



Vietnamese men and women carried out years of struggle against different imperialist powers. Their fight will continue.

(This is the second article analyzing the developments in Southeast Asia.)

By 1965, it was apparent that if the U.S. ruling class wanted to turn Vietnam into a sweatshop for itself, it would have to send U.S. troops to fight a major land war there. As we all know, this is exactly what happened, although the imperialists didn't get what they had anticipated. What they got was creamed. Every time LBJ & Co. sent another batch of troops over to Vietnam, the Vietnamese rebels inflicted another defeat on them. The Vietnamese people proved through People's War that a politically committed and well-organized working class and its allies can overcome staggering technological disadvantages. Despite the presence of over 600,000 U.S. imperialist troops, despite the powerful support from the U.S. Seventh Fleet, and despite daily genocidal carpet-bombings, the Vietnamese people crippled the elite Marines and ground the vaunted U.S. Army into the mud. Meanwhile, U.S. rulers were being further weakened internally by mounting class struggle at home that included black rebellions, a wave of strikes, and a mushrooming anti-war movement.

These defeats for U.S. bosses were signal victories for the world's working class and its allies. However, three things happened that have temporarily reversed this situation.

First, the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China was defeated. The GPCR was a mass movement to prevent the restoration of capitalism in China and strengthen proletarian dictatorship there. Because of factors which our party has analyzed in *Road to Revolution III*, the left within it was smashed. When this happened, the international communist movement no longer had a center that it could look to for leadership.

Second, the anti-war movement in the U.S. did not unite with the working class. Although steps in this direction were taken, our party was unable to win the millions who wanted the U.S. out of Vietnam to a revolutionary working class outlook. Therefore, the movement was vulnerable to the misleadership of the liberal bosses—the same liberals who had planned and excused the Vietnam war in the first place. They diverted it away from militancy and away from the workers. This strategy was apparent in the McCarthy campaign of 1968 and the McGovern campaign of 1972.

Third, the leaders of North Vietnam (DRV) and the Provisional Revolutionary Government (PRG) in the South had abandoned People's War, and were pursuing instead a policy of war for a negotiated settlement that would maintain capitalism in South Vietnam on terms most favorable to them. They had been pressured into this by their Soviet "allies," who didn't want to see a socialist Vietnam any more than did Kissinger, Rockefeller, Nixon & Co. Since the DRV-PRG were dependent on the Soviets for aid and weapons, they had to pay the price for this dependency and knuckle under. So, in an apparent paradox, the heaviest fighting and greatest DRV-PRG military victories served to usher in the sellout being prepared by the charlatans in Hanoi and Moscow. After the U.S. imperialists had suffered one of their worst defeats (the 1968 Tet Offensive), the "rec" bosses in Hanoi offered to negotiate with them. From a class standpoint, there was **nothing** to negotiate—not a blade of grass, not a hair on a

Vietnam

Past & Future

Vietnamese child's head—**nothing**. U.S. bosses had absolutely no rights in Vietnam and in fact were hardly in a position to make any demands. The liberals saw a chance here to steal at the bargaining table what they couldn't grab on the battlefield, and of course they pounced on it.

In the course of the 1968-73 Paris negotiations, the DRV-PRG leaders repeatedly announced their intention of maintaining capitalism in South Vietnam. They called for a government that would include and represent all sections of the population; they gave their solemn oath that they wanted "positive" (i.e. profitable) relationship with U.S. imperialists; and they promised to roll out the red carpet for "foreign investors" as long as they received an adequate cut. This was hardly the goal that Vietnamese workers and their allies had been fighting for like hell, but it was, unequivocally, the goal of the leadership. All the fighting between 1968 and 1973, including the Nixon administration's vicious bombing of Hanoi, was an attempt to conclude this deal more or less favorably for one side or the other.

Finally, in 1973, the deal was signed, and the U.S. pulled out all its troops. As James Reston points out in the April 13 *New York Times*, very few knowledgeable members of the U.S. government or ruling class thought that their puppet Fuehrer Thieu could hold onto power indefinitely. They probably hoped that he would buy them enough time to make some serious capital investment in South Vietnam on good terms for them, which, in turn, would give them an important trump in their dealings with the DRV-PRG and the Soviets.

At the same time that they signed the "peace" treaty, Thieu and the U.S. imperialists violated it constantly. Thieu, also, ruled the Vietnamese people under a fascist thumb.

However, U.S. imperialist decline in other parts of the world plus Thieu government's corruption and ineptitude altered the scenario. Thieu was defeated and the PRG control all of South Vietnam.

The situation in Cambodia is more complicated since Peking and Moscow (the Soviets maintained an embassy in Pnom Penh until a few weeks before Lon Nol was routed) will be in dispute trying to win the support of the Khmer Rouge, who declared right after taking over in Cambodia that they had no intention of establishing socialism and declared Cambodia a "neutral" country.

We should anticipate the following developments

in Southeast Asia:

—The Soviets will move into South Vietnam and Cambodia and try to turn them into sweatshops for their own class interests. Sino-Soviet competition for control of Cambodia will increase.

—The pro-U.S. regime in Thailand will collapse, from a combination of its own decrepitude and attacks by nationalist forces.

—The fascist Park regime in South Korea will be severely weakened by all of the above. The revisionists in Pyongyang may step up their campaign to gain control over the South.

—U.S. bosses will not be totally frozen out of Southeast Asia. As we pointed out in previous issues of *Challenge-Desafio*, the Soviets need U.S. technology and capital. Therefore, their client states will be in the same position. However, the deals available to the U.S. imperialists will not be nearly as favorable as they might once have hoped, because of increased Soviet power in the area as well as intensified competition from Japanese, European, and other investors.

—The gains made in Southeast Asia by Brezhnev & Co. will sharpen contradictions between the "red" bosses of Moscow and the "red" bosses of Peking and thereby increase the threat of Sino-Soviet war. The U.S. imperialists will attempt to take advantage of this development.

—Contradictions with the Soviets will sharpen, and the U.S. ruling class will opt for World War III to recover its lost status.

Workers all around the world drew great inspiration from the valiant struggles of the Vietnamese people during the period of People's War. Despite the betrayal of this heroic struggle, we can draw valuable lessons from past errors that will enable us to win in the future:

—"National" capitalism is still capitalism. A boss is a boss is a boss.

—The "two-stage" theory of revolution is a myth. The leadership of a movement has either a working class outlook or a pro-capitalist outlook. The class that holds power is either bosses or workers. There is no in-between.

—Communists in any movement must always, under all circumstances, advocate revolution, socialism, and the dictatorship of the proletariat. The masses of oppressed people in every country of the world are ready for this program. Abandoning it is tantamount to betraying them.

—Pacificism inevitably leads to more war and mass murder by the imperialists. The humanitarian argument flops on its own terms. **Because socialism has not yet been won in Southeast Asia, the people of this area will fight again and again until they win it.** Their own heroic history proves that they will not shirk this task. Vietnam should prove to workers everywhere that, ultimately, continuing the fight for socialism through to the end is the most humane, least costly, and only sure way of getting the imperialist butchers and their Quislings off our backs.

Let U.S. bosses offer a haven to the international ratpack of their deposed fascist valets while they scramble to plug the holes in their dike. Let the Soviets gloat over their rise to the top of the dungheap. Let Sihanouk and the "red" bosses of Hanoi eat filet mignon in Paris. Their days are numbered. The international working class will wipe them all out.

This is the goal for which our party fights.