**Tu Luc Van Doan**, etc.)

* Though in a difficult situation, our Party always believed in the future of the revolution. In 1932, the Party put forth the **Programme of action**, recalling the Party's « Programme on the bourgeois democratic revolution » in 1930, and three immediate practical requirements :

1 — To demand democratic freedoms for the toiling people, freedom of assembly, of organization, of speech, of movement, and of going abroad.

2 — To protest against the policy of terrorism and reprisals against political detainees, to demand immediate cancellation of the policy of repression and death sentences, abolition of the special criminal Court and military courts, etc.

3 — To demand cancellation of the monopoly of salt, alcohol, opium, etc.

* See « The preparation for the founding of the Party, the Party's revolutionary Programme » above.