

PREFACE

A foul and savage enemy is riding roughshod over the soil of Viet Nam. The Vietnamese people are waging a heroic war of resistance, determined to avenge the blood shed. Will Viet Nam survive? Will the Vietnamese people succeed? These are the questions being asked by our compatriots and by many people in other countries.

Here is our answer: the Vietnamese people will not be reduced to bondage! The movement for the liberation of Viet Nam is an integral part of the new democratic movement surging through the world. As for the enemy of Viet Nam, the French colonialists, they represent out-of-date, decadent imperialism, whose fate has been sealed by history.

At present, the Vietnamese armed forces are still weaker than those of the enemy; it is therefore necessary to prolong the war of resistance. In the course of the fighting we will develop our forces, and gradually wear down the enemy's strength, until the day we can crush him completely. This war of resistance must be waged by the whole people, in every field — military, political, economic and cultural! — so that, wherever the enemy goes he meets our fierce resistance, which encircles and chokes him, giving him not a moment's respite in our country.

This book sets out the guiding principles of the fight to the death against the reactionary French colonialists for the genuine independence and reunification of the Fatherland, for the maintenance and development of the democratic republican regime in Viet Nam, and for the small contribution that the Vietnamese people can make to the safeguarding of world peace and democracy.

Viet Nam's armed resistance is a just war. A just war generally receives considerable support and derives immense strength from the people. However, the experiences of the Abyssinian people in the struggle against the Italian fascists in 1935-1936 have shown that even a just war may fail if the military command commits blunders, and if propaganda, mobilization and foreign policy are weak. There is a lesson in this for us.

To win final victory in this long and hard struggle is not an easy task. Success can only be achieved when the following fundamental conditions are assured: the correctness of our political line, the achievement of compact national unity, the consolidation of our rear, the heroism of our army and people and the competence of our command.

This war of resistance enhances the Vietnamese people's prestige throughout the world and enriches the best traditions of our nation. Our compatriots have all heard the sacred call of their Fatherland, and are rising up in response. Determined to fulfil their duty to the Fatherland, they vie with each other in proving themselves worthy of their ancestors.

The salient strong point of the resistance under the Tran dynasty consisted of clever stratagems.

The salient strong point of the resistance in the reign of the Later Le was perseverance and endurance.

The salient strong point of the resistance during the reign of Quang Trung lay in speed and vigour of attack.

Under the leadership of President Ho Chi Minh, our national hero, a synthesis of the historical experiences of Viet Nam and other countries is being achieved in order to turn defeat into victory. Great sacrifices and strenuous efforts are being made by all the people in every part of our country.

However savage and scheming the reactionary French colonialists may be, the long resistance of our people is sure to be victorious.

The Resistance will win: this is our unshakable belief. And that is the title we have given this book, which comprises articles dealing with the Resistance, first published in Nos. 70 to 81¹ of the review *Su That*², and later revised and amended. The book is now published by the *Su That* Publishing House on the occasion of the second anniversary of the outbreak of the war of resistance in southern Viet Nam.

Bac Bo, September 19, 1947.

TRUÔNG-CHINH

1. Issued in the period from March 4, 1947 to August 1, 1947.
2. *Truth*. (Translator).

Indochina of the French reactionaries who oppose their aspirations and bring dishonour upon the name of the new France.

Naturally we are not fighting against the French people; we are not even fighting against all types of French colonialists.

President Ho Chi Minh has said: "There are French businessmen who want to carry on their business activities in Viet Nam. They know that to conduct business and make profits, they must cooperate in good faith with the Vietnamese people. They know that the precondition for that cooperation is that Viet Nam be independent and unified. These are the non-reactionary colonialists. As for those who scheme or use force to subjugate our people, they are the reactionary colonialists."¹

It is only against the French reactionaries who "scheme or use force to subdue us" and who refuse to recognize our right to independence and reunification that we are fighting. The more we fight, the more clearly will the relatively less reactionary colonialist elements realize that the aggressive war in Viet Nam is harmful. They will oppose the stubborn reactionary colonialists, advocating a peaceful settlement and co-operation with us in order to "conduct business and make profits" in our country.

Are we fighting all types of colonialists all over the world? Of course not! We are not so stupid as to declare war on those who remain neutral, who do not send troops against us. That would sow needless hatred between them and ourselves.

1. Reply to journalists' questions, January 1, 1947.

I

WHOM ARE WE FIGHTING?

The Vietnamese people are waging a sacred war for freedom and independence, in defence of the territory handed down to them by their ancestors. The whole country is rising against the enemy.

Who is the enemy? The enemy is the reactionary French colonialists, who are re-invading our country by armed force.

The reactionary French colonialists are our deadly foes, our main enemy. They are our sworn enemy for all time, whose advance we must make speed to check, and who must be crushed and annihilated.

It is not France we are fighting. France is a democratic country, whose new constitution states that it will "never launch any aggressive war and never use force to infringe the liberty of any people".

Is it the French people we are fighting? No! The French people, who love "liberty, equality and fraternity", have no desire to invade our country. They know that this aggression will lead to their children dying on the battlefield, and that only a handful of greedy capitalists will benefit from it. The more we fight, the more the French people will hate the French colonialists; they will demand that their government agree to an armistice and to the withdrawal from

In brief, we are neither Francophobe nor xenophobe. We are only against the reactionary French colonialists.

We pledge never to allow these colonialists to impose their yoke again upon our compatriots. We are rising up, arms in hand and we shall not lay them down before the reactionary French colonialists have been swept right out of our country.

The French soldiers, legionaries and colonial troops are forced to come to Indochina to fight us. They are mere pitiful tools of the reactionary French colonialists. They are forced to leave their homes, their parents, their wives and children, and are sent here to serve as cannon fodder for the imperialists and colonialists.

We have to fire on them because they are obliged to fire on us in the interests of the reactionary French colonialists. In this war against the reactionary French colonialists, we cannot avoid fighting the French and colonial soldiers. We do not hate them however. On the contrary, both we and they have a common enemy: the reactionary French colonialists. When the French and colonial soldiers come to understand this, not only will they refuse to fire on us, but they will even come over to our side with their arms, and together with us they will turn them against the French reactionaries. That is why we must seize every opportunity while fighting the French reactionaries to make propaganda among the French soldiers, legionaries and colonial troops, and must treat them well when they are taken prisoner.

As for the puppet soldiers, they are our compatriots and most of them are peasants. The colonialists are making use of them to fight against the Fatherland. We must strive all the more vigorously to make them realize this, in order to

win them over to the ranks of the resistance with their arms, and to annihilate the aggressors together with us, in atonement for their offences against the country.

If we succeed in achieving all this, the enemy ranks will disintegrate and the reactionary French colonialists will be isolated.

To isolate the enemy in order to overthrow him is the common tactic of a class or of a nation that is determined to fight, and to win.

II

WHY MUST WE FIGHT?

In his appeal to mount a war of resistance made to our compatriots on December 20, 1946, President Ho Chi Minh said :

“Because we love peace, we made concessions; yet the more concessions we made, the more pressure the French colonialists put on us. The reason was that they had decided to invade our country again.”

We did indeed make numerous concessions to the French colonialists. But, greedy and savage, they broke their word, trampling loyalty and justice underfoot. They have attacked us, so we must fight back in self-defence.

In August 1945 the Japanese were defeated. Our people rose up to seize back power. On September 23, 1945, the French colonialists attacked and occupied Saigon, once again unleashing an aggressive war upon our country.

On March 6, 1946, the French colonialists signed a “Preliminary Agreement”, according to which we allowed French troops to enter the North and Centre of Viet Nam. But they did not implement their part of the Agreement. Not only did they fail to effect the cessation of hostilities in southern Viet Nam, but they established a puppet government in

what they called the “Autonomous State of Nam Ky”, and attacked and occupied the south-western part of central Viet Nam with the intention of forming a “Western State”. At the same time, they attacked Son La and Lai Chau in northern Viet Nam, and occupied the regions of Lang Son and Hai Ninh, with the intention of forming a “Nung State”. They also occupied the coast from Hai Phong to Mong Cai, thinking to found a “Federal zone”¹.

On September 14, 1946, a modus vivendi was signed between France and Viet Nam. According to this modus

1. The following quotations from documents are proofs of the perfidious schemes of the French colonialists :

Immediately after the signing of the Preliminary Agreement of March 6, 1946, French troops came to northern Viet Nam and the northern part of central Viet Nam. General Leclerc, commander of French forces in the Far East, sent the following directive to the officers under his command :

“Your job is not simply to restore the former French administration; in addition you must defend French interests during the negotiations being held in Indochina and Paris.

“These defensive measures will be put into effect either by moderate steps bringing steady daily progress... or by force wherever needed...”

On April 18, 1946, General Valluy, French commander in northern Indochina, sent the following directive to the officers under his command :

“Immediately upon arrival in a garrison, the commander must draw up a basic security plan. This plan must include permanent defence of the army's barracks, and provide in particular for action to occupy the town since the best means of defence is generally attack.

“The plan has three objectives :

“1 — Rapid isolation and occupation of the enemy's bases for resistance, such as the principal streets inhabited by Vietnamese and Chinese residents, all barracks, suspect neighbourhoods, arms depots and military equipment stores ;

“2 — Occupation of all key points in the localities (public services, bridges, artistic monuments, tactical points) ;

“3 — And, by applying the above measures, to guarantee protection of the life and property of French residents in the area concerned.

“As soon as this plan has been drawn up and its main facets put into practice, a study must be made as early as possible of complementary measures which can be taken in order to transform activities involved in this purely military operation into activities which will set the scene for a coup d'etat”. (Directive No. 11)

vivendi, we recognized the cultural and economic interests of France in Viet Nam. As for France, she agreed to implement the cease-fire, and to respect democratic freedoms in Nam Bo (formerly Cochinchina — *Translator*).

Implementing the modus vivendi, we gave back to France the Pasteur Institute in Hanoi and ceased our fire in Nam Bo. However, France took advantage of our good faith and dispatched troops throughout the countryside in southern Viet Nam to arrest our patriots and to re-establish the "Councils of Notables", a French puppet administration, in the villages. At the same time they blockaded the port of Haiphong, attempted to seize control of our Customs and thus create financial difficulties for our Government.

....From this it is clear that as early as March 1946 the French colonialists intended to occupy our towns and overthrow our Government. On April 6, 1946, Valluy sent the following secret directive to Colonel Vicaire concerning the invasion of "the Nung State":

"Proceed to Co To and prepare for an attack on the Nung State around Mong Cai.

"Leave part of your troops in Co To and Van Hoa and keep these places occupied pending further orders".

Following General Valluy's directive, Colonel Vicaire noted in a report to his commander on the occupation of the Nung State on April 21, 1946:

"Our action may be defined as the occupation of the base of a triangle (Hanoi — Hai Duong — Hongay, Mong Cai), the apex of which is Lang Son".

Reporting on Gribelin's troops use of bandits to stir up troubles in the Quang Yen region, in preparation for the occupation by French troops of the mining area, Vicaire wrote, on the same day:

"The occupation of the mining area of Mao Khe and Uong Bi by the regular army, as proposed by the Tonkin Coal-mining Company, seems impossible in the present circumstances.

"In all events attention must be paid not only to the occupation of the Nung State, and the political activities which must be carried out behind the Hongay — Mong Cai coastal area, but at the same time the actions of a group of partisans must be kept in mind".

These samples of documentary evidence are sufficient to expose the French colonialists' criminality. Faced with such clear proof, how can the French invaders still deny that they attacked and occupied Viet Nam premeditatedly?

Where is the validity in their propaganda accusing Viet Nam of attacking them first?

On November 20, 1946, they obstructed the collection of customs by our Government, and fired on our security and customs officials while the latter were carrying out their duties. Our troops fired back in self-defence. D'Argenlieu and Valluy ordered the outright occupation of Haiphong and Lang Son and, in violation of the agreements signed, simultaneously landed thousands of French troops in Da Nang.

Thus, the French colonialists violated first the Preliminary Agreement of March 6, 1946, and then the modus vivendi of September 14.

They were thus attacking us in all three *ky* (northern, central and southern parts of Viet Nam — *Translator*).

There could be no further doubt about their intentions: the French reactionaries' obvious scheme was to re-invade our country.

But that was not all. Following the Haiphong and Lang Son incidents, the French colonialists staged repeated provocations everywhere they had troops stationed.

More oil was thus poured on the fire. The situation became tense.

Our people no longer trusted the French Officials' word and took active measures to cope with all eventualities. Earth ramparts, combat trenches, barricades went up in Hanoi and other places where French troops were stationed.

On December 16, 1946, all the French colonialist ring-leaders in Indochina met in Haiphong. On the following day, French troops resorted to provocations and launched an attack in Hanoi. On December 17, 1946, they crossed the

barricade in Hang Bun Street in the Yen Ninh quarter of Hanoi, and fired on the headquarters of the self-defence forces in that street. Their fire was returned. Then the French forces, armed with mortars, machine-guns, cannon and grenades, attacked the whole Yen Ninh area. They broke into houses, raped women, slaughtered children and pillaged property, creating a state of war right in the heart of Hanoi. The reactionary French colonialists in Indochina were taking advantage of the Cabinet crisis in France — the Bidault Government had resigned, the Blum Government was not yet in power — to carry out a policy of *fait accompli*. From that day onwards, there was a state of generalized war between the Vietnamese people and the French colonialists, a war provoked by the French colonialists.

On December 18, 1946, French forces occupied our Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Communications and Public Works. At the same time, Morlière, the butcher of Yen Ninh, sent an ultimatum to our Government, demanding that the self-defence forces be disarmed and threatening to assume control of public security in Hanoi.

The French colonialists were trying hard to press their plans through. The atmosphere of hostility between Viet Nam and France became extremely tense. Then, on the night of December 19, 1946, under severe provocation on the part of French troops in Hanoi, fighting broke out in the capital and hostilities spread throughout Viet Nam.

Events have proved that it was the reactionary French colonialists who failed to keep their word, and who broke the Preliminary Agreement of March 6 and the *modus vivendi* of September 14. It was they who provoked war

and launched attacks on us throughout the country. They used force to invade our country and to partition it. We could not continue making concessions to them. Had we done so, our Government would have become a puppet government, and our people slaves. For that reason, we were compelled to resist, to fight the reactionary French colonialists, in order to defend the integrity of our country and to maintain our sovereignty.

As President Ho Chi Minh declared in his appeal of Dec. 20, 1946 :

“Even if we must sacrifice everything, we are determined not to lose our country, not to live as slaves”.

The French reactionaries insist in their propaganda that we attacked them first, on December 19. This is nothing but an attempt to conceal their own crimes. They themselves attacked us as early as November 20, in Haiphong and Lang Son, and on December 17 in the capital; they attacked us immediately after the signing of the Preliminary Agreement on March 6, 1946, and even before. They whine shamelessly : “Viet Nam is acting in contravention of the agreements”, and hope in this way to delude people and make them forget the French violations of the agreements. But in the face of stubborn fact, they must bear the full burden of responsibility, in the eyes of history, in the eyes of the world and of the French people.

Honest people have to acknowledge today that our people do love peace and that our Government pursues a very moderate policy. But when forced to fight, we do so with determination. The anger our people have long kept at bay blazes forth today like lightning.

III

WHAT ARE WE FIGHTING FOR?

The reactionary French colonialists intend using methods of attrition to get their hands on our country. Furthermore, they are applying a policy of *fait accompli* in order to continue their reactionary manoeuvres in Indochina regardless of changes in the political situation in France.

If the French people ask questions, they will be told: "The whole thing's settled, there is no problem!"

In order to defeat these policies of "attrition" and *fait accompli* of the French colonialists, the Vietnamese people must fight!

France has signed an Agreement with Viet Nam. Why should those who call themselves representatives of France expect the Vietnamese people to implement the Agreement, while they regard themselves as free to disregard it? How do the reactionary French colonialists, of whom d'Argenlieu and his clique are mere lackeys, dare to send "ultimatums" to our Government? In face of the faithless, unjust, insolent behaviour of the reactionary French colonialists, the Vietnamese people must fight!

The French colonialists oppressed and exploited the Vietnamese people for nearly a century. During the five years of the Second World War, they opened the gates of Indochina

to the Japanese fascists and, together with them, caused our people untold hardships and burdens. Today, on seeing us win power and gain independence and freedom, they become concerned for their sordid interests, and look upon us with hatred. According to the *modus vivendi* of September 14, 1946, we recognized their cultural and economic interests (interests, alas, which they acquired by our people's sweat and blood, but which they were incapable of protecting, letting them fall into Japanese hands; it was our people and our people alone, who wrested them back with the August uprising!). But they were not satisfied. They want to make our people once again serve them as soldiers and coolies, and pay them taxes. They want to muzzle our people, torture, massacre and imprison them as before.

To wipe out the cowardly, greedy French colonialists, the Vietnamese people must fight!

How much blood our ancestors shed because of the French invaders! Today we must again shed our blood because of them!

How many of our young people in the flower of youth have been sacrificed on French scaffolds and in French prisons? How many women have been raped, how many children burnt alive? How many mothers have lost their little ones, brothers lost their sisters, husbands been torn from their wives? How many houses have gone up in flames, villages fallen victim to terrorist raids? How much gold and rice has been plundered? How many churches and tombs have been desecrated, pagodas and temples burnt and razed?

To annihilate the French reactionaries, to defend themselves, to defend civilization and the cause of justice, the Vietnamese people must fight!

The guns fired in our war of resistance spit the hatred of the Vietnamese people in the faces of the French reactionaries.

Now the Vietnamese people not only demand that the French colonialists respect the agreements already signed; their demand is not simply reversion to the position as it was on November 20 and December 17, 1946, as some people have mistakenly understood.

No! The shots now being fired are those of a long resistance! We must win independence and national unification. Independence and unification within the French Union if need be, but it must be independence and unification! The Preliminary Agreement of March 6, 1946, and the modus vivendi of September 14, 1946, entail recognition of the complete independence and the complete unification of Viet Nam: only on these conditions can peace be restored. Otherwise, the Vietnamese people have no alternative but to fight, fight and fight again — fight until they achieve the complete annihilation of all rapacious reactionaries on their beloved soil.

The French reactionaries are attempting to set up a puppet government for the whole country. Then they will proclaim the recognition of the fake independence and unification of a Viet Nam headed by that Government. But their treacherous schemes are doomed to failure. The Vietnamese people are not as easily deceived as they think.

Some people say that the slogan "independence and unification within the French Union" implies a contradiction. Why

does Viet Nam agree to remain part of the French Union when it claims to be independent? These friends forget that the Vietnamese people have firm confidence in themselves and trust the French people, and therefore do not fear to remain part of the French Union. The Vietnamese people are ready to co-operate with the new France, because they know that such co-operation, if it is sincere and based on equality and free consent, will be beneficial to both sides in the present international imbroglio. The Vietnamese people do not want the French people and the democratic world to misunderstand, to think that Viet Nam wishes to leave the French Union in order to join some reactionary bloc hostile to the forces of peace and democracy...

There are others who say that the slogan "independence and unification within the French Union" betrays a wavering resistance and hopes for peaceful negotiation with France. We reply: The Vietnamese people do not hate the French people, and it is not against them we are fighting; so why should we not be on friendly terms with them? On the other hand the Vietnamese people do realize that in order to establish friendly relations with the French people, they must resolutely break down the wall which separates the French and the Vietnamese peoples — that wall is the French colonialists. We are determined to annihilate the French reactionaries, who daily widen the gulf which separates our two peoples, both of whom love peace, justice and freedom.

To achieve the above-mentioned political aim of the war of resistance (independence and unification within the French Union), mere diplomacy with France is ineffective. We must

wage a war of resistance, we must take military action. Here are the military aims of our war of resistance :

1. To annihilate the enemy forces in our country ;
2. To crush the aggressive designs of the enemy completely;
3. To take back the whole country.

Our people advocate a long resistance ; this means to strive to achieve our military aims in order to realize our political aims. If France recognizes the "independence and unification of Viet Nam within the French Union", we shall agree ; otherwise, when the resistance of Viet Nam has scored final victory, Viet Nam will become an independent state outside the framework of the French Union.

IV

THE CHARACTER OF OUR RESISTANCE

History knows two kinds of wars : just wars and unjust wars. Just wars are wars fought against oppressors and conquerors to safeguard the freedom and independence of the peoples. Unjust wars are wars whose purpose is the seizure of territories, and a usurpation of the freedom and happiness of the majority of the people of these territories.

Our people are fighting the reactionary French colonialists in order to regain freedom and independence, to defend and liberate themselves ; our war of resistance is therefore a revolutionary war, a people's war fought in self-defence, a just and progressive war. On the other hand, the French colonialists are invading our country with the aim of oppressing and exploiting our people as before ; the aggressive war of the French colonialists is therefore an unjust and reactionary war.

A just war always enjoys warm support from people of goodwill and from progressive nations all over the world. An unjust war wins only disapproval and contempt from sound public opinion and the peace-loving peoples.

We are not surprised that world opinion has not supported France up to now. On the other hand many countries (India, Burma, Indonesia and Malaya in particular) support and encourage us.

This is one of the many factors which weaken the morale of the French soldiers and strengthen the determination of our army.

Moreover, although the August Revolution won power for the Vietnamese people, it did not completely liberate the whole country. The present war of resistance will complete the task of national liberation.

Though the August Revolution set up the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, this regime is not yet perfect. The present war of resistance will extend and consolidate the democratic republican regime of Viet Nam and develop it on the basis of new democracy.

That is why Viet Nam's armed resistance not only has the character of a national liberation war, but is also a struggle for new democracy. Does this not make it part of the great democratic movement now blazing through the world?

This resistance carries on the work of the August Revolution. It is a revolutionary war aimed at achieving national independence, democracy and freedom. A new Viet Nam is being forged in the fire of the resistance: an independent, unified, democratic, prosperous Viet Nam — a new democratic Viet Nam.

There are some friends who think that since our present struggle has a national and democratic character at the same time as we are fighting the colonialists, then this entails land being taken from the landlords and distributed to the tillers. We reply: this war of resistance is fulfilling the task of national liberation and is developing new democracy. At present, we shall limit ourselves to the confiscation of land

and other property belonging to Vietnamese traitors in order to distribute this land to the peasants on the one hand, and swell the budget of the resistance on the other. This does not mean that we shall carry out absolutely no land reform during the course of the war of resistance. But it must be implemented gradually and undertaken step by step, in such a way as to differentiate among the feudalists, and isolate the French colonialist aggressors.

This war of resistance is a people's war. The overwhelming majority of our people are peasants. Nearly all the fighters of our regular, militia and guerilla forces are peasants too. Our resistance is in fact a peasant war led by the working class.

The Vietnamese people are not struggling for themselves alone. They are struggling for their own liberation and at the same time for the defence of world peace. The French reactionaries who are invading Viet Nam are part and parcel of international reaction. Their ranks consist of a great number of German soldiers who were formerly members of Hitler's fascist armies. A number of French colonialists who took part in the resistance against the German fascists during the last world war, such as Valluy, Morliere, etc., have today betrayed the ideal of opposition to aggression, letting selfish and shameful interests get the upper hand. Their collaboration with French financial magnates has turned them into their lackeys in their aggression against Viet Nam.

In this way the Vietnamese people's fight against the reactionary French colonialists is a fight against remnants of the fascist forces, who openly violate the United Nations and Atlantic Charters and are sworn enemies of world peace.

The Vietnamese people realize that only when the reactionary French colonialists have been swept out of Viet Nam, will the French and Vietnamese peoples, both loving independence and peace, be in a position to enter into genuine cooperation within the French Union, and in the great democratic family of world nations.

Thus, the resistance in Viet Nam is a progressive war in which we are fighting for freedom, independence, democracy and peace.

V

MILITARY RESISTANCE

Many people think that resistance consists in no more than sending troops to the front to fight the enemy. In fact, to take up arms and fight the enemy is only one aspect of the problem. The resistance of our people must be carried out in every field : military, economic, political and cultural.

How are we to fight in the military field ?

Resistance in the military field means using every measure, every stratagem, to maintain and develop our own forces, while destroying those of the enemy. It means using force to drive the invader out of our country.

The guiding principle of the strategy of our whole resistance is to fight a protracted war.

To protract the war is the key to victory. Why must the war be protracted ? Because if we compare our forces with those of the enemy, it is obvious that the balance is still in the enemy's favour. The enemy's country is an industrial one — ours is an agricultural country. The enemy has planes, tanks, warships ; as for us, we have only rudimentary weapons. The enemy troops are well-trained, ours are not inured to war. If we throw the whole of our forces into a few battles to try and decide the outcome, we shall certainly be defeated and the enemy will win. On the other hand,

if while fighting we maintain our forces, expand them, train our army and people, learn military tactics while fighting, we shall gain what we lacked at the outset and grow in strength. If we at the same time reduce and harass the enemy forces, we shall weary and discourage them in such a way that, strong as they are, they will become weak and will meet defeat instead of victory. In short, if we prolong the war, our forces will grow stronger, the enemy forces will be weakened, their already low morale will become still lower, their already poor finances will become still worse. The more we fight, the more united our people at home will be, and the more the world democratic movement will support us. On the other hand, the more the enemy fights, the more the anti-war and democratic movement in France will stay his hands; the rising revolutionary movement in the French colonies will oblige the enemy to spread his forces; and he will find himself in a position of isolation in the international arena. To achieve all these results, the war must be prolonged, and we must have time. Time is on our side — time will be our best strategist, if we are determined to pursue our resistance to the end.

Under the Tran dynasty, our people waged long wars of resistance three times in 31 years to defeat the Yuan invaders. Under the Later Le dynasty, it took us ten years' resistance to wipe out the cruel Ming troops. It took the Chinese people eight years to free themselves from Japanese occupation¹. Those who want "lightning war and rapid victory", who want to bring the whole of our forces to

1. Those are clear examples of protracted resistance.

the battle-front to win speedy victory and rapidly to decide the outcome of the war, have learned nothing from the invaluable experiences of history; indeed, they understand nothing of the strategy necessary to our people in this war of resistance. They do not believe in the ability of the masses. All that they would achieve would be the premature sacrifice of the bulk of our forces in a few adventurous battles; they would commit heroic but useless suicide. They pretend contempt for the enemy. Yet they are the very ones who are afraid of the enemy and of a long resistance war.

What is our line in the fighting? It is to seize the offensive and force a rapid decision in every battle.

We are attacked. The enemy is stronger than we are. If we remain on the defensive, and only defend ourselves where we are attacked, the more we fight the weaker we shall become — the more we fight the more we shall be defeated. Therefore, in every campaign and battle, the weak points of the enemy must be discovered and attacked, and we must attack forcefully to annihilate his forces. If we attack, we must do it quickly and decide the battle rapidly. (From the strategic viewpoint, we must prolong the war; but in every individual campaign and from a tactical viewpoint, we must achieve quick results). It is only by applying the tactics of lightning attack that we can destroy the enemy sector by sector. The effect of many battles in which the enemy is destroyed sector by sector, will be the weakening of his forces as a whole, and their demoralisation. Our forces, on the other hand, will increase and our fighters' morale will be strengthened. We shall go on in this way

until we reach the point at which we are sufficiently strong to launch a general counter-offensive to defeat the enemy on all battle-fronts and to recover the whole of our territory.

To attack forcefully and wipe out the enemy in every battle we must apply tactics of maximum mobility, penetrating deeply and then withdrawing as far as possible. We must concentrate our forces rapidly, launch lightning attacks, then disperse like a flash. In other words, from a tactical viewpoint, we must wage guerilla and mobile warfare.

Guerilla warfare is the method of fighting in partisan units or with relatively small groups of the regular army disguised as civilians and mingling with the people. Though these forces are armed with rudimentary weapons only they are extremely active. They attack the enemy from behind, outflank him or launch sudden attacks on his weak points. They pretend to attack the enemy's right flank while actually attacking his left, they concentrate for attack and disperse to dodge the enemy's reply. They cut communication lines, harass the enemy while he is eating or sleeping, wear down his strength, cause him weariness and distress, render his forces lame, lost, hungry, thirsty... The three most generally employed tactics of guerilla warfare are: surprise attack, ambush and harassment. Fighting must be co-ordinated with sabotage. Sabotage is a wonderful means of resistance by guerilla forces or by regular troops less well-armed than the enemy.

Mobile warfare is fighting in which the regular army, or guerilla forces mustered in relatively large units and co-operating with the regular army, use more or less advanced weapons, group themselves rapidly and launch lightning

attacks; encircling the enemy in order to destroy him, working round positions to attack him, attacking from behind rather than launching frontal attacks, advancing rapidly and withdrawing quickly. On a long and deep battle-front (sometimes stretching the length of the country), the fighting units must divide duties among themselves and co-ordinate their actions, attacking the enemy according to a common plan, disturbing his forces, spreading alarm and disorder among them, so that they will either be destroyed or be forced to withdraw. The characteristic of mobile warfare is: to manoeuvre with flexibility, attacking the enemy and destroying him.

In order to win, we must wage a guerilla war and engage in mobile warfare or guerilla-and-mobile warfare; that means, a mixed form of military tactic. But all this does not mean that we shall not practise positional warfare.

What is positional warfare? It is the deployment of forces of the regular army in readiness for a battle, digging trenches, setting up fortifications, checking the enemy's advance, taking advantage of the enemy's weak points and inadequacies to attack him and occupy his positions.

So long as we are not as well-armed as the enemy, to apply positional warfare in a hurry is to doom ourselves to failure. That is why guerilla and mobile warfare are at present the chief forms of fighting, and positional warfare only a secondary form. Sometimes guerilla warfare should be applied rather than mobile warfare and sometimes vice-versa, all according to the concrete objective and subjective conditions at each particular time and place. Because we are short of arms, guerilla warfare will in general be the

most widespread method of fighting employed by our people in the long-term resistance. With the gradual development of the war, our army will gain more experience and we shall have more modern arms, so that mobile warfare will be applied more extensively, until, finally, in the stage of general counter-offensive, positional warfare will play the paramount role.

As they have not yet thoroughly grasped the principles of the above mentioned methods of fighting, our regular troops and guerilla forces often commit considerable tactical blunders. The Thi Nghe battle at the end of 1945, the Nha Trang and Thua Thien battles in early 1946, the battle to the west of Hanoi last March and others, showed that in the first stages our troops had a tendency to fight a war of position. They therefore suffered losses or became bewildered when attacked by the enemy. On the other hand, where we shift rapidly and in good time to guerilla and mobile warfare, we not only avoid losses but are also able to stay the advance of the enemy and to defeat him.

Guerilla warfare must be the tactic of the people as a whole, not of the army alone.

To achieve good results in guerilla and mobile warfare, we must mobilize the people to support our armed forces enthusiastically and to fight the enemy together with them. The people are the eyes and ears of the army, they feed and keep our soldiers. It is they who help the army in sabotage and in battle. The people are the water and our army the fish. The people constitute an inexhaustible source of strength for the army. To increase their numbers, the troops must recruit new fighters from among the people. That is

why the entire people must be armed, guerilla movements must be initiated and the actions of the regular army and guerilla forces must be co-ordinated. We must act in such a way that wherever the enemy goes, he meets the resistance forces of the entire Vietnamese people who fight him arms in hand, ready to die rather than return to slavery.

POLITICAL RESISTANCE

Just knowing how to fight, or fighting well, is not enough if we are to defeat the French invaders : it is necessary to have good domestic and foreign policies.

Within the country, the entire people must be united. The anti-French national united front must be consolidated and develop daily in the struggle against the aggressors.

In order to wage a long resistance war, the entire people must be united and of one mind. The same principle applies to our people as to a bundle of chopsticks : if the chopsticks are bound together it is difficult to break them. But if they are separated, nothing is easier than to snap them all one by one.

But uniting the whole people doesn't mean that we blithely shut our eyes to a handful of Vietnamese traitors who willingly betray their country, and permit them to sabotage the resistance, become the henchmen of the enemy, and deceive and massacre our compatriots. Fighting the enemy and crushing the national traitors are two tasks which must be undertaken simultaneously.

At present, the French invaders are striving to deceive and divide our people. To sow discord between our Catholic

and non-Catholic compatriots they have their agents tell the Catholic patriots that the Viet Minh are Communists, that the Ho Chi Minh Government is a Viet Minh Government and that to follow the Ho Chi Minh Government is to follow the Communists. They say that, should the impossible happen and the resistance be victorious, our Catholic compatriots would be forbidden to worship God, the churches would be burnt and the crucifixes destroyed. "Better to lose one's country than one's God ; better to be enslaved than to face eternal damnation".

Such misleading propaganda must be eradicated. Communism is a doctrine that hides neither its ends nor its means. But it is not our intention here to explain what Communism is. Our Catholic compatriots should nevertheless realize that the Ho Chi Minh Government is a government of the entire people, approved by the National Assembly. This war of resistance is a revolutionary war of the entire people led by our government. It is not a private concern of the Communists or the Viet Minh Front. The Communists and the Viet Minh Front have the sole aim of gaining freedom and independence for Viet Nam. This resistance will bring democratic freedoms to our people, including freedom of belief and freedom of religion. It is neither the Viet Minh nor the Communists, but the French invaders who bomb pagodas, desecrate the cross, and use churches as military posts from which to massacre our people ; who spurn Christian charity, rape Catholic nuns and kill Buddhist bonzes. "To love one's country is to serve God". But how is it possible to love our country and serve God if we do not fight the invaders ?

The French aggressors are doing their best to sow discord between the people of the South and those of the North, between the Thai, Muong, E-De, Mong, Dao, Tay, and Nung peoples and the majority people, between rich and poor. But facts have proved that they are doing so in order to occupy Nam Bo; they are using Vietnamese to fight Vietnamese, cutting Viet Nam up into pieces, inciting the minority peoples to oppose the majority people; they are egging the Thai and Nung peoples on to fight the majority Kinh people, and are using the latter to oppose the Thai and Nung peoples, to enable the colonialists to subjugate them; all and in ease enjoy the position of "masters of the country".

This resistance aims at wiping out the French colonialists, to win independence and national unification, and bring freedom and happiness to the entire people. The lives and property of the people will be respected. The living conditions of the labouring masses will be improved. Like all other democratic freedoms, freedom of belief is guaranteed. Our compatriots of the Centre, North and South are one: all nationalities — minority as well as majority — are equal. The aim of the resistance is clear. The French invaders cannot fool our people!

The French aggressors even declare that they are "fighting the Viet Minh and not Viet Nam". But in fact they are jeopardizing the lives and property of the Vietnamese people — Viet Minh or non-Viet Minh — quite indiscriminately! They seek to divide the Viet Minh from the entire people, because they know that the Viet Minh consists of the most patriotic and determined elements in the country.

They are the most faithful to the people's interests. They are ready to make any sacrifice in the struggle for national independence and unification. The enemy is well aware that he can subdue our people only if they succeed in isolating the Viet Minh and inciting the people to oppose them.

On the one hand, the French invaders deceive and divide our people. On the other, they massacre and rob them. Drawing on their own experience of the enemy our people clearly recognize their hypocrisy and are closing their ranks tighter every day in support of the Viet Minh, joining it and the Lien Viet Front, and fighting the enemy together with the Viet Minh. We thank the French for having helped "Viet Minh-ize the Vietnamese people" by their words and deeds.

There was already a basis for our national resistance front which the reactionary French colonialists unwittingly consolidated and encouraged by violating the right to live of the Vietnamese people. We must help the people to understand the intentions of the French aggressors and make skilful use of every possibility, big or small, of contributing to the resistance; thus assuring the success of our policy of wide national unity.

At home, national unity must be maintained; the national united front against the French colonialists and their lackeys must be consolidated and developed. This front must be built on the cornerstone of the alliance of the workers and peasants, and must be led by the working class.

What must we do in the field of foreign policy? We must isolate the enemy and win more friends. We must act in such a way that the French people and the peoples

of the French colonies will actively support us and oppose the reactionary French colonialists, in such a way that all peace-loving forces in the world will defend us and favour the aims of our resistance. That is why French prisoners-of-war and all foreign residents in our country must be well-treated (this does not include the bandits and spies who use their situation as foreign residents to work as lackeys of the French colonialists).

The French people and soldiers have been deceived by the reactionary French colonialists and led to believe that it was we who violated the Agreements and attacked France first. We must make them understand by showing them that it was the reactionary French colonialists who trampled on the Agreements and attacked us first. Not only do they want to exploit our people again but they are also exploiting the French people. To fight the French colonialists is to help the French people directly, because while fighting we weaken our common enemy. The French people and French soldiers should oppose the war in every way. Oppose the sending of troops to Indochina, oppose military expenditure for the reconquest of Viet Nam. These are actions which are completely contrary to the new Constitution of France. They should demand that the French Government engage in peaceful negotiations with the Ho Chi Minh Government. The French soldiers in Viet Nam should demand repatriation and protest against the setting up of a puppet Government. They should fraternize with the Vietnamese People's Army, and turn their arms against the reactionary French colonialists, joining the ranks of the Vietnamese army and people in order to fight side by side with them for the overthrow

of the common enemy of our two peoples. This will enable an independent and unified Viet Nam to form a voluntary alliance with the new France on the basis of equality and mutual benefit.

We must make the people in the French colonies realize that while we are fighting the reactionary French colonialists, we are also fighting for them to a certain extent. They should therefore seize the opportunity presented by the predicament of the French colonialists in Viet Nam to rise up and regain their own independence.

We must make the progressive forces all over the world realize that we are making sacrifices and exerting efforts for the cause of world peace and democracy too. In the struggle for peace and democracy, these forces cannot remain indifferent to our struggle, or support Viet Nam by words only where deeds are required. They must arraign France before the tribunal of world opinion, to judge her and compel her to stop the war of rapine in Indochina, a war completely contrary to the ideals of the United Nations Charter. Moreover, they should help the Indochinese peoples from the material point of view as well as giving them moral support so that the reactionary French colonialists, sworn enemies of world peace and democracy, may be defeated rapidly.

Seen from the political point of view, the tasks of the resistance are extremely heavy. To fulfil them, we must on the one hand consolidate the democratic republican State, strengthen the machinery of resistance, and unify all military, administrative, and popular organizations in the whole country; all patriotic organizations must be developed, and the leadership of the people's resistance consolidated; military

questions must be subordinated to political leadership. On the other hand, all traitors, wreckers, opportunists, cowards, bureaucrats, militarist and factionalist elements must be thrown out of the resistance organizations, traitors must be punished, the seeds of disruption and division among the people destroyed, and the political rear consolidated to the highest degree. The following goals must be our constant concern :

Unity of the entire people,

Isolation of the enemy,

Victory of the resistance.

VII

ECONOMIC RESISTANCE

To fight the enemy effectively, we must eat our fill, be healthy and have great qualities of endurance. That is why particular importance must be attached to economic problems and the people's living conditions.

To enable the people to fight the enemy resolutely, we must improve their living standards, while fighting. If the people are poverty-stricken and lack adequate political consciousness, they may be tricked by the enemy.

The enemy is not fighting us in the military and political fields alone, but also in the economic field. They blockade and pillage us, and sabotage our arrangements for food supplies, for instance. We must fight them in the economic field too. An economic plan for the long-term resistance must be drawn up. The economy of the resistance war must be built so that we gradually make inroads on the enemy's economy.

Our resistance in the economic field consists of two parts : to wreck the enemy's economy, and build our own.

How can we wreck the enemy's economy in our country ? There are many ways : blowing up his machines, warehouses and lines of communication and transport, so that he cannot enjoy in peace the wealth extorted from the people by

exploitation ; opposing his policy of rapine, not allowing him to "use war to feed war". (This manœuvre, incidentally, is not peculiar to the Japanese fascists, it is the common practice of all aggressors).

We should act in such a way that wherever the enemy goes, he meets scenes of scorched earth, with nothing left for him to pillage. The further the enemy extends the front, the greater the danger to his food supplies, and the more the war becomes a burden to him.

If we never budge an inch from the people, if we arm the whole nation, if we become masters of the countryside, not only can we check the enemy's attempts to destroy our economy, but we can also destroy his. At the same time, we will build our own economy.

The building of our economy must be directed in accordance with the two following principles :

1. National reconstruction to be carried out simultaneously with the war of resistance.
2. Self-reliance in every field.

Concerning the first principle, we should keep in mind that we must not wait until after the victory of the resistance to start the reconstruction of our country. We must carry out reconstruction in the course of the war of resistance itself : we will reconstruct in order to be able to carry on the resistance.

During the period of the resistance our economy is a war economy in form, and a new-democracy economy in content. This means on the one hand that the people's economic life must meet the conditions of war ; every economic activity must aim at guaranteeing the supply of the front, and

providing the whole people with all the commodities necessary to carry on the long resistance (war form of our economy). On the other hand, individual economy, cooperative economy and State economy¹ must be developed simultaneously. We should make skilful use of the co-operative economy as a link between the individual economy and the State economy. We should improve the living standards of the people to enable them to participate enthusiastically in developing the economy and supplying the army and our compatriots (new-democracy content of our economy).

In our resistance economy, to what should we attach most importance ?

The development of agriculture must receive our closest attention, because our country lives by agriculture. Nearly all the needs of the people are supplied by agriculture. Then come handicrafts. We must encourage handicrafts and small-scale industry to produce articles capable of being substituted for industrial products. Commerce ranks third. We should develop small-scale trade, and organize and carefully control foreign trade. At the same time, we must act in such a way that the co-operatives shoulder an important part of the tasks connected with distribution and consumption. For us, industry can rank only fourth, although it plays quite an important role in war in modern times. We should pay particular attention to industries producing weapons, repair industries and those which process the raw materials we have available.

1. Apart from these forms, we may organize yet another form, that of "joint State-private enterprises", in which the State and private individuals invest capital together.

Keen attention must be paid to the development of cattle-breeding alongside agriculture, and of transport alongside handicrafts. The war is extended every day, roads and bridges are destroyed daily: if we do not establish a system of transport adapted to the new situation, production and distribution of products will suffer disastrously.

As far as the second principle, that of self-reliance, is concerned, we realize clearly that our country is an agricultural country, and that even if we lose all the cities and suffer enemy blockade, we will still be able to ensure our self-supply. (This does not mean that the enemy will be permitted to occupy all the cities, or completely blockade us). Our country is endowed with plenty of raw materials and manpower; the spirit of our people is high; and we can build a self-sufficient economy along the following lines:

Raising production norms — We must improve techniques and methods of production, reducing the number of idlers. Except in special cases, soldiers, students and office employees should also take part in production to a certain extent.

Producing according to war-time needs — During the resistance war, we produce what we need, not luxury goods. For example, we produce rice, salt, cloth, tools, guns, ammunition, medicines, paper, etc., but not scent and toilet soap.

Building the State economy and the co-operative economy according to a plan. In our present conditions, we cannot have a completely planned economy, but branches of production and distribution must at any rate be readjusted and put under unified guidance, although individual initiative is free

to develop. Enterprises managed by the State and all co-operatives can produce according to a plan.

To achieve good results from our resistance in the economic field, we must define an economic policy for this period. In our opinion, that policy should meet the following needs:

1. *To increase production.* We should initiate a movement of patriotic competition in increasing production, arouse the people's eagerness in labour, and mobilize all our manpower, all our material and financial resources. Except in some special areas, militia men must stay close to the fields to plough them. (When the enemy comes we fight, when he goes we plough). The aim of raising production during the war of resistance consists in the three points of *eating one's fill, dressing adequately, and having strength to fight.* Work exchange and co-operation in production must be encouraged and developed. We should transfer the refugees, particularly those who have production skills, from the regions ravaged by war to areas that are relatively safe, have land available but lack manpower, in order to set up farms for shock-production. We must pay particular attention to the supply of rice (at the start), salt, medicines, oxen, buffaloes and farming implements to such farms.

2. *To increase income, cut costs, and practise thrift.* A war budget must be prepared. The two main sources of income for this budget are the various taxes, and the income from the State enterprises. Taxes must be collected according to the democratic principle: the rich pay more, the poor pay less, the very poor are exempt from tax. To balance the budget we must increase income and bring down

expenditure. A policy of thrift must be put into effect. In the administrative and military departments, in all organizations and among the people, non-essential expenditures must be done away with. The number of civil servants will be reduced. If we must spend, we will spend boldly; but our spending must be reasonable, all appropriations must be fully justified.

3. *To gradually lighten the people's burden.* Taxes and rates, surcharges, etc. must be reduced to lighten the burden borne by the people. At the same time, we must carry out our land policy step by step with a view to improving the peasants' life, because the peasants are the greatest reservoir of manpower and of material strength for the resistance.

4. *Exhortation, reward and punishment.* Even when our plans are good, if we do not know how to mobilize and encourage the people to carry them out, the people will certainly not take part in the work in large numbers. In every field there are people who work well and people who work badly. To forgo rewards and punishments would be an error. That is why we should organize competitions of products and crafts, institute medals to be awarded to Labour Heroes, talented inventors and those who are rich in goodwill. At the same time, we should severely punish those who steal public property, speculators, smugglers, and saboteurs; and confiscate the property of national traitors and use such property to improve the people's life.

5. *Consolidating the currency, stabilizing prices.* We must maintain the value of our currency, avoid inflation, and use Vietnamese currency in production. (We will exchange home products and goods for necessary foreign goods which we

cannot yet produce ourselves). The Government must ensure the supply of staple commodities such as rice, salt, cloth, etc., to all government departments, to the troops and to the people, keeping prices down.

To put into effect the above-mentioned policies, we must fight against wrong ideas concerning economy, and against the tendency to demagoguery advocating the abolition of all taxes. This error was committed in many places after the August uprising. We must also struggle against the tendency towards extorting excessively heavy money contributions from the people; against planlessness, working in a happy-go-lucky manner, scratching where it itches, paying attention to the pipe only where it is leaking, or making grandiose plans and extensive programmes without being able to achieve them. We should fight the tendency to passivity, as it exists among those who do not think about developing the economy and further exploiting our rich resources, but only about practising extreme stinginess. We must oppose waste, disorder, corruption and fraud, fighting against the "leftist" deviation in economic affairs of those who can think only of "agricultural collectivization" and the "building of a heavy industry", while neglecting agriculture and handicrafts, and who thus waste considerable time and effort in elaborating illusory plans which can in no way be carried out in the present conditions.

VIII

CULTURAL RESISTANCE

Our all-out resistance requires more than resistance in the military, political, and economic fields. We must also wage resistance in the cultural field. Culture is also a battle-front of our people.

The tasks of the resistance in the cultural field consist in :

1. Doing away with the obscurantist culture introduced by the French colonialists to strengthen their domination.
2. Building a new-democracy culture for Viet Nam.

How is the obscurantist culture of the French colonialists to be done away with ? (And let us never confuse this kind of culture with the genuine and progressive culture of the French people).

Of course, our people's resistance is wiping out the evil influence of this reactionary culture. The slavish, cowardly and parasitic ways of French times are being wiped out. The moral and intellectual fetters used by the French colonialists are being smashed. But we must realize that the colonialist culture remains prevalent in the habits and thoughts of our cadres and people. The French colonialists will continue to deceive our people as long as they remain in our country. Every day, the pamphlets, books, newspapers, magazines, speeches and radio of the enemy sow their poison

among our people, so that there are still some to be found among us who believe that the enemy has good intentions. There are still people who have doubts as to our final victory, or even believe that the enemy's "mission" is to fight us in order to re-establish peace and order, to bring the light of civilization to our people, and so on. These myths, in cultural disguise, are backed by the policy of armed terror and economic corruption, and have been of some service to the enemy, particularly in the occupied zones.

This tendency is very dangerous and we must resolutely fight it.

All artists and writers, all teachers and all intellectuals must now take part in the resistance, open up a cultural-front and attack the cultural strongholds of the enemy.

At present, our engineers together with the workers are striving all-out in the rear to produce arms, and to establish workshops and production camps to produce what is necessary for the army and the people. Doctors, medical men and students are taking care of the health of the cadres and the masses. A number of architects are taking part in the construction of defence works, school and office buildings and reception centres for evacuees. They are participating in the resistance in this way.

All our teachers are striving to free the people from illiteracy and to train cadres to serve the long resistance and national reconstruction. Our musicians are writing martial music and inspiring compositions. Our poets are writing lines which arouse love for the country and hatred for the enemy. A number of artists and painters are zealously participating in

propaganda work for the resistance. This is their way of taking part in the resistance.

All political figures, journalists and writers are urging the army and people to unite for the struggle, clearly pointing out the advantages and disadvantages of various political lines, proposing tactics and policies. Is resistance of this kind any less important than going to the front under arms?

But all this is not enough. Further efforts must be made. There are still many shortcomings in our cultural activity. Not all the cultural forces at our disposal, the talented writers, scientists and artists, are fully mobilized yet. Numbers of cultural workers want to work, but do not know what to do; there are even people who are still indifferent. Those cultural workers who have boldly taken part in the resistance, and are serving the army and mingling with the people, have made progress. But we feel that they do not have a clear-cut guiding principle and plan yet.

While the enemy is tramping all over our fatherland, and the whole nation is struggling heroically, every cultural activity must be in line with this slogan:

“Love for the country and hatred for the enemy.”

All cultural workers must celebrate and work for the renewal of the collective heroism of the people, arousing the greatest possible hatred among our army and people for the enemy, so that they will advance eagerly to fight the enemy, preferring death to surrender. Their work must aim at welding our people into one bloc, in support of the Government, with firm confidence in national salvation, not losing heart when faced with difficulties and hardships. Their work

must aim at doing everything possible to dishearten the enemy troops, lowering their morale, causing them to leave the enemy and to pass over to our ranks, to the right path.

The measures to be taken to achieve the above aims are numerous. Our cultural workers must make frequent use of the simplest forms, capable of winning a ready response from the masses; for instance: newspapers (particularly wall-newspapers), leaflets, posters, sketches, pictures, talks, songs, dances, etc.

We are not afraid to use the forms of propaganda of the old culture which are familiar to the broad masses, the forms most effective in influencing them; for example, the various folk song styles such as *Trong quan*, *Quan ho*, *Hat dum* and *Hat boi*, should be widely used, provided that we give them a new content and a new artistic spirit.

Using culture in service of the resistance in such a way is to build a new culture for the country.

In our opinion, that culture must be based on the three following principles:

- a — It must be national;
- b — It must be scientific;
- c — It must be popular.

Whatever is contrary to national, scientific and popular principles, either in form or in content, must be eliminated.

The war is in part helping us in this work. Indeed, this war is a great upheaval. It helps us to boldly “revolutionize” culture. Big events are taking place: many towns are being destroyed, townspeople are evacuating to the countryside.

The towns, which were formerly the cultural centres, are now occupied by the enemy and are being turned into dark and savage places, abounding in the depraved, obscurantist "culture" of the aggressors. In contrast, the countryside, formerly a dark and backward place, is now becoming civilized and progressive. Culture was formerly something enjoyed by a handful of rich people in the cities; it has now, in a short time, come closer to the broad masses. In order to serve the Fatherland and the people, cultural workers must create works which are simple and well-adapted to the level of the people, who, for the most part, are illiterate, or have only very little education. (Their works must be popular). In this time of war, old elaborate forms and habits, ill-adapted to the new times, bureaucratic styles of work for instance, tend to disappear; in the resistance, every task must be rationally and economically performed, and it must serve a purpose. What is not scientific tends to disappear. (Our cultural works must be scientific). The resistance stirs up our hatred against everything anti-national, against everything which apes the colonialists. In this situation, cultural workers are rapidly able to gain an understanding of their slavish diseases of the "half-breed French" and the "half-breed Chinese" in order to cure themselves. (Our cultural works must be national).

The opportunities are good. The conditions of the resistance are very favourable to the building of a new culture. It requires only that the Vietnamese cultural workers take bold steps and avail themselves of the opportunity to develop Vietnamese culture on the basis of new democracy. Here are their practical tasks :

- a — To use art and literature for propaganda and for mobilization of the forces of the resistance ;
- b — To struggle against illiteracy ; develop education ;
- c — To build a new life ;
- d — To popularize the practice of hygiene among the people ;
- e — To wipe out all slavish, colonialist remnants in the cultural field ;
- f — To develop a culture having a national, scientific and popular character.

In order to advance, our cultural circles must engage in severe self-criticism, and give up their tendencies to arrogance, contempt for and aloofness from the masses. They should shake off their tendencies towards selfishness, avoidance of difficulties and risks, wavering and opportunism.

Regarding traditional culture and foreign cultures, we should refrain from harsh criticism, but we should not follow their examples blindly either. We should have a critical spirit, assimilate what is good in these cultures, and reject what is bad.

In this great struggle, those who fail to keep pace with the movement, who do not adapt themselves to the rapidly changing situation, will certainly be left far behind. Our cultural workers should pay close attention to this fact.

IX

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE WAR

We have so far described four aspects (military, political, economic and cultural) of the war against the French. On the basis of the military situation in our country during these last months, we now take up the question of the characteristics of this war :

War of interlocking combs — Our war of resistance is a people's war in which regular army, militia and guerilla forces combine and fight together. Regular forces launch frontal attacks and guerillas fight from the rear, thus catching the enemy between two fires. Sometimes the regular army is obliged to withdraw to avoid losses, but then militia forces and a small part of the regular army split up into guerilla groups and sneak behind the enemy's lines to fight ; or considerable regular forces attack quickly under cover of night, penetrating very deeply into enemy-held areas, launching lightning attacks on bases considered by the enemy to be quite secure. After fulfilling their task, they withdraw according to a plan, foiling the enemy's attempts to encircle and annihilate them. The attacks launched by our troops on Ha Dong (March 20, 1947 and April 13, 1947), on Haiphong (March 22, 1947) and recently on the Viet Nam University Students' Hostels in Hanoi (April 20, 1947) long after our withdrawal from these cities, are striking examples of this.

As for the enemy, they use motorized infantry to penetrate our zones in depth at several points, or work round our positions over a considerable area, hoping to encircle and annihilate our troops, destroy our bases, plunder the people's property and sow bewilderment. Sometimes they send occupation forces of paratroops and commandos to cities or bases in our rear far from the battlefield, in order to hinder our communications and supply lines, or to open another front in our rear. The paratroop raid made by the enemy on Hoa Binh on April 15, 1947 merits attention in this connection.

Thus the enemy attacks deep behind our lines, and we launch attacks deep behind his. This war has the characteristic of two combs whose teeth are interlocked.

"Rough-and-tumble" war — In many regions in the delta, the enemy fights us not only in the military field but also strives to destroy us in the economic field ; they pillage crops and destroy harvests, hoping to drive our people to surrender from sheer poverty. In certain very narrow regions pressed between mountains and sea (such as the Binh Tri Thien zone and the southernmost part of Central Viet Nam), the enemy attacks us at both ends, cutting up the regions into pieces in which he launches mopping-up operations.

In these regions, experience has taught us that to avoid disintegration our troops should quickly abandon their uniforms, mingle with the people, distribute a part of their arms to them, organize them and the militia forces in using every means to fight the enemy. They should cling to the rice-fields and struggle against the enemy to win the right to live. The army and the people must unite into one bloc

and be ready to fight to the death against the Expeditionary Corps at any time and anywhere.

Thus the war is a violent, "rough-and-tumble" one.

War without battle-fronts — The result of the interlocking and disorderly war described above is a war without battle-fronts between the enemy troops and ourselves or a war in which the battlefront is not clearly defined. The character of the fighting is constantly changing. Our army and militia forces fight the enemy everywhere, sometimes in his rear, sometimes right in his midst. Sometimes, the enemy advances into our zone, our forces strike at him from behind and at his flanks rather than launching frontal attacks, wearing him out by forcing him to ward off blows.

The battle-front is quite extensive; but even quite close to Hanoi, Haiphong, Saigon, Cholon, our troops are constantly attacking enemy posts. As we arm the entire people and develop guerilla movements day by day, the enemy has to fight for every step forward; our troops and guerillas open a battle-front wherever they encounter the enemy. Neither in areas under our control, nor even in his own occupied zones can he consolidate his rear.

At any given time every guerilla base or nucleus in enemy-held regions will have its front and rear lines. The positions of these bases, and their front and rear lines, are constantly changing.

A war without rear lines, without clear front lines — this is another characteristic of the war against the French colonialists.

War of encirclement — Due to his possession of naval forces the enemy controls the territorial waters and coastal

regions. He also occupies a number of cities close to the frontier. Thus we are encircled by the enemy. But when all-out war broke out, when he wished to attack us with his forces already stationed on our soil, the cities in which enemy forces were garrisoned and all enemy positions were immediately encircled by our forces.

During the first two months of the battle of Hanoi an unusual reciprocal encirclement carried out by the enemy forces and by our own took place: the enemy encircled us in the centre of the city, and we encircled the enemy in the suburbs.

The enemy seeks to occupy many cities and major communication lines thinking to catch us in a net: but when he breaks through our encirclement around the towns and penetrates into the countryside, or parachutes forces into our free zone, his forces are immediately encircled by ours.

Our guerilla bases in the enemy-held regions can appear to be mere enclaves surrounded by the enemy. But all these guerilla bases, together with the extensive free zones, in fact form a huge het encircling the enemy.

Let us look at the world at large. The enemy seeks to appeal to the imperialist forces to encircle us (D'Argenlieu appeals to the British and Americans for help in fighting the "Vietnamese Communists"). But we, together with the democratic, progressive, peaceful forces the world over, with the oppressed peoples in Asia (first and foremost the Khmer and Lao peoples), with the French people and all the peoples of the French colonies who are struggling for national liberation, are encircling the aggressive French colonialists. The enemy is encircled on our soil, in France, in the French

Union and in the world. We see that he is surrounded many times over. In this mutual encirclement, those who enjoy the support and sympathy of the Indochinese peoples and the peoples the world over will carry the day.

War of scorched earth — Everything the enemy can use against us, everything we cannot hold in our hands, must be burnt or destroyed. That is the principle of "resistance by scorched earth". The scorched earth tactics is not a Vietnamese invention but the scale on which we have applied it has bewildered many people. There are foreigners who think that it is madness for the Vietnamese people, of their own will, to raze towns and villages with their own hands, to set ablaze not only the quarters and storehouses of the enemy, but their own houses as well. No, the Vietnamese people are not mad. They have their reasons for applying scorched-earth tactics to a degree unusual in the history of people's wars :

a) Generally speaking, the Vietnamese people are weaker than the enemy with regard to arms and equipment, that is why they should destroy bridges and roads to check or slow down the advance of the enemy's motorized infantry.

b) It is their indefatigable spirit, their will to victory, that enables the Vietnamese people to make great sacrifices in order to cause difficulties to the enemy and bring his defeat closer. The Vietnamese people realize clearly that the task of sabotage is as important as fighting at the front. Sabotage is a tactic used by a people armed with rudimentary weapons to fight better-equipped aggressors who are more inured to war.

Apart from the above-mentioned factors the scorched-earth tactic brings us other advantages. For instance : it causes the enemy to despair, because each time he thinks he is going to occupy a town or a city, in the end he only takes over heaps of rubble and ashes. It displays to the enemy the determination of our people to wage the war of resistance and to defend their freedom.

The more the French invaders and the Vietnamese traitors curse the tactic of scorched-earth, the more clearly they show us that this tactic hurts them very much : it strikes a vulnerable point, by preventing them from filling their pockets. In their propaganda, their plaint is that our High Command applies scorched-earth tactics "to achieve communism by wiping out the difference between rich and poor". What a crude lie ! Our people know very well that when the last reactionary colonialist is driven out of Viet Nam, with our rich resources, the creative spirit of the toiling people, and with the skilful organization and leadership of the democratic Government, fine buildings and cities of new design will gradually appear on the soil of independent Viet Nam. Moreover, the French invaders pillage our compatriots without discrimination between rich and poor many places now. Is it not they in fact who "are wiping out the difference between rich and poor" ?

Scorched-earth tactics are dictated by the circumstances of the resistance in our country, by the relation of forces between the enemy and ourselves, by the weapons at our disposal and by our spirit. Scorched-earth resistance systematically carried out on a large scale is another characteristic of the present war against the French.

In short, the anti-French war is an utterly destructive and brutal war. The enemy is ferocious and we are fearless. The two sides are engaged in a deadly hand-to-hand fight, determined to decide victory and defeat. The characteristics of this war against the French are therefore truly unusual.

X

THE THREE STAGES OF THE LONG-TERM RESISTANCE

In Chapter V, we dealt with the reasons why we must wage a long resistance, why we must prolong our fight in order to win victory. Our long resistance will pass through three stages :

- 1) The defensive stage,
- 2) The stage of equilibrium,
- 3) The stage of general counter-offensive.

Here we cannot describe in advance all the details of the resistance ; we can only map out general lines.

a) *The defensive stage* — At the beginning because the enemy forces are stronger than ours, the enemy's strategy is offensive and ours is defensive. The enemy occupies a number of towns and main communication lines, the coastal region and some areas of the delta. After waging a fierce resistance and encircling the enemy in these regions our troops are obliged to withdraw to safeguard their forces ; in particularly favourable circumstances, they will lure the enemy to penetrate deep into our rear to attack him.

But we do not always withdraw, letting the enemy freely extend his security zone around the cities under his temporary

control, and consolidate the communications and supply lines between occupied towns.

Our strategy may be defensive, but our tactics and campaigning principles are constantly to attack. In the country as a whole we withdraw to prepared positions; but locally we continue to attack, launching sudden assaults on enemy positions right in the heart of the zones he occupies (for example, the attack on Gia Lam airport on January 16, 1947, the battles in Ha Dong and Haiphong in March and April 1947, etc.).

During this period, the military aim of the enemy is to control the big cities, main communication lines, the coastal region, the frontier and the delta, cut our country up into many parts, and block our supplies and communications, hoping to annihilate our regular forces, and destroy our bases, factories and storehouses. In the political field, they justify their aggressive acts before the people of France and the world with deceitful propaganda, accusing us of violating agreements and attacking them first. At the same time, they try to sow discord between the Viet Minh and the people, to entice evacuated compatriots back to the occupied zones, and to set up puppet administrations in the occupied cities and the areas around them.

To achieve these military and political aims, they mobilize their land and air forces, including motorized infantry, applying the tactics both of positional and mobile warfare, launching lightning attacks, working round our positions, attacking us in pincer movements, launching parachute raids or landing troops to attack us by surprise (the battles in Haiphong and Hai Duong of December 1946, in Thua Thien and

Quang Tri of February 1947, in Ha Dong of March 1947 etc.). At the same time, they buy up Vietnamese national traitors and bandits, trick our Catholic compatriots and followers of the Hoa Hao and Cao Dai sects, and bribe national minority people.

Our forces are still small in number, badly equipped, and not yet inured to war; but they have a high spirit and enjoy the unreserved support of the people. Moreover, they know from the beginning how to apply flexible tactics; that is how on the one hand they can maintain their strength and on the other hand wear out the enemy forces. The latter's prestige falls as they suffer these initial defeats. At the same time, we mobilize the people to rise up in resistance. We strive to consolidate the unity within our ranks, unite the entire people, unmask the enemy, win the sympathy and support of the French people and the people the world over, show them clearly our desire for peace and what circumstances have obliged our people to fight in self-defence.

Our tactics during this stage are as follows: at first, we apply positional warfare in the streets, holding on to every house, every street, every quarter (battles in Hanoi, Nam Dinh, Hue). Then we withdraw from the towns, using positional warfare tactics to bottle the enemy up in the towns for a certain time (battle in Hanoi, etc.). Simultaneously, small units of our forces penetrate the streets and use guerilla warfare to harass the enemy. Guerilla warfare complements and helps positional warfare.

Gradually, the enemy extends his attacks from the big towns, and occupies more towns and communication lines. As this process goes on, the war of positions takes second

place, giving way to guerilla and mobile warfare. From now on positional warfare complements and helps guerilla and mobile warfare. It is still necessary to stop the enemy's advance. But if we have resort only to positional warfare, the enemy will use mobile warfare to work round our positions or encircle us, thus causing us big losses. Generally speaking, during the defensive stage, compared with guerilla warfare, mobile warfare plays the leading part. But guerilla warfare comes gradually to play the major role towards the end of this state, as the enemy-occupied zones are extended, and the militia and the guerilla movements are developed.

b) *The stage of equilibrium* — Gradually the enemy's forces and our own become equal. Enemy strategy at this stage is to remain on the defensive, while ours is to prepare for the general counter-offensive. Generally speaking, the enemy no longer has sufficient strength to advance. At some point he must call a halt, or make a few steps forward and then withdraw to his former positions. In general, we no longer have to retreat, but we have not yet sufficient strength to take back the lost areas (although we can take back some positions). The two sides seem to be holding each other in the same positions. But the enemy's forces and ours do not only simply watch one another, like the stork and the oyster¹. We continue to carry out local attacks on the enemy-occupied zones. The result of many small attacks is equal to that of a big attack. As for the enemy, he does not remain constantly on the defensive and leave us in peace either. On the contrary,

1. The author refers to a Vietnamese fable: a stork wished to eat an oyster, but the oyster caught its bill and held it firmly. Thus they remained, watching one another, for a long time, until a fisherman arriving on the scene caught them both.

he is constantly carrying out raids in the occupied zones and launching spear-head attacks deep into our free zones.

The military aim of the enemy during this stage is to consolidate his positions and communication lines, use relatively big forces to launch terrorist "mopping up" operations, hoping to "re-establish order" in the occupied zones. He strives to encircle and raze our guerilla bases there, to blockade us, to chop up our free zones into many parts to destroy them. He sends agents into our zone to spy on the garrisoning of our troops, our public services, storehouses, workshops, schools, etc, then to rain bombs on them or direct their henchmen to sabotage them. Their political aim is to set up a central puppet government and an administration in each Ky¹. At the same time they develop the reactionary village organizations, the councils of notables, in order to divide and trick our people into submitting to them. They count on this puppet power and its "armed forces" to repress our movement for national liberation and to plunder our people's belongings. Riding the puppet clique, they hope to enjoy the fruits of their exploitation in peace.

Our own military and political aim during this stage is to wear out the enemy forces, annihilate them piecemeal; sabotage, disturb, give the enemy no peace to exploit the people easily; mobilize the people to wage armed struggle against the puppet administration, oppose the enemy's mopping-up policy; and organize counter-measures against bandits and traitors. Armed propaganda must be carried out on a large scale, particularly in the enemy-held region,

1. Name given by the French to the three parts into which they had divided Viet Nam: North, Centre, and South.

to maintain the people's morale. We must guard against the weariness, discouragement, and tendencies to compromise and defeatism which may appear in the ranks of the resistance. Our aim is also to strengthen our forces, training more cadres, producing more weapons, establishing more regular and guerilla forces, developing and consolidating revolutionary organizations, preparing conditions for the switch-over to the stage of general counter-offensive.

Our tactic during this stage is to apply guerilla warfare to the greatest possible extent, with a view to making it difficult for the enemy to eat and sleep, obliging his forces to scatter, tiring them and wearing them out. On the one hand, a part of the regular forces must be set aside to organize guerilla forces with the help of the people and to carry out guerilla warfare. On the other, regular troops must be concentrated at "mobile" key spots, places where the enemy must pass, and where "we can attack while advancing, or keep our position while retreating", at so-called "hinge" points, from which we can attack isolated enemy posts, encircle and annihilate a part of the enemy's forces at the right time, launch sudden attacks on towns where enemy forces are not numerous, and, better still, liberate certain regions when conditions permit.

The regular troops, militia and guerilla forces always co-ordinate their attacks.

Thus, generally speaking and in the country as a whole, during the stage of equilibrium guerilla warfare is the most widespread tactic; mobile warfare takes its place, after a period in which they are both of equal importance. Positional warfare plays the auxiliary role and supports guerilla and

mobile warfare. By the end of this stage, a part of our guerilla units are deployed in mobile warfare, which is thereby reinforced.

This second stage is an extremely hard and complicated one. It is a relatively long but also the key stage, because it is during this stage that we pass from an inferior position to a superior one to advance to the stage of general counter-offensive.

c) *The stage of general counter offensive* — In this stage, since the balance of forces has changed in our favour, our strategy is to launch a general counter-offensive, and the enemy's strategy is defence and retreat.

There are two factors determining our strategy of general counter-offensive. First, the growth in strength of our army and people, and second, the weakening of the enemy and the extreme demoralisation of his troops. It may be that our material forces are still not superior to those of the enemy. Nevertheless, as a result of the special conditions in Indochina, France, in the French colonies and the world over, and the tendency to disintegration of enemy morale, we can switch over to the stage of general counter-offensive, granted even that our material forces are relatively weaker than the enemy's.

For example, as a result of the long war the enemy troops become weary and discouraged and are tormented by homesickness. The French economy and finances are exhausted; supplying the army is difficult, the French troops have to put up with privations, the French people do not want the war in Viet Nam to go on any longer. The movement against the war and against the diehards in France grows stronger

and more fierce. The peoples in the colonies rise up in active opposition to French rule. World opinion severely condemns France, which is isolated diplomatically. The world movement for peace and democracy scores great successes, etc. Such factors would have considerable influence on our liberation struggle, and create many favourable conditions for us in launching the general counter-offensive.

As for us, although our material resources are not yet adequate, our fighting spirit soars constantly higher. Our army and people become more united. The solidarity of the entire people is strengthened daily.

With such subjective and objective conditions, the success of our general counter-offensive can be guaranteed.

During this stage, the enemy surrenders many positions and withdraws to entrench himself in the big cities. He will possibly hold false negotiations with us with a view to gaining time, and will use delaying tactics while waiting for direct and more active assistance from reactionaries the world over. As for us, our consistent aim is that the whole country should rise up and go over to the offensive on all fronts, completely defeat the enemy and achieve true independence and unification.

As far as tactics are concerned during this stage mobile warfare plays the outstanding role at first, and is complemented and supported by guerilla warfare. Guerilla warfare is rapidly and extensively transformed into mobile warfare (many guerilla groups gathered together form units analogous to those of the regular forces and apply mobile warfare). Mobile warfare is in its turn transformed into positional warfare. Battles for cities and strong points take place all

the time, and finally after a number of campaigns, mobile warfare changes into positional warfare, which plays the predominant role in the last, decisive phase.

Our troops concentrate rapidly, act vigorously on the offensive and launch a series of well-planned lightning attacks on the cities and the enemy positions to encircle and annihilate them. In brief, we throw all our forces throughout the country into the battle to crush the enemy completely and win back the whole of our territory! The machinery of enemy rule temporarily set up in our country is smashed to pieces by our army and people. And at the bottom of the scrap-heap of that machinery lie the rotten corpses of the puppet traitors. This third stage, although the shortest, is also the most victorious and valiant.

In a word, our long resistance will develop through the following stages :

- a) First stage - strategy : defensive ; tactics : attack.
- b) Second stage - strategy : seesaw struggle (preparing for counter-offensive) ; tactics : attack.
- c) Third stage - strategy and tactics : counter-offensive (general counter-offensive).

These are the three stages of our long resistance war. In what stage are we now ? On a national scale, we are in the first stage. But, in the South particularly where the resistance has been going on for a long time, we will switch over to the second stage soon. In fact, there are no clear dividing lines between the three stages. The later stage originates in the former. The former stage creates conditions for the later stage.

In the future, will there be any change in this three-stage war?

There may be changes: changes in duration but not in the stages themselves. There will be no change if the French colonialists are blind and stubborn in their schemes to re-occupy Viet Nam. Even if the reactionary French colonialists receive support in the course of the war through the intervention of international reaction, the three stages will remain unchanged in general outlines. But if we wage a powerful resistance, if the uprisings and movements for liberation in the French colonies in Africa are intensified and cause France many difficulties, if the movement for peaceful negotiation with Viet Nam now under way in France becomes stronger every day, if the French soldiers and legionaries in Viet Nam oppose the war, and France's already faltering economy and finances become exhausted; under the pressure of these factors, it is possible that in certain conditions the democratic parties in France may hold negotiations with us in order *to save the situation*. In that case, our long resistance will be interrupted by new talks, and that is precisely *one of its characteristics*¹. However, as long as the French colonialists remain in our country, and we have not yet completed the third stage, we cannot obtain genuine independence and unification.

1. Since the beginning of the resistance (September 1945), there have been two periods of negotiations between France and Viet Nam.

XI

OUR DIFFICULTIES AND THOSE OF THE FRENCH

The long-term resistance will be very hard, but it will certainly be victorious. That is our opinion and the common opinion of our compatriots.

We should overcome the tendency to groundless optimism, the inclination to think that everything will be plain sailing. We should guard against the tendency to underestimate the enemy and overestimate our own forces; such tendencies leave us off our guard, leave us indifferent and unprepared, make us slacken our efforts, or cause us to lose our heads when we score the least success.

We should be fully aware that this resistance is a hard and fierce struggle; a long and painful trial. We must have courage and patience; we must make energetic efforts if we are to be able to hold out. We must clench our teeth and rise above ourselves to overcome all difficulties and win final victory.

Our difficulties in this resistance are many!

We have to give up a part of our territory and allow our sphere of action to be narrowed down. We will lose several thriving commercial cities, several major communication lines and even parts of our rich plains. Countless families will thus

be broken up, scattered, and deprived of their means of livelihood!

Thousands of our finest young people in the flower of youth have had to sacrifice themselves for the country! Hundreds of talented and experienced cadres have sacrificed their lives for the fatherland! If the war is prolonged there will be mountains of bones and rivers of blood. In some places, due to violent enemy raids, and our own lack of vigilance, we have suffered losses in men and arms with our storehouses pillaged, our countryside devastated.

In the enemy-held regions, the people suffer terrorism, rape, destruction, pillage. Traitors and bandits harass the people day and night poking their noses into everything.

In consequence of the economic blockade, if we do not do our utmost to increase production and to establish adequate organization for the distribution of goods, we will meet difficulties in supplying some regions.

Faced with the enemy's manœuvres to divide us politically, if we do not strengthen our solidarity and do our work of persuasion, there will be misunderstanding and discord between Catholics and non-Catholics, between majority and minority people, there may even be fratricidal conflicts.

Certain international reactionary forces may intervene in this war and temporarily tip the scales in favour of the French colonialists.

All this is not to mention natural calamities, floods and the epidemics that usually go with war!

The above-mentioned difficulties usually accompany war in any country. Our people must be determined to overcome every obstacle!

Pessimists get discouraged at the least difficulty. They forget that our country is an agricultural country with rich resources which are easily exploited; our people are industrious and thrifty, the overwhelming majority of them live by farming and will never starve through the loss of the cities (as we have said already in dealing with resistance in the economic field).

Our territory is relatively small. Our population is relatively small. But the enemy lives thousands of miles from our country. Moreover, he must scatter his forces to defend many places in the French Union and thus cannot concentrate them to annihilate us.

Enemy terror will in fact frighten a few people, but in general it will arouse the deep hatred of our people. The deceptive propaganda of the enemy is indeed dangerous to us; but then his greed and his barbarous methods straight away unmask his hypocrisy before our people's disgust. Eighty years of slavery and five years under the double yoke of the French and Japanese have driven our people closely together in united struggle to the end: they have resolved never to live under the same sky with the invaders. In the course of nearly two years, the people's power has brought to our people freedom and some important economic and cultural gains; therefore, our people are prepared to make sacrifices in their determination to preserve the gains of the republican regime.

Thanks to guerilla tactics and their eagerness our people can to a certain extent make good our deficiency in arms and munitions: they can seize enemy weapons and turn

them on the enemy. While fighting, they can produce still more weapons.

For nearly a century, the French invaders have massacred the men of talent of our nation without let-up. But "young shoots replace the old bamboo". From generation to generation, our people have fought unremittingly for independence. Men of talent have passed the torch on from one to the other. And our sacred resistance of today is forging a whole generation of heroes! if the enemy murders one of our gifted sons, many others will be ready to replace him.

Cowards are generally blind or have only a limited view of things. They see only our difficulties, but not what we can do to overcome them. They see only our weaknesses, but not those of the enemy.

And when we look at the enemy, what do we see? France is now confronted with four great difficulties:

1. After the Second World War, France was economically and financially run down. France is short of coal; she must restrict the running of the machines in her factories. This year, France is short of 600,000 tons of wheat, and she has not even the money to buy abroad to make good the deficiency. The regular budget and extraordinary expenditures in 1947 resulted in a total deficit of 285,000 million francs. France has as yet recovered only to a small extent from the ravages of war; yet she must spend hundreds of millions of francs on the war in Viet Nam. This situation is having very serious consequences for the supplies to the French Expeditionary Corps.

2. The political situation in France is confused. The de Gaulle clique are agitating for the establishment of a party,

and aim to rely on foreign reaction to overthrow the republican regime. The anti-war movement has been launched. In debates on Viet Nam at the sessions of the French National Assembly in March and May, the Communist Party has clearly expressed its opposition to the policy of using force to re-establish the colonial regime in our country, and opposed the war expenditures. On March 25, 1947, the General Confederation of Labour organized many demonstrations embracing millions of people throughout France, with the slogan: "Immediate negotiations with Viet Nam".

The anti-war movement in France is sure to grow considerably in the future.

3. The situation in the French African colonies is constant turmoil. On March 29, 1947, the people of Madagascar rose up in opposition to the French; the insurrection is expanding daily. On April 8, 1947, hostilities broke out between the Algerian people and the French in the Kabylia region. On the night of April 7, 1947, at Casablanca (Morocco), there were many hundred killed and wounded in a fight between Arabs and the Senegalese soldiers of the French. In French West Africa, on April 19, 1947, railwaymen went on strike, and at the end of April the people demonstrated in front of the palace of the French Governor, etc. The movement of struggle for independence is spreading in the member countries of the French Union.

4. The peoples in Southeast Asia have shown their indignation at French aggression in Viet Nam. The Indian, Burmese, Malayan and Indonesian peoples have expressed their sympathy for us. In mid-April 1947, the World Federation of Democratic Youth session held in India decided to support

Viet Nam and established a programme of action aimed at pressuring France to cease hostilities in Viet Nam. Thus, we can see that the opinion of honest people in the world against French colonialist aggression will gradually isolate France in the international arena.

And this is only the beginning of France's difficulties. If France does not negotiate with us soon, these difficulties will grow to such an extent that France will be powerless to overcome them. Why? Because the more France fights Viet Nam, the more she will suffer losses in manpower and material resources, the more hardships the French people will endure, the more the anti-war movement in France and the revolutionary movement in the French colonies will develop, and the more strongly the democratic world will condemn French colonial policy. It is just as French Premier Ramadier said on April 27, 1947: "*France is like a drowning man gasping for air*".

These words correspond exactly to both the financial and economic situation of France, and to her political situation. Ramadier also said:

"If we do not react, we will sink"¹.

But in our opinion, the only way for France to avoid "sinking" is to negotiate with Viet Nam and recognize the national rights of the Vietnamese people and those of other countries in the French Union. This way France will not fall into the arms of the American capitalists and simply be sold out to the Yankees.

1. These words of Ramadier were designed to appeal for help from the U.S.A. and to prepare French opinion for acceptance of U.S. imperialist assistance, which will mean that France will be subservient to the U.S. But they also clearly show how critical the situation is for France.

We have the necessary conditions to overcome all difficulties in our country. All we need is for our people to be patient, single-minded and skilful, work out plans for every task, fight with determination and increase production.

In the course of the war of resistance, these difficulties will diminish with our efforts. These difficulties exist in our own country; we can concentrate our forces to minimize them. Moreover, we enjoy the assistance of our allies in the world: the French people, the peoples in the French colonies, and the forces of peace, democracy and socialism headed by the Soviet Union; thus, it is entirely possible for us to overcome our difficulties.

As for the French difficulties, some exist in France itself, some in Viet Nam, others in the countries of the French Union, and others in the world in general. France cannot concentrate her forces on overcoming these complicated and scattered difficulties, especially as she is much weakened following the recent world war. Therefore, if France wants to be an independent and democratic country, and to keep her position as a great power in the world, she has no other way of easing or overcoming these difficulties than to recognize the independence and unification of Viet Nam. This is one more reason why future victory belongs to Viet Nam, and future defeat to France.

XII

BALANCE OF FORCES

In this war as in all other wars, the stronger will carry the day and the weaker will be defeated in the fray. Strength and weakness here mean strength and weakness in the moral as well as the material fields, and are reflected in the strong and weak points of each side. Whichever side has more strong points and fewer weak points will be able to triumph over the other.

It is difficult for the side which has many strong points, in minor matters, and few weaknesses, in major matters, to defeat the other side when it has fewer strong points, but in major matters, and more weaknesses, but in minor matters. The side whose strong points grow and weaknesses diminish as the fighting wears on will be able to defeat the other side, whose strong points diminish and whose weaknesses grow with the fighting.

Therefore, to know which side will win or lose — our people or the French — we have to consider the strong points and the weaknesses of the two sides objectively.

These are our strong points :

a) The aim of our war is just (we are struggling against aggressors in order to recover our freedom).

b) The entire people are united in the National United Front against the French invaders.

c) The morale of our army and people is high (everyone is vying in heroism for national salvation).

d) Our troops are fighting on their native soil to defend their people's interests, and they thus enjoy three advantages : they are used to the climate (*Thien thoi* : the climate is favourable to them), well acquainted with the natural features (*Dia loi* : the terrain is favourable to them) and supported by the people (*Nhan hoa* : the population is favourable to them).

e) We have many allies (the French people, the peoples of the French colonies, the forces of peace, democracy and socialism the world over, support us).

Our weaknesses are as follows :

a) Our weapons are few and rudimentary.

b) Our troops are not numerous and inadequately trained.

c) Our organizational level is inadequate (particularly in the military and economic fields).

d) Propaganda directed to foreign countries is weak.

These are the weaknesses of the enemy :

a) The aim of their war is reactionary (aggression, oppression, exploitation, and this arouses hatred against them).

b) Internal division (the backers of the war and the supporters of negotiations, the reactionary forces and the progressive forces, sharply oppose one another).

c) The low morale of their troops (several facts show that the French soldiers are afraid of death; puppet soldiers, legionaries and French colonial soldiers have deserted and come over to our ranks).

d) Waging an aggressive war in a foreign country, the enemy meets with three disadvantages: they are not used to the climate (lack of a climate favourable to them), not acquainted with the natural features (lack of a terrain favourable to them)¹ not supported by the people (lack of a population favourable to them).

c) They have many enemies and few friends (the British and American imperialists may back them to a certain extent, in weapons, finances, etc., but this is merely a drop in the ocean compared with their huge expenditures, because France must heal the wounds of war at home and at the same time meet the expenditures in Indochina, face up to the struggle of the colonial peoples in Africa, the anti-war movement in France and the world peace movement).

f) Finances and economy are in a state of exhaustion (France has not yet been restored after the Second World War, and now has to fight in Viet Nam. That is why her already poor finances and economy are becoming worse).

g) Their forces are limited and have to be scattered throughout the French Union.

Here are the French strong points:

a) Numerous modern arms,

b) Numerous well-trained troops,

1. Though the French invaders have lived for 80 years in our country, they cannot be so well acquainted with our land as our own people.

c) High level of organization,

d) Well-orchestrated propaganda directed to foreign countries.

Comparing the advantages and the disadvantages of the two sides, we notice the following five points:

Firstly, the advantages of Viet Nam are the disadvantages of the French, and *vice versa*.

Secondly, France has more weaknesses than Viet Nam.

Third, France has more weaknesses than strong points.

Fourth, Most of the strong points of Viet Nam are political ones; most of the French strong points are military ones.

Fifth, All the strong points of Viet Nam are fundamental; those of the French are secondary. Indeed, the French have many modern arms, numerous and well-trained officers and troops, a high standard of organization and large-scale propaganda with foreign countries; but their war is an aggressive war, so they have few friends and many enemies, suffer from internal division, and cannot enjoy the support of the people; their effective strength is constantly diminished.

Thus their strong points are of no avail.

This is the lesson of wars down through history. The new experiences of the Second World War in particular, have shown this clearly. How did things work out for the Germany of Hitler, and fascist Japan? Had they not many modern arms, able generals and well-trained troops, good organization and clever propaganda? Yet, because of the aggressive and reactionary aims of their war, their army and people were not single-minded; the morale of their troops was very low, and they were opposed by the whole civilized

world. They could only win some resounding victories at the beginning. After that, the more they fought the weaker they became until they were smashed to bits and defeated. The French colonialists must learn this historical lesson, go back quickly on their error, or France's future will be very gloomy.

We should keep well in mind that if we protract the war, and this will be thanks to the strenuous efforts of our entire people, our strong points will constantly increase, and our weaknesses will decrease with every passing day. On the contrary, the more the enemy fights, the more his strong points diminish, and the more his weaknesses grow. Here are some easily grasped examples: The more we fight, the better trained, experienced and tempered our troops are. The more the enemy fights the more critical his financial and economic situation becomes. The more we fight, the more we enjoy the support and sympathy of the French people and peace-loving peoples the world over, the more the peoples of the French colonies will avail themselves of the sending of French troops to Viet Nam to rise up against the French, the more numerous our allies become. The more the French fight, the lower their morale, the more weary and demoralized their forces.

So we see that the more we fight, the stronger our forces grow, and the more the enemy fights the weaker his forces become. Though at present our material strength (weapons, troops, economy, etc.) is still inferior to that of the enemy, our moral strength (the heroism and solidarity of our army and people, the moral support given by the world's people) is tremendous. In the future, if we prolong the war, not

only will our moral strength develop, but our material forces will also increase. Our protracted war aims at developing every reserve of material and moral power, strengthening our strong points and minimising the weak ones, in order to be able to switch over from a weak position to a stronger position vis-à-vis the enemy to win final victory.

In brief, after comparing our forces with the enemy's, we can affirm that *we will certainly win*. Our war of resistance is a people's war, a progressive war. We enjoy the material and moral strength drawn from the inexhaustible resources of the people, from the progressive character of a just war. Temporary failures cannot discourage us, just as small and partial successes cannot intoxicate us. We know that at any time and anywhere, revolutionary success can be obtained only if we organize and make preparations to win it. Our success in this resistance war will be partly due to the difficulties, weaknesses and errors of the French (which we know how to exploit to the fullest extent), and partly thanks to the assistance of our allies; but it will be *chiefly due to our close unity, our self-reliance, our strenuous efforts to strengthen and develop our forces. Long term resistance and self-reliance are our general guiding principle in this war for national liberation.*

The three great points which will lead us to success are:

1. The entire Vietnamese people are closely united to wage a long resistance war.
2. The French people will oppose war more and more strongly every day, or will rise up to overthrow the reactionaries.

3. The revolutionary movement in the French colonies is on the upgrade and the forces of peace, democracy and socialism all over the world energetically oppose the French colonialists.

These three factors already exist, but they are not yet fully developed. We should make still more sacrifices, and struggle with all our might. Time will bring us more favourable opportunities.

At present, the French reactionaries are plotting a perfidious manoeuvre, hoping to overcome all their difficulties and make good the weaknesses of France.

They intend to engage in anti-Soviet propaganda, and anti-Communism; they seek to undermine the Republic, to crush the French people under the burden of war spending and push France into the arms of the US and Britain in the hope of winning help from these powers to restore the French economy and to prolong the colonial war. But for France this path is suicidal, because France will thus turn herself into a country subservient to foreign powers and, finally, will be unable even to maintain the French Union. The French people and all parties loyal to the French Republic will assuredly not stand by with arms folded in the face of these harmful activities of the French reactionaries. They will struggle against them. At that moment, their struggle will combine with that of the Vietnamese war of resistance, and with the struggle of other peoples in the French Union, and will become a large-scale coordinated offensive which will defeat the French reactionary colonialists.

XIII

WHAT IS TO BE DONE

We have described our strong and weak points, and the strong and weak points of the enemy. But this exposition does not decide the question of victory or defeat in the war.

We should not be content with comparing the potentials and problems, the strengths and weaknesses of the two sides, and subside in complacency because of our advantages. An attitude of groundless optimism robs us of clear vision and the will to make progress and makes us short-sighted and passive.

In the history of war, there have been countries which met with fewer difficulties and had fewer weaknesses than the enemy, but which nevertheless were defeated. On the other hand, there have been countries which encountered more difficulties and had more weaknesses than the enemy, but which triumphed. Why should this be so? Because the country which had the advantage of its enemy did not try hard enough, underestimated its enemy, and lacked skill. On the other hand, the country whose situation was disadvantageous made strenuous efforts, "knew itself and knew the enemy", and triumphed because it had skilful leadership. When the author of *Kim Van Kieu*¹ wrote: "The will of

1. Poem written by Nguyen Du (18th century), acknowledged as a masterpiece of Vietnamese literature.

man triumphs over fate", he was thinking of the talents and subjective efforts of man, which may exercise a great influence on objective conditions. Of course, if we examine this matter closely, we can see that the amount of influence depends on the nature of the objective material conditions.

When our people struggle with determination, when our leadership is skilful, we can take advantage of the favourable conditions of time and circumstance to turn "difficulties" into "advantages", "weaknesses" into "strengths", and there is nothing strange in this at all! War itself is a great movement. Difficulties the war creates for the belligerents ("strengths" or "weaknesses" depending on the side) do not remain static. They change according to the development of the war. The side which is skilful and makes great efforts will be able to turn these changes to its advantage, and to the enemy's disadvantage. On the other hand, if this side lacks vigilance, is foolish, passive, or cowardly, these changes will become advantageous to its enemy and harmful to itself.

We should also be asking ourselves: if we have more strong points than the enemy, then why do we remain on the defensive and go on retreating? Why, when the situation is viewed as a whole, do we still remain in a passive position? Why have we not yet won the initiative? In our opinion, it is because most of the enemy's weaknesses are moral ones, and most of his strong points are material ones. As for us, our weaknesses are for the most part material, and our strong points moral. War is a struggle between two forces from both the moral and the material viewpoints. And favourable material conditions are necessary to victory — even a tem-

porary victory — in any military action, whether in war, or in an armed uprising.

That is why our efforts to check the advance of the enemy and defeat him should concentrate on diminishing our material weaknesses, increasing our moral strength, and at the same time reducing the material strong points of the enemy and aggravating his moral weaknesses.

This is the heart of the matter.

Because we have fewer arms than the enemy, while fighting, we must on the one hand maintain and develop our arsenals, keep up and increase our flow of weapons; and on the other hand, we must destroy and capture increasing amounts of enemy arms. Unfortunately our firepower is still weak and our tactics are not yet skilful: in many battles, we have killed a considerable number of enemy soldiers, but we have seized only a very small quantity of weapons. Conversely, though we have suffered small losses in men, every time one of our fighters falls, we lose his weapon as well. While fighting we must also produce arms, both rudimentary and modern arms, and constantly improve the standard of our arms manufacture. We should overcome the tendency to overestimate modern arms and underestimate rudimentary ones. Those who have these tendencies do not realize that with the technical conditions prevailing in our country, if there is no manufacture of rudimentary arms, we cannot equip our guerilla forces and arm our entire people.

But at the same time we should overcome the tendency to attach importance to rudimentary arms only and neglect the production of modern arms; if we lack modern arms,

it is difficult to check the advance of the enemy's motorized troops, or to counter-attack him. We should also carry out sabotage, intercept the enemy and use guerilla warfare with a view to minimizing the effect of the enemy's modern arms. We should launch surprise attacks and blow up enemy munitions stores; and we should set up sham targets easily visible, in order to delude the enemy and trick him into firing and expending his ammunition to no effect.

Our troops are not as well-trained as those of the enemy; that is why we must learn rapidly from the experiences gained in every battle, study the enemy's methods, improve our own strategy and tactics, and strive to train our officers and soldiers, militia and guerilla forces. At the same time, we use stratagems to deceive the enemy and drive him onto the defensive; we find out as much as possible about the enemy in order to get to know him; we keep him in the dark about our forces by depriving him of information; we should clearly foresee enemy moves and take advantage of his carelessness and lack of vigilance to launch daring attacks to annihilate him, avoiding all disadvantageous "fights to the death" in order to conserve our forces for a long resistance, for the moment when we can switch over from a defensive to an offensive position.

At present, most of our soldiers only know how to fight bravely; they do not pay attention to the study of tactics. Many officers have their attention focused only on details, knowing only that area in which they are fighting, and not bothering to study and analyse matters thoroughly; or else they collect experiences mechanically, and do not know how to apply them correctly to our practical situation; they limit

themselves to positional warfare or to the former strategy and tactics of the colonialist army. These tendencies should be weeded out immediately.

Our level of war organization is low; therefore it is a matter of some urgency for us to try to discover ways of improving our command, and make it unified, rapid and precise. It is necessary to simplify and militarize the various technical organs. We should give precise orders; these must reach every fighter, and we should maintain strict control of their implementation. Liaison and communications must be rapid and consolidated, even in enemy-held regions. Intelligence work must be speedy and accurate. Supplies should be punctual, sufficient and regular. Militia and guerilla forces must be organised on a wide scale with a view to the constant replenishment of our reserve forces, ensuring that we reinforce the regular army in such a way that our regular troops receive timely relief and do not wear themselves out. At the same time, we must strive to upset the enemy's organization by sabotage and ruses. In order to achieve the aims of the war of resistance not only must our line and policies be correct, and our strategy and tactics flexible and clever, but organizational work, too, is very necessary, in order to ensure the implementation of these lines and policies, and the correct application of strategy and tactics. We should overcome tendencies to work in an amateur fashion, according to the way we feel, without principle, mechanically, unsystematically, without planning and checking. We should at the same time struggle against the tendency to waste time and effort over trifles, not to see the question as a whole; or the tendency to do organizational work so poorly that the execution of the political line is not ensured.

We must grasp this point : the key question in organization is the question of cadres — their political stand, ideology, style of work and experience. To train, foster, choose and use cadres is extremely important.

Is our propaganda directed to foreign countries weak ? We will do our utmost to explain our just cause and expose the enemy's schemes to the world.

Since ours is the struggle of a just cause against barbarism, of sincerity against perfidy, we are bound to win the sympathy of the French people, of personalities in other countries and of small nations, particularly Asian peoples and the peoples of the French colonies. Furthermore, the Soviet Union may raise the problem of Viet Nam before the United Nations Organization and demand that France withdraw its troops from Viet Nam. We should take full advantage of the contradictions between France and other countries in propaganda against the French colonialists. That is why we must document French crimes against our people, against foreign residents and the adherents of various religions ; and document our humanitarian behaviour towards French prisoners of war, our correct policies in regard to foreign missionaries and residents. Propaganda in foreign countries must be undertaken by a responsible organ, and by a number of specialized cadres, in order to avoid negligence and a happy-go-lucky manner of working. We should also send cultural delegates or National Assembly deputies abroad to make propaganda. We should get rid of the tendency to consider propaganda in foreign countries as a completely auxiliary task and thus neglect it ; or else to consider it a "panacea", in other words, to rely on others without making

any attempt to develop our own resources, or to make our own efforts.

These are the tasks to be carried out to minimize our weaknesses and diminish the enemy's strong points. There is no other way to develop our strong points and accentuate the enemy's weaknesses than to carry out the following fundamental tasks : unite the entire people, mobilize the whole country, wage a long resistance, make skilful propaganda directed at the enemy, have a good foreign policy and conduct skilful diplomacy.

However, if we manage to direct our efforts to turning the enemy's disadvantages against him, is the enemy so stupid as not to use our own disadvantages against us in return ? The enemy is more treacherous and cunning than we think. In the course of the resistance, unforeseen difficulties may come our way, created by efforts made by the enemy, by our own errors, or by circumstances unforeseen either by us or the enemy. For instance : natural calamities, or famine might occur, there might be intervention by a third country which would first help the French colonialists to fight us and then oust them ; again, the loss of a number of our cadres and outstanding men could have a considerable effect on the leadership of the resistance ; or grave errors by our commanders could lead to serious losses...

Such things may happen. The duty of our leading organization¹ is to foresee such eventualities and take all necessary

1. The leading organization here is the Indochinese Communist Party (later the Viet Nam Workers' Party and now the Communist Party of Viet Nam). In this book, the author does not refer by name to the Indochinese Communist Party, the Party having proclaimed its voluntary dissolution. In fact it discreetly continued its activities (Editor's note).

preventive measures. But when something has happened that we were unable to prevent, we should remain calm, hold out, and deal with the situation.

If we hold firm to Marxism-Leninism, stick closely to the people, and fully develop their potentialities, we will never be defeated.

XIV

SOME BURNING PROBLEMS IN THE MILITARY FIELD

The nation-wide war of resistance has been waged for nearly six months. The war is expanding and becoming fiercer every day. Here is a brief summary of the main points concerning a number of burning military questions :

1. *Politics and military action* — These two questions are closely related : “*War is a continuation of politics*”. (Marx). The politics of our Democratic Republic are hampered by the French colonialists ; we must therefore act militarily to remove the obstacles they have put in our way, so that our politics can be carried out successfully. Military action is a measure by which politics are executed. “*War is an instrument of politics. War is the continuation of politics by other means*.” (Clausewitz). This is why military action can succeed only when politics are correct. And conversely, politics cannot be fulfilled without the success of military action. When military action is successful the aim of war is also realized. After a war comes to an end, politics continue to be carried out by other, more moderate means. That is the relation between military affairs and politics.

Those who rely only on politics often do not realize the important role of armed force in history ; they do not realize that sometimes armed force must be used to fight the internal enemy or external aggressors. Internally, such people often

accept unprincipled compromise. In foreign relations, they are liable to surrender, or make any kind of diplomatic concessions. On the other hand, those who have a tendency to rely on military action only are inclined to militarism. They tend to believe that everything can be settled by armed force; they do not apply political mobilization, are unwilling to give explanations and to convince people; they even use threats, or bring pressure to bear on the people. Or, fighting spiritedly, they neglect political work; they do not seek ways of building ties of affection between officers and men, do not act in a way that encourages the army and the people to help one another wholeheartedly; and they neglect propaganda directed at breaking the morale of the enemy troops. Such people know only how to fight; they fail to consolidate the National United Front, to seek new allies outside the country, and neglect the study of the internal and world situation, which is indispensable to the development of correct internal and foreign policies.

2. *Strategy and tactics* — In brief, strategy is the art of war directed at winning victory in a given war. Tactics is the art of fighting to defeat the enemy in a given battle. Tactics is an integral part of strategy. To succeed, strategy must be correct first of all. If strategy is correct but tactics happen to be wrong, the war will not necessarily fail entirely. On the other hand, tactics may well be correct, but if strategy is wrong tactics will be of no use in the long run. (This was obvious in the Soviet-German and Sino-Japanese war). Nevertheless, if strategy is correct and tactics are consistently wrong, the numerous errors in tactics may lead to strategic failure. Or sometimes a very great tactical error may also have

a harmful effect on strategy. After all, though a strategy may be correct, if command is weak and suffers continual losses in all battles, how can strategy succeed? Again, a single heavy defeat, which shatters the army's strength and destroys the morale of the troops, may endanger strategy. (For example, the defeats suffered by the Germans in the battle of Verdun in the First World War, and in the battle of Stalingrad during the Second World War).

Moreover, strategy decides tactics. Our strategy is to protract the war; therefore, in tactics, we should avoid unfavourable "fights to the death", because we must maintain our forces.

3. *Defence and attack* — At present, we are strategically in the defensive stage. But we would be wrong if we should keep on retreating and refuse to fight on the pretext of defence and preservation of forces. The Thai Binh battle of April 11, 1947 showed the confusion of the local command in this connection, a confusion which caused sorrow and shame to the troops who were indignant at not being allowed to fight, and discouraged the people who felt mistrust for the army and lost confidence.

Sometimes it is better to fight a more or less losing battle than to retreat with unimpaired forces and leave behind a very bad impression. Sometimes we must use forces smaller than those of the enemy to defend a very important position at the peril of our lives, while we await the arrival of our main forces, which will be able to annihilate the whole initially superior enemy force.

We should bear in mind that in this stage our strategy is defence, but our tactics are those of constant attack. This

means that in the whole country we still remain on the defensive, but in each battle we attack and annihilate the enemy. In strategy, the war must be prolonged, but tactically speaking lightning attacks must be launched and rapid decisions won. In other words, “*prolonging the defence in the rear*”, and “*attacking to force rapid decisions at the front*”¹.

In general, our cadres already understand this point. But there are still some who do not understand it thoroughly; that is the reason why there have been cases in which they gave up fighting and ran away.

Moreover, we are used to remaining on the defensive in positional warfare, but not yet used to applying mobile warfare in defence, or to launching attacks to ensure defence. So, when we want to defend a position, we often have a tendency to establish a fixed line of defence, dig trenches, set up fortifications and defend them in a rigid manner; we do not know how to combine guerilla and mobile tactics to attack and encircle the enemy, cut off his supply lines, attack him on the flank or from behind, with the aim of obliging him to withdraw; nor do we always know when to send our troops to attack a position important to the enemy to oblige him to detach a part of his attacking forces to save this position. It is by such means that our defence is reinforced in the area in which we are under attack. The attack launched by our forces on Haiphong on March 21, 1947 obliged the enemy to send a part of his forces from Hon Gai and Quang Yen to Haiphong, thus reinforcing our defence in these places where we were under attack. The

1. Mao Tse-tung: *On Protracted War*.

Loc Binh battle at the end of March 1947 obliged the enemy to despatch forces from An Chau to defend the Lang Son - Tien Yen road, thus increasing our strength for the defence of Luc Nam. These are examples of active defence, of defence by offence.

4. *Attrition and annihilation* — To wage war is to fight in such a way as to annihilate the enemy forces in battle, and at the same time to increase our own forces with a view to the final defeat of the enemy. So we must apply the tactics of attrition (to wear away the enemy and exhaust him) and annihilation (to kill or capture the enemy).

At present, the enemy forces are still stronger than ours. That is why we must protract the war to wear them down. Only by wearing the enemy down, can we fulfil the strategic tasks of launching the general counter-offensive, annihilating the enemy and winning final victory. But must we wait for the stage of general counter-offensive to annihilate the enemy? Clearly, no. During the first two stages (defence and equilibrium) we must also launch attacks to annihilate the enemy forces locally, to wear them down *as much as possible*, and seize their weapons, munitions, etc., to provide our forces with more arms. This is the most active way to work towards the moment of general counter-offensive in which the enemy as a whole will be annihilated.

Up to now our troops have often launched attacks to wear the enemy down; in these attacks, both sides have suffered losses, though ours have been smaller than the enemy's. From now on, battles of annihilation must be applied to a greater extent than battles of attrition. What is mobile warfare if not the tactics of annihilation? And guerilla warfare,

if not a combination of the tactics of attrition and those of annihilation? ¹ Our regular army must apply mobile warfare often in order to annihilate local enemy forces. As for the guerilla forces, they must harass and decimate the enemy, and at the same time launch sudden attacks and stage ambushes to achieve rapid annihilation of the enemy forces involved.

5. *How should we attack?* — Attack is the only effective means of annihilation of the enemy. Fighting the enemy without attacking him is not fighting. However, most of our troops and militia and guerilla forces do not yet clearly understand how to attack. They often split up their forces to probe a series of enemy positions simultaneously, and call this kind of action an “attack”. They go and attack some position without reconnoitring, without planning, and start shouting “Assault” two hundred yards before they reach the enemy, giving him plenty of time to get ready to receive them... This they also call an “attack”. No! In our opinion to attack — a town or an enemy post for example — we must:

a) Investigate carefully the enemy's position, his forces, his weapons, his morale, the character of the commander, etc., with a view to drawing up a detailed plan, and then secretly make careful preparations. (But we should avoid formalism and slowness, which could cause us to miss good opportunities).

b) Concentrate forces superior to those of the enemy and such as will enable us to annihilate him in one battle. *Concentration is an essential law of attack.* Use our regular

1. The main characteristic of mobile warfare is annihilation. That of positional warfare is attrition. That of guerilla warfare is annihilation and attrition.

army, when it is superior to that of the enemy, to launch a sudden attack on the objective; never use more than half or even half of our forces for defensive purposes, or for pinning the enemy down in adjoining areas. Of course while we remain on the defensive, the regular army must be quartered some place as a reserve force, awaiting an opportunity to launch a successful attack. But when we are on the offensive, we must use the regular army for sudden attacks, not as a reserve force. This is the one way in which we can rapidly annihilate the enemy.

c) *Attack in an active, rapid, alert manner, adapt oneself speedily to the new situation* — When the attack is decided upon, and once the order is given, officers and men must be courageous, bold, and attack very rapidly. The troops must be divided for the advance and regrouped to attack, encircle, work round the enemy positions and finally take them by storm.

d) *Define the principal direction clearly* — We should concentrate our forces to defeat the enemy at one point in a sudden attack; attack the most important key positions of the enemy, completely paralysing his power of defence. It is possible to divide our forces to engage the enemy in one direction, while we actually plan to attack him in another direction.

e) Launch lightning, surprise attacks *availing ourselves of moments when the enemy is off his guard*, when he is eating or sleeping, or when it is drizzling or dark, to attack vigorously for a rapid annihilation of the enemy.

f) After a position has been taken in an attack, if we do not feel strong enough to hold it, retreat immediately in order

to preserve our forces for new battles. Otherwise the enemy may assemble stronger forces to launch a counter-offensive, seize back the position and destroy our forces. But, providing conditions are favourable to us, we should profit from our victory to mop up the front and complete the destruction of enemy forces before retreating.

g) *Make full use of the victorious attack* to enhance the prestige of our troops and the morale of our whole army and people. Experiences must be drawn from all attacks for the preparation of others.

In short, attack is an art. To attack successfully, we must know the enemy and we must know our own forces. We must study the conditions of time and place, rapidly concentrate sufficient forces, and attack in an active, alert and rapid manner.

6. *How do we win the initiative?* At present, the enemy is the stronger and we are the weaker of the two sides. That is why the enemy remains on the offensive and we on the defensive when the situation is viewed as a whole. But even when on the defensive, we must try to win the initiative. *To keep the initiative is a basic general tactical principle, and the basic principle of guerilla and mobile warfare in particular.*

There are many ways of winning the initiative :

a) *To lure the enemy*, by diverse means, into a trap prepared by us. This is one way in which we can keep the initiative although weaker than the enemy. Even though our forces are not numerous, and our weapons not modern, we may sometimes manage to lure the enemy into a trap

and annihilate him. We can for example worry his left before attacking suddenly on the right, in such a way that he does not know where the attack is coming from and is thus unable to ward off the blow.

b) *To attack the enemy's exposed and weak points* in such a way as to make it impossible for him to defend himself. We can take advantage of moments when the enemy is least expecting us to attack him. For instance : when the enemy moves, we lay an ambush for him ; when the enemy troops arrive at their destination worn out by a long march, we launch a sudden attack on them.

c) *To mobilize the entire people to rise up and wage guerilla warfare everywhere in order to scatter and wear down the enemy*, and to enable our regular forces to launch sudden attacks to annihilate him bit by bit ; to organize the people, hush up all news, and conceal our troops, so that the enemy has no notion of our activities and we have favourable conditions for our sudden attacks.

d) *To move skilfully*, advancing rapidly towards the enemy rear, attacking important points, with a view to obliging the enemy troops to regroup, and thus upset their predetermined battle plan ; to strike the enemy on his flank and from behind, rather than throwing ourselves directly at his main front.

e) *To keep well informed about the enemy's situation in order to be able to concentrate our regular troops rapidly and move our reserve forces swiftly to where we want to and in good time.* (At present, our forces are not only weak

in intelligence work but also slow in moving and regrouping ; they often cannot use or do not know how to use their reserves).

f) To centralize leadership in the hands of a higher command. But the local commands are free to act and indeed have the responsibility to act according to their own initiative in order not to miss good opportunities or fall into a state of passivity. In many places, conditions have been favourable, but the commands refused to fight on the pretext that they had received no orders ; thus, they tied their own hands, and by failing to act often created a dangerous situation.

Such are the general methods to win the initiative : on the one hand, we should not fight unfavourable battles, or fight without preparation ; we should not allow ourselves to be forced by the enemy to fight in unfavourable conditions. On the other hand, we should have the initiative, not let good opportunities slip by, strive to make full use of guerilla and mobile warfare, actively attack the enemy at his weak points, attack when the enemy is careless, and cleverly use ruses to lure the enemy into our traps.

When facing more powerful enemy forces, if the guerilla forces want to keep the initiative while fighting, they must follow the four rules drawn up by Comrade Mao Tse-tung :

- a) When the enemy advances, we retreat ;
- b) When the enemy halts, we harass him ;
- c) When the enemy is worn out, we attack him ;
- d) When the enemy runs away, we pursue him

One could add more :

- When the enemy concentrates, we disperse ;
- We may lure the enemy deep into our positions, etc.

7. *Base areas* — A base area is an area in which it is relatively safe for us to set up our leading organs, train our regular army, train cadres, produce arms and munitions, tend our wounded, etc.

There are many kinds of bases : in mountainous areas, in the delta and in marshy areas.

Areas fit for the establishment of such bases are those where :

a) the people are active, broadly organized and ready to support the army in every field ;

b) there are regular troops ready to make sacrifices and hurl themselves forward to stay the enemy's advance, to safeguard the base and defend the leading organs and the population ;

c) food crops may be grown to ensure supplies to a certain extent ;

d) the natural features of the country are favourable to our defence.

Of the above three conditions, the first two are of course more important. Where there are neither forests nor mountains, regular forces with high morale and broad masses who are politically conscious will constitute human forests and mountains to protect us.

There are people who think that because our territory is small, it is impossible for us to establish base areas. Such a conception is wrong. It comes from an overestimation of the enemy's forces. Though our territory is small it is not so small that it is impossible to set up bases in it. Moreover,

the enemy forces are limited and they come from afar. It is certain that they cannot wipe out and annihilate our forces, and they do not have sufficient forces to occupy the whole of our territory and prevent us from gaining a foothold.

Others consider that a base area is an absolutely safe area where we can carry out construction on a large and permanent scale. This viewpoint is also wrong. It comes from the overestimation of our own forces. No base can be absolutely firm! That is why we must not and cannot build anything that, while it may be imposing, is cumbersome and difficult to move in case of need.

When we occupy a place, we must always have in mind the moment when we may have to leave it. When we defend a place, we must always have in mind the moment when we may have to abandon it. However, we should not make the mistake of thinking of a base area merely as a place where we quarter our troops. The "one-day base" of which the comrades in Quang Tri have often spoken was only a temporary camp, no more and no less.

When we choose an area as a base we should convene a conference of cadres of the army, the administration, and the people's organizations of the region to discuss the establishment and defence of the base. The following questions require prime attention:

1. In administration and mass work, we should develop and consolidate the administrative organs and mass organizations (prepare underground groups), and train local cadres to maintain and lead the administrative organs and develop mass organizations in the region.

2. In military affairs, we should establish militia forces on a large scale and arm the entire people, giving the young people military training; we should assemble the regular forces and weapons necessary to check the advance of the enemy and to destroy his forces once they have penetrated deep into our base area; we should conceal military objectives, and endeavour to prevent enemy planes from causing us harm.

3. As for the people's well-being, production should be increased according to a plan: supply must be organized and the people's living conditions improved.

4. Concerning security, we should wipe out traitors to the nation, restrict and control all movements of the population and deprive the enemy of all news.

* * *

Such are the urgent military problems set for us by the war. All cadres, the army and the people, and especially the military commanders at all levels, must have a clear understanding of these questions so that existing shortcomings may be speedily done away with and all errors harmful to the struggle corrected.

To defeat the enemy, strenuous efforts must be made, as has already been stated above. Making good our deficiencies and correcting errors in our command require an especially great effort on our part.

XV

LAUNCHING THE MILITIA MOVEMENT

As has been said before, our war is a *people's war*. The people's war must be waged by the people themselves. This means that not only does the regular army fight the enemy, but all those who are enthusiastic — regardless of sex, or of whether they are in the army or not — also take part in the fighting. Born of the people, the army defends the people and enjoys the people's support. For that reason, our fighters have a very high morale. A war waged by both the army and the people is one whose tactics are very alert and varied, conforming to the varying local topography and the possibilities for fighting (tactics of guerilla warfare and mobile warfare). Furthermore, the war can be protracted until our final victory, despite the barbarity of the enemy forces and all their modern weapons.

How is the people's war to be carried out? We must arm the people and *launch the militia movement*. To launch the militia movement is the best means of mobilizing the entire people to take part in the fighting; it is a measure aimed at organizing and training a numerous reserve army to replenish and reinforce the regular army and to enable the latter to prolong the war.

The enemy troops massacre our people, occupy our land, plunder our property, rape our women and destroy our crops. All those who are courageous and able-bodied rise up, arms in hand, to defend the lives and property of the local population and help them carry on their work and production. They help them to carry out the policy of scorched earth, gather intelligence, suppress traitors, and carry out sabotage when need be. At the same time, they do not abandon their ordinary work. They love their native soil, their Fatherland. They are deeply attached to their villages, their ricefields and the graves of their ancestors. Highly indignant at the overbearing and vile acts of the enemy, they take up knives, sticks, spears, cross-bows, guns, grenades, mines, sometimes even a bamboo spear or a stone or a brick, to kill the enemy. They help the regular troops or the local guerilla forces to fight the enemy. These are the self-defence militia forces.

A portion of the most enthusiastic and active of them will leave their ordinary work and organize themselves into a guerilla group, or, together with elements of the regular forces, organize local guerilla groups. These groups do not participate in production any longer: they move about in a specific region, and their duties consist of defending a region or a district against the terrorist mopping-up activity of the enemy. They support the people by helping with their farming work, protecting people's property from the enemy's plunder or carrying out armed propaganda, repressing traitors and bandits, laying ambushes to attack the enemy, and launching sudden attacks on his isolated posts. At the same time, they are in constant contact with the regular forces to co-ordinate their action to wear down, harass and destroy

enemy forces. Their weapons are better than those of the self-defence militia forces, and should comprise guns, machine-guns, mines, grenades, bazookas, etc.

The entire people and the militia and guerrilla forces back up and replenish the regular troops. The militia forces from many villages, from many districts, gathered together to fight the enemy, can form a local guerrilla detachment. The advanced local guerrilla detachments which gather together to fight the enemy can become regular troops. In the course of our long-term resistance, from ordinary civilian to regular soldier, there is an endless process of development. We see that the people constitute the sources of manpower for the army; and from the militia and guerrilla forces we recruit and train our regular forces. If the militia forces are strong, the regular forces will be strong. If the militia, guerrilla and regular forces are strong, we will certainly triumph. Lenin said:

*"Victory will belong to the side which has many reserve troops, and plenty of vitality and endurance drawn from the masses"*¹.

Does our militia movement now exist? Certainly it does; but it is not yet widespread; it is not yet the nation-wide ferment that it must become. In regions such as southern Viet Nam, the southern part of central Viet Nam, and, recently, the provinces of Thua Thien and Quang Tri, and around Hanoi, Haiphong, and Nam Dinh, the militia movement has developed and is surging forward.

1. Speech at the Eighth Congress of the All-Russian Soviets.

Generally speaking, the training and arming of our militia and guerrilla forces is going ahead at a satisfactory rate. Good points of our militia and guerrilla men are their activity and initiative. The battles waged by the militia and guerrillas on Road No. 5, around the capital, on the road from Saigon to My Tho, at Ba Long (Quang Tri province) at the beginning of this year, in Dinh Bang (Bac Ninh province), and at Cu Da (Ha Dong province) last month, are worthy examples for the whole country. *The organization of fortified villages and underground defence works* by our militia and guerrilla forces in many places is highly praiseworthy. Several special groups have been formed with a view to attacking tanks, waging battles on the rivers, or using mines against the enemy. Nevertheless, the militia movement still has many shortcomings and makes many errors. It is still formalistic, not yet practical. It lacks arms, particularly rifle ammunition, grenades and mines, which are very necessary to guerrilla forces. It is short of training and leading cadres; its political work is weak: so weak, in fact, that in some places, there is even resentment among the people against the militia and guerrilla men. Misunderstandings and petty jealousies between guerrilla and regular forces are not yet wiped out; co-operation with the regular troops in battle is not yet close. Some militia men in the villages tend to let their daily work slip; some guerrilla troops tend to fight rigidly in the manner of positional warfare, and have not yet learnt to apply guerrilla tactics skilfully.

We hope that the comrades responsible for our militia and guerrilla forces will do their best to develop the militia and guerrilla movement everywhere, and launch a *patriotic emulation* movement to organize militia forces and fortified

villages, between cantons, districts and provinces and even in enemy-held regions. We hope that these comrades will strive to arm the militia forces, make them understand that they should exchange *their rudimentary weapons for modern ones taken from the enemy*, and disseminate battle experiences of the militia and guerillas among the guerilla forces in the enemy-held areas so that the enemy's rear can be harassed without let-up. We hope that the regular forces, as well as the militia and guerilla forces, will do their utmost to do away with all unreasonable jealousies. The regular forces, the militia and the guerilla forces are brothers. They are born of the same mother, the people. The regular forces should train militia and guerilla forces at their places of cantonment. The militia and guerilla forces should support and welcome the regular forces wherever they appear. When regular troops withdraw, they must inform the militia and guerilla forces of the fact beforehand. The militia and guerilla men who go to seek out the enemy to fight him, must inform the regular troops of what they are doing, and co-operate with them in fighting if need be. When they capture enemy arms by joint action, the regular, militia and guerilla forces must split these weapons up among themselves in a fair and reasonable manner.

Whether our long-term resistance war ends in victory or defeat is the common responsibility of the whole people. But naturally, in military affairs, the regular, militia and guerilla forces must shoulder the bulk of this responsibility.

XVI

BUILDING THE ARMED FORCES

In order to ensure the success of the war of resistance we must have strong armed forces. In the present initial stage, our people's armed forces comprise only two categories: the regulars and the militia. The latter is divided into two categories: the guerilla militia and the self-defence militia. But later these forces may comprise the following branches: the main-force units, the regionals and the militia. In our regular forces several branches will gradually take shape: infantry, artillery, engineers, etc. In future we shall have different armed services: army, navy, air force and others. We are building our forces in the 20th century and must take this into account in our calculations.

The people constitute the reserves of the armed forces in general. The militia is the reserve of the regionals, who in turn are the reserve of the main-force units.

These three categories conform to the law of development of people's war and the people's army: the latter springs from the people, develops from nothing, attains ever higher levels and grows ever stronger.

Our army is the people's revolutionary army and fights for the interests of the people.

The fighting aims of our army correspond to the tasks of the Vietnamese revolution in its successive stages. At present our revolution is a people's national democratic revolution. Hence the immediate aim our army is fighting for is national independence and new democracy. In other words, our army fights and endures sacrifices in order to destroy the invaders and the traitors, i.e. the French colonialists and their lackeys (who represent the feudal landlord class and the comprador bourgeoisie), and to build a Viet Nam that is independent, united and a new democracy. It follows from the above that our army is a *national, democratic and popular one*.

Our army is one of the people, essentially one of the workers and peasants led by the working class. It includes workers, peasants and revolutionary intellectuals as well, but workers and peasants essentially, and in fact the vast majority of its members are peasants. Generally speaking, cadres of our army must originate from the grassroots strata and follow Marxism-Leninism.

Political work in the army is of decisive importance both in the building of our forces and in actual combat. Its aim is to imbue the soldiers with fervent patriotism and genuine proletarian internationalism, the will to fight and endure sacrifices for the supreme interests of the nation, the resolve to serve the country and the people unconditionally, self-imposed discipline, an ever stronger sense of internal unity as well as solidarity with the people, and to train them to conduct propaganda and agitation work among enemy troops and undermine their morale.

We must constantly strive to strengthen the ideological stand of our cadres and soldiers, foster revolutionary virtues in them and at the same time inspire them with correct strategic and tactical thinking. To this end we must emphasize educational work among our troops in Marxism-Leninism and in the line and policies of the leading Organization and the Government. Cadres in general and army cadres in particular must study seriously the military works of the classical Marxist-Leninist authors. Comrade Mao Tse-tung's book *On Protracted War*, as well as military documents left by our forefathers (For instance: *Essentials of Military Art* and *Message to Generals and Soldiers* by Tran Hung Dao; *Proclamation of Victory over the Ngo* and *Writings Composed While in the Army* by Nguyen Trai).

We must emphasize the brilliant examples set by our national heroes past and present and by heroic combatants in friendly countries to educate our army and people in revolutionary ethics and heroism.

Political, military, and general education should be systematically organized for our army in order to ceaselessly raise the standard of officers and men in all fields, turning our army into a steeled invincible one.

To achieve internal solidarity and unity of views between officers and men, the cadres should be taught to stay close to their men, love them, show concern for their material and spiritual life and behave democratically towards them. At the same time, the soldiers should be taught to respect their officers and obey the orders of their commanders. The relationships between officers and men and among the men

themselves should be fraternal and comradely. They should share weal and woe and remain together in all circumstances.

To achieve solidarity with the people and unity of views between the army and the people, the former should realize that the people is like water with the army as fish. So the latter should establish good relationship with the people and rely on the people to fight and defeat the enemy. To strengthen solidarity between the army and the people, the former should do good mass work and help the people in production, anti-illiteracy, sanitation and disease-prevention work as well as military training and guerilla tactics. For their part, the people must be made conscious of their duty to support the army in all fields so that it may defeat the invaders. Of course this support must be in conformity with the policies of the Organization and the Government.

Propaganda and agitation work in enemy ranks should drive home to the puppet soldiers, French troops, soldiers from French colonies and Foreign Legionaries the evil aggressive design of the French colonialists and the justice of our cause.

They will slowly awaken and refuse to be used as cannon fodder by the colonialists. They will even come to accommodations with us and when possible will desert the enemy ranks, cross over to our side and together with us level their guns at the French colonialist aggressors and their agents, the Vietnamese traitors.

By working in this way to build our armed forces we are bound to defeat the enemy completely and win final victory.

XVII

ELIMINATING ERRONEOUS TENDENCIES

In the above chapters, we have made a preliminary criticism of certain erroneous tendencies concerning the resistance. Now we think it necessary to outline the four major erroneous tendencies, with a view to unifying the thoughts and actions of our cadres and people in the resistance.

These four tendencies are :

1. Defeatism, pessimism.
2. Complacency, underestimation of the enemy.
3. Tendency to compromise half-way.
4. Tendency to resort to the mediation of a third country.

What do the defeatists and pessimists advocate? They say: Our people are not well armed, our population is not numerous, our country is small and not rich; if we fight, we are doomed to failure. It is better to get it over and done with, acknowledge French tutelage and accept an "autonomous" regime! They also say: France has ground, air and naval forces, she is powerful; what is the use of resisting her, only to go on suffering? They even say: Our people have a low standard of education, our country is weak, it is not ready for independence. Tran Van Ty, a puppet belonging to the Le Van Hoach clique, dared to utter these vile

words, which deserve the everlasting scorn of our people: *"Even if France gives independence to Viet Nam, we shall refuse it..."*

All these arguments prove that the pessimists, the national traitors, the defeatists, the capitulationist clique, grossly overestimate the enemy and greatly underestimate our people's strength.

Though our weapons are not good, we have produced new ones with which to resist the French colonialists! It is certain that the more we fight, the better arms will be produced. And if we apply guerilla and mobile warfare skilfully we can use our rudimentary weapons to seize the enemy's superior ones; with few arms, we can defeat an enemy with many.

It is true that our country is small and not rich, and that our population is not numerous; but as we said in Chapter XI ("Our Difficulties and Those of the French"), the enemy's country is far from ours, his troops come from afar, his forces must be split up to fight in many places. The enemy's domestic finances and economy were exhausted after the Second World War; the dissensions between the various French political parties are growing; the struggle between the workers and the capitalists is fierce. As for us, disregarding the question of arms, the political consciousness and the level of organization of our people are higher than before. Our National United Front has been consolidated and expanded. The present world situation is very different from that which followed the 1914-1918 World War. The great and constantly growing movement of democracy and independence constitutes a strong rearguard. We have the necessary

conditions for fighting. It is possible for us to wage a long resistance, and our long resistance will certainly be victorious. The tendency to defeatism and pessimism does not bear scrutiny.

Recently a clique calling itself a "Nationalist United Front" emerged. It is headed by Nguyen Hai Than, Nguyen Tuong Tam, Tran Trong Kim and Nguyen Van Sam. This clique demands "independence and unification within the French Union"; in reality these elements are scheming with the old foxes, the Franco-American colonialists, with the aim of destroying our people's resistance and dividing our ranks. The defeatism of these national traitors is even more dangerous than the "bootlicking" of Truong Dinh Tri, or the "self-rule" — actually "self-murder" — advocated by Le Van Hoach.

The opposite of the tendency to defeatism and pessimism is the tendency to complacency and underestimation of the enemy. Those who are affected by this tendency grossly overestimate our forces and greatly underestimate the enemy. They say: We must avail ourselves of the present time, before the enemy can send big troop reinforcements, while he has to divide his forces between the struggles in the African colonies, and throw all our forces into a few decisive battles: we should not protract the war. In their opinion, a protracted war will create suffering for the people and wear out our forces. They maintain that we should attack the enemy quickly to reach a quick decision. This is an adventurist line and represents certain suicide. It has the character of desperation: Those who underestimate the enemy are afraid of him, of hardship and of the protracted war.

If we follow their line, we will make a premature sacrifice of our forces in some initial forced battles; once our main forces are decimated, we shall become weakened and will not be able to rise again. At the beginning the enemy forces are stronger than ours; they are at the peak of their strength. As the enemy concentrates his attacks to annihilate us, we must avoid battles unfavourable to us, we must preserve our forces for a long resistance. While fighting, we consolidate our forces and weaken and discourage the enemy. Thus, we wait for the opportunity to launch a counter-offensive to annihilate him. Protracting the war does not wear out our forces, but on the contrary strengthens them day by day, as it weakens the enemy forces. If we are afraid that a long war will make our people unhappy, and advocate throwing all our forces into the fray in a fit of anger, which would end in military defeat and national bondage, what hardships would there be then?

Fortunately, this tendency to "attack quickly and force a rapid decision" is not widespread in our country, and has not very serious consequences. And those who wanted to stake everything on this policy when the nation-wide resistance broke out, have admitted their errors now and have given up their "flash in the pan" heroism.

The third tendency to be eliminated is the tendency to compromise half-way in the resistance. Those who are affected by this tendency think that if we prolong the war we are doomed to failure; that if we are going to negotiate with France, the earlier we do so the better, in order to avoid sacrifices by our people and losses to our forces. These people become too quickly depressed in the face of the

temporary successes of the enemy. Faced with loss of land, they think the country is lost. They do not understand the twists and turns in the development of war: the enemy wins victory only to be defeated later on; we suffer defeat, to carry the day in the long run.

The aim of our people in this war of resistance is to recover independence and unity. If France recognizes the independence and unity of our country within the French Union, we may discuss the re-establishment of peace with her. On the other hand, our people will continue their fight as long as France does not give up her designs to invade our country again, or recognizes only sham independence and unity. We will fight to the last man. We will fight to the last-breath. We are determined not to compromise, because to compromise is to surrender. The guns are cocked, they are firing. The Vietnamese fighters cannot lay down their arms until their task is fulfilled.

The war of resistance necessarily involves hardship. While fighting, we must rally all the moral strength of the people so that they will work with enthusiasm, endure hardships and participate in the resistance to the end. There are battles which wear out our forces; but there are battles which enhance them. So we must fight in such a manner as to increase our potential. If we surrender and compromise we shall be disarmed by the French; without any armed forces at our disposal, won't it be irrelevant to speak of loss and gain?

There is a category of people who are preys to sickly fear, who grow anxious at the mere thought of a long-drawn-out war of resistance. They think of a simple measure, which they hope may rapidly end the war: they propose to reform

the government, to eliminate a number of "red" elements. According to them, this will facilitate negotiations with the French and facilitate diplomatic relations with other countries.

This category of people think that by removing some people from the government the war will cease immediately. How naive! Whether the war ends or not is decided by the evolution of the balance of force between the two sides, not by administrative measures. The more we "reform the government", the more we show our spinelessness; the more we make concessions, the more the French will exert pressure on us. This only serves to sow confusion among the people and leaves them in doubt. Why do people who ask for the above "reform" not suggest replacing the reactionaries, the incapable and wavering elements in the administrative machinery at all levels in order to conduct a stronger resistance? In truth, they are afraid of a protracted war and do not believe that a long-term resistance can be victorious. That is why they seek to use governmental reform as a present to offer to the French colonialists in begging for an armistice. They do not look ahead, but always look back. On the resistance road, they turn their backs on the goal, or march backward. What a pitiful lot!

This does not mean that we brush aside reform of the government. No government is everlasting and unchangeable. But ours is a country with a constitution. Our government is constitutionally formed. If reform is needed, it must be carried out constitutionally. And even if it is reformed, our government must be a constant reflection of the solidarity of the entire people: all sections of the people, democratic parties and patriotic personalities, united within the

framework of the National United Front, under the leadership of the Communists. We must bear in mind that neither the Vietnamese revolution as a whole nor this war of resistance can be successful without the leadership of the Communists!

The fourth tendency which opposes the long resistance, is the tendency to resort to the mediation of a third country. Those who have the above tendency do not believe in our people's power to resist. They have no confidence in final victory. Which is the third country from which they are begging mediation? It is a powerful imperialist country. How dangerous! If they demand the mediation of an imperialist country it will play the role of the clever magistrate in the fable of La Fontaine, "The Oyster and the Litigants"; or it will be the "fight between the stork and the oyster to the benefit of the fisherman" all over again.

There is at present a clique in France which is seeking to call in the assistance of a third country. This clique tends in the direction of submission to the orders of the Dollar God, to sell out France and a part of the French colonies to the U.S. imperialists, so as to have sufficient strength to repress the democratic movement in France and the revolutionary movement in the colonies. We refer to de Gaulle and those around him. Do we want to imitate them?

There are also people who hope for the intervention of the United Nations Organization. We need only remind them that the U.N.O. with its present organization and spirit is powerless to defend the San Francisco Charter and is unable to sanction its members who have violated it. The problems of Greece, Indonesia and China have proved that even if

the problem of Viet Nam were raised before the U.N., it would bring no better results. If we prolong the resistance war, there may be countries which will raise the question of Viet Nam before the U.N. in the future, in the cause of peace and justice, or because of a situation analogous to ours, or from a sense of rivalry. But we should not rely too much on others. We should help ourselves, and then we will be helped by others. If we lack courage, no foreign force can bring us freedom and independence.

In short, the above tendencies are inimical to a long war of resistance. If we do not combat them resolutely they will develop and cause damage. These tendencies which are expressed in words by some people, remain in the thoughts of others. There are people who express them in deeds, others are biding their time thinking of trying to carry them out later. If we are to win victory, we must act in such a way that shows there is unity of mind among the entire people in the resistance. Eliminating the above tendencies is a vital task in this context.

XVIII

MOBILIZING THE WHOLE POPULATION

This people's war for freedom and independence is very hard and long. To win victory, the whole people must participate in it, shoulder their responsibilities, be courageous and make sacrifices. Therefore, the entire people must be mobilized.

For more than six months now, the people throughout the country have been supporting the government and the army : they enthusiastically enlist, join the militia forces, help the engineers, ensure the supplies of the army and provide it with information, willingly pay taxes to the government and diligently tend wounded soldiers. The most moving thing of all is that the youth in many villages urge one another to harvest rice to help out the families of soldiers. What zeal, what selflessness, what exemplary solidarity and patriotism !

Our compatriots in the rear are worthy of the sacrifices of the heroic fighters at the front.

But is this enough ? Not yet ! What forces there are latent in our people that are not yet fully tapped and not yet made use of in a rational manner ! Is there not *still a lot of lifeless elements* alongside the flourishing forces that are so abundantly contributing to the cause of the Fatherland ? Are there not *still inert elements* not yet stirred by a driving

force to take their part in the struggle? Many reserves of labour, money and material wealth are not yet mobilized in service of the long war of resistance.

All this is true. Many villages lying a long way from the front are still deep in their dreams; they do not know yet what the resistance is, they do not yet understand the resistance. The sound of distant gunfire has not yet stirred them from their slumbers.

There are still many areas where the young people think of the sabotage of roads, the building of earthen barricades, helping the army, as they did forced labour under the imperialist regime: they put their heads together to devise ways to bungle the job, or even run away!

How much money is just lying in strong-boxes at the bottom of family chests and is not yet used in production beneficial to the country! The spirit of mistrust, selfishness and stinginess of those who have it has not yet come under strong attack; that is why it lies unused while the Government calls for increased production. There are people who use their money for contraband activities, hoarding and speculation, capitalising on the fact that the country is in danger to make their fortunes. Their money does more harm than good to the nation.

There are still many able people who consider that the war of resistance is the affair of the government and the army, and maintain the indifferent stand of "doing nothing while your neighbour's house goes up in flames." There are even trained personnel of various branches who impudently draw their pay from the government only to spend whole days and nights playing cards, while our fighters

are sacrificing their lives for the Fatherland on the battlefield, and while our workers and peasants are straining every nerve to produce munitions for the army, and tools and food for the entire people. There is not as yet any rigorous law on mobilization to discipline these elements, nor any active propaganda to make them see their failings quickly and rapidly mend their ways.

In short our weak political mobilization has not yet aroused the burning patriotism of the whole people. The press only circulates superficially, and is read by a few people only; it is only people in the areas where the papers are published that really get any benefit from them, and there are still many villages which have not received a single paper since the beginning of the nationwide resistance. The agitation groups and shock propaganda units work hard at delivering speeches, but they generally separate propaganda for the resistance from help to the people both in production and in the struggle against illiteracy; thus, their propaganda becomes drier and drier every day. Information centres have done much work, but are still very few.

The mobilization of the moral strength of the people is not yet continuous and widespread. And actions that are harmful to the mobilization of the entire people are not condemned or corrected in time. In some places, our troops behave arrogantly and in an authoritarian manner and recruit "labourers" by force. In some places, the Resistance and Administrative Committee is incompetent and passive: it does not know how to mobilize the people and give explanations; so it issues orders without thought, thus sowing discontent among the people. In some places, sectarian

elements among our cadres dismiss able people and genuine patriots from the resistance. In other places, traitors to the nation have wormed their way into the ranks of the people, using money to bribe or female beauty to beguile government workers in order to get information and to discover the whereabouts of government organs. Worst of all is that in some places, traitors using the cloak of religion have set up the "Viet Kien" Association (Reconstruction of Viet Nam) with the aim of bringing about the "autonomy of the Catholic area" and sowing the tendency to surrender and division among our Catholic compatriots, and calling on them not to pay taxes to the government. They make anti-Viet Minh and anti-communist propaganda, but dare not utter a word against the French. They constantly instigate the people to oppose the government's orders, and sabotage our moral mobilization.

It is a matter of urgency to neutralise these dangerous seeds. Traitors to the nation, reactionaries, and enemies of the resistance must be eliminated immediately. We should punish even those in the ranks of the resistance who have advocated wrong measures or committed harmful deeds. We should wipe out corruption, backwardness, sectarianism, bureaucracy, arbitrariness and militarism, and apply a progressive policy, in the people's interests. At the same time, we must develop propaganda work in a methodical manner. We should strive to raise the people's political consciousness, increase their patriotism and vigilance, and foster their fighting spirit. We should use diverse forms — newspapers, books, music, dances, operettas, plays, photographs, exhibitions, emulation, etc. — to enable the people to grasp why we must

fight, for what purpose we are fighting, how we will win victory and to help them to see that although the war of resistance is hard, it will certainly be victorious. Only in this way will the people assume their responsibilities enthusiastically in accordance with the slogan "Those who have money will contribute their money to the resistance, those who have strength will contribute their strength, those who have talent will contribute their talent". Thus, no force will be wasted, no force will be isolated from struggle, no force will be superfluous. Only in this way will the army and militia forces bravely sacrifice their lives to annihilate the enemy; when one man falls, ten others will rush forward to take his place.

However, if we want all the people to take part in the resistance in every field, verbal political propaganda alone is not enough. We should strive to improve the living conditions of the people, lighten their burdens, reduce land rents, restrict usury, genuinely strive for a decent life for the toiling people and the civil servants, etc. In order to mobilize financial resources, we should levy taxes according to democratic principles, while ensuring a certain standard of living, for only in this way will the people be brought to contribute to the resistance budget, support the army and risk their lives to fight against the French aggressors and defend their own vital interests. At the same time, we must consolidate and develop the new democratic regime, so that the people really feel that they are citizens of a Democratic Republic and have rights. This will provide encouragement to the people to make sacrifices, to defend their sacred freedom

and their political power, to struggle against the enemy's attempts to re-impose upon them the yoke of barbarous and brutal bondage.

There are people who suggest abolition of the committee system and appointment of administrative personnel. They do not understand that restriction of democratic rights will have harmful effects on the war of resistance.

Improvement of the people's living standards and extension of their democratic rights — these are two conditions that must be fulfilled if the entire people are to be politically mobilized, if the whole vital power of our twenty-five million compatriots is to be drawn into the struggle.

Mobilizing the entire people is not a job that can be done overnight, it must be carried out constantly and systematically until complete victory; brief bursts of activity cannot meet the need. We must announce our victories as the hostilities develop with a view to raising the morale of the people and the army. We must draw the lessons of our failures to educate the people and army in fighting, in combating espionage, in seeking information on the enemy's situation, ensuring secrecy, supplying the army, tending the wounded, etc.

Nor is mobilizing the entire people a task for the government alone; it is a task that must also be carried out by the various political parties and people's organizations. So, to carry out regular, wide-spread and far-reaching mobilization both from above and from below, we must strive to gather the people in patriotic organizations and democratic parties. The development of such people's organizations is a guarantee of the success, consistency and depth of the mobilization of

the people. For instance, to publicise an order issued by the government and implement it rapidly, the various organizations should mobilize their members to respond to that order, cite the organized people as examples, and thus give a good start to the implementation of the government order concerned.

If we neglect the organization of the people, we cannot mobilize the entire people to support the government and the army, or train them to take part in the resistance in every field.

In 1918 Lenin wrote: "To wage a real war, we must have a strong and well-organized rear". (Let's Set to Work, *Pravda*, March 4, 1919).

These words constitute very precious counsel for us in this long-term war of resistance.

the people. For instance, to produce an order issued by the government and implement it rapidly, the various organizations should mobilize their members to respond to this order.

CONCLUSION

Our people's war of resistance is a revolutionary war, a just war. It has a popular, all-round and long-term character.

Let us examine our history from the war of liberation which expelled the Manchus from our territory until now. Our present war of resistance is another great war of liberation waged by our people against the aggressors to recover independence. This is the fiercest battle there has been to crush the invaders and recover our sovereignty during the almost one century of French colonialist bondage.

This war is a very great but also a very hard one. A great task is never carried through easily! Out of so much blood and ruin will spring a new, independent, unified, democratic and prosperous Viet Nam.

Of the three conditions for the victory of the war of resistance mentioned in Chapter XII, the *unity of the entire people* must of course be the first one. If the people's front of resistance is broad and firm, even supposing that the movement in France against the "dirty war" and the support of the world democratic forces do not prove strong enough, our war of resistance, though certainly prolonged and harder, will sooner or later end in victory. The future belongs to us. Final victory will be ours, provided that *the entire people are united, are self-reliant and wage a long resistance.*

Our people's long-term war of resistance must pass through three stages. That is a necessity. In the course of the resistance

war, negotiations may take place. *Nevertheless, if we have not yet passed through these three stages we will still not win back true independence and unity.*

The enemy of our people is extremely brutal and treacherous. The French and world reactionaries are seeking to crush us by the most foul means before they themselves are finally crushed by the democratic forces. Our difficulties are still many. The task of every Vietnamese citizen is very heavy. The tasks of *the Lien Viet front, of the Viet Minh and of our Organization* are still heavier. Our people and the cadres of our movement must be determined to overcome every difficulty and do their duty.

With our far-sighted President Ho Chi Minh at the helm, the ship of Viet Nam, with its heroic crew, will certainly negotiate all reefs and weather every storm, to reach its splendid harbour.