

THE PEACE MOVEMENT IN VIETNAM



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VIETNAM PEACE COMMITTEE

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*(Excerpts from Report by Dr. Le Dinh Tham,
Chairman of Vietnam Peace Committee, to Vietnam
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I. — SOME FEATURES OF THE PEACE MOVEMENT IN VIETNAM DURING THE RESISTANCE WAR

During the Resistance war, the Vietnamese people saw their heroic fight against French and American imperialist aggression as an active and essential means of safeguarding world peace. All the army men who sacrificed life and blood on the battlefields; all the volunteer porters who day and night, carried their heavy loads over mountains and plains to supply the front; all the civilians who suffered hardships of all kinds and strained every nerve to produce for the front and fulfil the tasks of the rear; all of them, irrespective of sex or age, knew that in their different ways they were, as President Ho Chi Minh put it, 'striking at the roots of imperialist war and contributing to the preservation of peace'.

Even while the Resistance war still raged, our people joined directly in the world peace movement, and warmly upheld all its initiatives. The Vietnam Peace Committee was founded in mid-1950; many peace conferences were organized on a national scale in the war years. Despite difficulties in transport and communication, Vietnamese delegates were present at all international peace conferences and carried back their message to the Vietnamese people, even in the enemy-held regions. All these resolutions were courageously implemented by our fellow-citizens! Five million signatures were collected in Vietnam to the 1950 Stockholm Appeal against atomic bombs. A million signatures to the 1950 Berlin Appeal for a Five Powers Peace Pact were collected in enemy-held areas among guerrilla fighters and civilians who, arms in hands, were defending their villages and hamlets against enemy mopping-up operations. Even in the free zones, signatures were collected at enormous risk, often enough during brief intervals between two air raids.

The various activities of the peace movement in Vietnam during the patriotic war helped the noble fight of the Vietnamese people, and at the same time won unanimous approval and strong support from peace-loving peoples the world over.

From its inception, the world peace movement never failed at its various meetings to condemn the aggressive war waged by the imperialists against

the Vietnamese people, to demand an end to this war and universal recognition of the right to independence of the peoples of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. We take this opportunity of re-affirming our deep feeling and profound gratitude toward the peace-loving peoples of the world for their noble international solidarity.

We may say without exaggeration that the peace movement in Vietnam and the world peace movement successfully combined their efforts in the common fight against the French and American imperialist aggressors, and effectively contributed to bringing the Vietnamese people's resistance to a glorious end — to the historic victory at Dien Bien Phu, and the successful Geneva Conference.

II. — THE SITUATION IN VIETNAM IN THE LAST FOUR YEARS

The Geneva Agreements signed on July 20, 1954 marked a turning-point in the long struggle of the Vietnamese people for independence and peace.

These agreements recognize the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. They not only re-established peace in Indochina, but provided for prevention of the recurrence of war, and for negotiations and general elections with a view to reunifying Vietnam.

Having failed in their attempts to sabotage the Geneva Conference, the American imperialists have since made all-out efforts to sabotage the implementation of the Geneva Agreements, even to annul them.

About a month after the conclusion of the Geneva Agreements, they set up the South-East Asia treaty organisation and announced the inclusion of South Vietnam in the 'protection zone' of that bloc. They interfered even more brazenly in South Vietnam, ousting the French colonialists and creating the Ngo Dinh Diem Administration as their tool for sabotaging the peace and reunification of Vietnam, and for turning South Vietnam into an American colony and military base.

In complete contravention of the Geneva Agreements, the U.S.-Ngo Dinh Diem clique has set up a separate State in South Vietnam, trampled upon democratic liberties, suppressed the peace movement of the twin cities of Saigon-Cholon, crushed the religious sects, whipped up 'campaigns of denunciation of communists', and taken widespread reprisals against former partisans of the resistance and all patriotic and peace-loving people in South Vietnam. So-called 'U.S. economic aid' has drained South Vietnam of its rich resources and condemned the people to a hard life. In violation of the military clauses of the Geneva Agreements, the U. S. imperialists are expanding the South Vietnam army, placing training and all military affairs

under American officers' command; they are enlarging their military bases and building new ones, bringing more and more U.S. military personnel, arms, munitions and war materials into South Vietnam. Recently, the Ngo Dinh Diem Administration illegally claimed the right to replace by American arms those taken out by the French troops during their withdrawal from South Vietnam. It is a matter of regret that the International Commission which has effectively contributed to the consolidation of peace in Vietnam, has now decided to give satisfaction to this unlawful demand in contradiction to the fundamental principles of the Geneva Agreements.

The plot of the U.S. — Diem clique against peace in Indochina and South-East Asia is clearly demonstrated by their repeated cries about 'filling in the Ben Hai river' and 'marching Northwards', by their provocations and attacks on the Cambodian borders, their feverish efforts to turn South Vietnam into a fully-fledged member of SEATO.

Their aim to perpetuate the division of Vietnam is revealed by Ngo Dinh Diem's absurd statement that he is not bound by the Geneva Agreements, by his repeated refusals to discuss with the Government of the Vietnam Democratic Republic the questions of general elections, national reunification, bilateral reduction of armed forces, and trade exchanges.

The designs of the U.S.-Diem clique and their activities in South Vietnam, seriously threaten peace. The U. S. policy of intervention in South Vietnam is the main obstacle to the consolidation of peace and the reunification of our country.

That is one outstanding feature of the developments in our country over the last four years.

Another feature of the utmost importance is that North Vietnam has embarked on the road to socialism. Completely liberated from imperialist domination and feudal exploitation, North Vietnam has successfully restored its economy and set itself the task of advancing gradually towards socialism by well-planned economic and cultural development.

Socialist construction in North Vietnam aims at building an equitable society, a strong and prosperous nation. It cannot in any way create any obstacle to our people's struggle for the consolidation of peace and national reunification, quite the opposite. It will have a good influence on the movement for national unity among our fellow-citizens in South Vietnam.

Socialist construction will make North Vietnam progressively stronger; it will increase the material and moral resources of our people, increase the strength of the socialist camp and of the peace forces of the world. It will create favourable conditions for carrying our struggle for unity to a victorious

end, freeing the Southern part of our country of American domination, thus contributing to the preservation of peace in South-East Asia and the world.

III. — THE PEACE MOVEMENT IN VIETNAM SINCE THE RESTORATION OF PEACE

Our people are all the more attached to peace because they have suffered the hardship and sorrow of fifteen years of war. The peace movement in Vietnam is a national movement. We defend peace in many ways: by upholding all initiatives of the world peace movement, supporting the national liberation movement, strengthening our bonds of friendship with all peoples, and also by speeding up our construction in all fields, and fighting for national reunification.

Since the restoration of peace we have been taking an even more active part in the movement of the peoples of the world for peace and national independence.

In 1955, in response to the Vienna Appeal, our people launched an active campaign for the collection of signatures demanding a ban on atomic weapons. In North Vietnam alone, we collected over 6,500,000 signatures. The campaigns for disarmament and a ban on nuclear weapons continued in the last few years with the fruitful cooperation of all political