

An Historical Overview of the China-Viet Nam Conflict

In the interests of long-term peace and stability, China launched a military counterattack against Viet Nam on the morning of February 17, 1979. Thousands of People's Liberation Army frontier troops moved into Vietnamese territory in a well-planned response to Viet Nam's provocative military actions along the frontier. Chinese infantry and armoured divisions, supported by air strikes, pushed the Vietnamese aggressors away from the besieged Chinese border. Throughout the world, peace-loving people hailed China's courageous and measured response to Soviet social-imperialism's hegemonic trouble-making in southeast Asia.

"It is the consistent position of the Chinese Government and people that 'we will not attack unless we are attacked; if we are attacked, we will certainly counterattack,'" noted the official Chinese announcement of the military action. "The Chinese frontier troops are fully justified to rise in counterattack when they are driven beyond forbearance. We want to build up our country and need a peaceful international environment. We would not like to fight. We do not want a single inch of Vietnamese territory, but neither will we tolerate wanton incursions into Chinese territory. All we want is a peaceful and stable border. After counterattacking the Vietnamese aggressors as they deserve, the Chinese frontier troops will strictly keep to defending the border of their own country. We believe this Chinese position will enjoy the sympathy and support of all the countries and people who love peace and uphold justice."

After 16 days of fighting, China began withdrawing its troops from Vietnamese territory. The military objectives it set for the campaign were achieved. Moving from positions in Yunnan province and the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, the People's Liberation Army forces pushed the Vietnamese back in battle after battle. Viet Nam was forced to shift tens of thousands of its aggressor troops from Kampuchea and Laos to the Chinese frontier. Still, they were unsuccessful in turning back the decisive Chinese military thrusts. The myth of "Vietnamese military might" was firmly exposed.

On the day that Chinese troop withdrawal began, Viet Nam announced a "nation-wide general mobilization". This is a move by the Vietnamese authorities to strengthen their control at home and suppress the unrest created by the unpopular military aggressions against Kampuchea and China, the severe food shortages and unpopular domestic policies.

Chinese troop withdrawal was completed on March 16. While the Chinese moved back to the border, Vietnamese forces repeatedly harassed them. Much fighting took place over the 12 days of troop withdrawal.

Meanwhile, Soviet social-imperialism wildly spread the myth of Chinese aggression against Laos. China firmly denied this charge and backed its case with hard facts. However the Soviets and their revisionist allies around the world continued to give this lie full play in their press reports. Slandering China is the only thrust of the Soviet social-imperialists' "factual" stories from southeast Asia.

The possibility of talks between China and Viet Nam is now being considered in the wake of China's decisive military thrust.

The events which make up the month-long "China-Viet Nam War" can only be properly understood if they are placed in the context of the historical relationship between these two countries and the overall international political situation. The purpose of this article is to present such an historical overview. Next week, *Alive Magazine* will present its analysis of the political significance of China's counterattack against Viet Nam.

FIVE YEARS OF VIETNAMESE BORDER PROVOCATIONS

A 1,300-kilometre land border separates China from Viet Nam. In recent years this frontier has been the scene of much unrest, due

to increasing Vietnamese hostility towards China. Spurred on by the late-coming superpower, the Soviet Union, Viet Nam repeatedly attacked Chinese frontier guards and civilians, destroying life and property.

Vietnamese authorities carried out armed provocations and incursions along the border areas on 121 occasions in 1974, 439 occasions in 1975, 986 occasions in 1976 and 752 occasions in 1977. The number increased sharply to 1,108 occasions in 1978 and 129 occasions in the first one and a half months in 1979. In sum, Vietnamese authorities created 3,535 armed provocations on the Chinese border from 1974 to mid-February this year.

Almost 20 percent of these armed provocations occurred in the past six months as the Vietnamese authorities stepped up their anti-China and anti-Chinese actions. Over 300 Chinese frontier guards and inhabitants were killed or wounded in 160 different locales in this period. Every Chinese county along the border suffered from the provocations and intrusions. In many areas the people were forced to leave their homes. Some took to living in caves for protection from the Vietnamese attacks.

The Chinese border town Hekou, Yunnan province, was virtually a ghost town before the February 17 counterattack was launched. Repeated Vietnamese shelling and shooting had forced the inhabitants to flee. Hekou, which is only separated from Viet Nam by the Nanxi River, has come back to life now that the Vietnamese have been punished for their unjustified attacks.

At the beginning of 1979, Vietnamese authorities near Hekou ordered their armed border personnel to shoot at anything that moved on the Chinese side — from trains and motor vehicles to cows, dogs, pigs and chickens. Chinese journalists visiting the town before the counterattack observed a water buffalo which had been machine gunned to death by the Vietnamese as it grazed by the side of the river. The correspondents also went to visit an old woman who lived by the Nanxi River. Someone on the opposite bank shouted in Vietnamese, "Get that one wearing glasses!" The correspondents had just ducked as the bullets whined close overhead.

In this unsettled situation, the Chinese border inhabitants lived in great unease. Production fell and normal patterns of life were disrupted.

China has kept records of the 700 incidents provoked by the Vietnamese authorities over the past six months. These facts are a scathing indictment of Viet Nam's current leaders. Clearly, these authorities have given up all pretences of upholding the principles of Marxism-Leninism in their dealings with China and other countries. Instead, the leadership has eagerly thrown Viet Nam into the role of bully-boy for Soviet social-imperialism in southeast Asia. Details of a few specific incidents are enough to prove this.

On August 25, 1978, hundreds of Vietnamese troops and policemen were called out to expel Chinese nationals stranded on the Vietnamese side of the border near Youyiguan. Dozens of Chinese were killed or wounded in the attack. The Vietnamese troops also entered Chinese territory and injured more than a dozen Chinese border checkpoint workers.

On October 2 and again on October 27, Vietnamese armed personnel intruded into a People's Commune in Yunnan province to interfere in the commune members' normal production activities. They beat up and injured 31 commune members, 10 of them seriously.

On December 9, Chinese fishing boats were attacked by the Vietnamese in the Gulf of Tonkin. One Chinese fisherman was killed.

Between December 23, 1978 and January 15, 1979, Vietnamese armed personnel intruded into Chinese territory on 13 occasions. 4 Chinese frontier guards were killed; 4 others were wounded. In the

same time period the Vietnamese unprovokedly opened fire upon Chinese territory on 32 occasions, endangering the production, lives and security of those living on the border.

On February 2, 4 Chinese frontier guards were killed by the Vietnamese and 7 others were injured.

On February 7, the Vietnamese killed 4 Chinese army men and civilians and wounded 5 others.

Two trains running from Hekou on February 12 were severely damaged by heavy rifle and submachine gun fire.

On February 15, mines planted by Vietnamese intruders killed or wounded 3 Chinese frontier guards. Shelling of Chinese territory also took place.

These bloody incidents, and many others like them, occurred in a tense and unfriendly atmosphere along the border. The Vietnamese authorities have stirred up disputes and friction wherever they could over the past five years. Armed Vietnamese personnel regularly crossed into Chinese territory to patrol and engage in road work and land reclamation. This was a ruse to claim ownership over Chinese territory. In entering Chinese territory, the Vietnamese disrupted Chinese border patrols, obstructed Chinese people at work, sabotaged production facilities and kidnapped Chinese personnel.

The Chinese people exercised great restraint and showed their deep love for the Vietnamese people by continuing to call for peaceful negotiations over the past five years. The extreme arrogance and anti-people contempt of the Vietnamese authorities could not go unchecked, however. Firmly in the pocket of the new Russian tsars, Viet Nam's leaders continued their blatant provocations along the Chinese border despite the reasoned arguments and stern warnings of the Chinese. The February 17, 1979, counterattack was entirely justified and has been applauded throughout the world.

A LONG HISTORY OF WARM FRIENDSHIP

The Vietnamese people won the true respect of people the world over during their decades-long struggle for national liberation. First the French colonialists and then the U.S. imperialists were soundly defeated by this heroic people. These are momentous landmarks in the history of the struggle of oppressed people. Thus the open hostility between Viet Nam and China, the leading socialist country in the world, has the potential of being both confusing and disheartening for people *unless* it is viewed in its correct historical perspective.

The peoples of China and Viet Nam have had close links for several thousand years. The two countries are linked by common mountains and rivers and the peoples have carried on a continual friendly exchange. In the past there has also been hostility between the two countries. For example, two thousand years ago imperial China invaded and conquered Viet Nam. At the same time it also conquered Korea. However since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, no such threat to Viet Nam has existed.

China conducts its foreign relations according to the "Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence". These are: (1) Mutual Respect for Territorial Integrity and Sovereignty; (2) Mutual Non-Aggression; (3) Non-interference in each other's internal affairs; (4) Equality and Mutual Benefit; and (5) Peaceful Co-existence. Over the course of its 30 year history, troops from the People's Republic of China have crossed its own borders on only three occasions — into Korea in the early 1950s to oppose U.S. imperialism, into India in 1962 to stop Indian aggression on the border and into Viet Nam in 1979. This record is a testimony to the Chinese policy that they will not attack another country unless they are attacked.

In the last century both the Chinese and Vietnamese peoples suffered heavily from colonial rule and imperialist aggression and oppression. Consequently, they are closely united by a common lot and shared fighting goal. In the early years of this century, revolutionaries in the two countries sought truth in Marxism together and forged strong bonds of unity.

In the struggle to apply Marxism to the concrete conditions in Viet Nam, Mao Zedong Thought formed an important theoretical

mainstay. In his 1966 book titled "President Ho Chi Minh, Revered Leader of the Vietnamese People", the Vietnamese leader Truong Chinh states: "Comrade Mao Zedong's contributions to the theory of revolution in the colonies and semicolonies have been of considerable assistance to our party and to President Ho in working out the political line and policy for our country." The Vietnamese closely studied Mao Zedong's book "On Protracted War" and Vietnamese books based on studies of Mao's writings during their revolutionary struggles.

The struggle against revisionism in the international communist movement has been a touchstone of Chinese-Vietnamese relations. In the period 1959-1961, the Vietnamese resisted pressure from Soviet revisionist leader Khrushchev who wanted them to discontinue the struggle for national reunification. He argued that the Viet Nam war might become the spark which would start a destructive nuclear war. Throughout this period the Vietnamese received consistent support from China and adopted the correct line of developing the people's war against foreign aggression.

The war of liberation in Viet Nam was thus also a living criticism of Khrushchev's line of giving up the struggle against imperialism. The war was significant for the Marxist-Leninists' struggle against revisionists everywhere and for the development of national revolutionary liberation movements as opposed to revisionism in many places in the third world.

VIETNAMESE TIES TO SOVIET SOCIAL-IMPERIALISM

Up until 1964 and Khrushchev's overthrow, all military aid to the Vietnamese people came from China. The Soviet Union refused to lend any support.

Starting in 1964, however, the up-and-coming superpower saw

UNIVERSITY MEETING

Film over, discussion completed, the meeting's organizer initiated some mechanical summing-up because it seemed that was the correct thing to do, at least that's what someone correct said she should do.

Trouble was, people took her seriously, they weren't all campus people, you see, she didn't know why community people had come but here they were putting forward their criticisms.

They laid the blame on her, as they did on themselves when they organized something and hardly anybody attended, like tonight. They didn't stop there either but made suggestions that would probably work except...

They didn't understand she didn't hold these meetings to get people out and to spend her days doing nothing else but to save that part of her conscience and her friends who were always saying she really should do something.

To silence those taking her seriously, she gave the answer as she put on her coat to leave, guarding precious minutes, "No. It's the students. They're too apathetic. Students are too jealous of their time, you know."

They weren't struck dumb by her opposing her own stance they weren't even impolite, saying "Goodbye" as she left but then they carried on discussing as if she was unimportant to further exchange, as if organizing wasn't a one shot deal.

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that its imperialist ambitions were best served by giving a certain amount of aid and thereby trying to get some influence over Viet Nam. Brezhnev accompanied this aid with hard diplomatic pressure on the Vietnamese to give up the war of liberation and negotiate with the United States. The Vietnamese people, however, were committed to waging revolution until victory was achieved and no amount of Soviet social-imperialist harassment could throw them off this correct track.

Soviet aid was used as an instrument of imperialist policy. With the aim of forcing the Vietnamese to change their policy, the Kremlin refused to provide some of the most modern Soviet weapons. Gradually, Soviet influence in Viet Nam increased as the decade of the 1960s drew to a close.

Dependence on economic aid from the Soviet Union has been at the root of Viet Nam's shift towards support for social-imperialism. Since the liberation of south Viet Nam in 1975, the Soviets have been "giving" hundreds of millions of dollars of "aid" to Viet Nam. The country is cluttered with Soviet and Cuban "advisors", all of whom move freely into and out of Viet Nam without visas.

On June 29, 1978, Viet Nam was admitted to the Soviet-dominated Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) as its tenth member state. This grouping of countries, apart from Romania, are completely subservient to the Soviet Union. Member countries are all located in Eastern Europe excepting Cuba and now Viet Nam.

On November 3, 1978 the Soviet-Vietnamese "Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation" was signed in Moscow. The treaty states, "The high contracting parties will conduct consultations on all important international issues concerning the interests of the two countries. If one of the parties becomes the object of attack or of the threat of attack, the high contracting parties will immediately begin mutual consultations for the purpose of removing such a threat and taking appropriate effective measures to ensure their countries' peace and security."

This military treaty indicates the extent of Viet Nam's subservience to the aggressive superpower. The Vietnamese authorities do the Soviet Union's bidding in southeast Asia and in exchange the Soviet war-machine backs them up. Following the signing of the treaty, the Vietnamese paper *Nhan Dan* wrote, "Viet Nam has cast its lot with the Soviet Union."

The success of the Soviet Union's campaign to win Viet Nam to its camp is reflected in the Vietnamese authorities' increasing support for social-imperialist foreign policy over the past decade. The authorities have publicly supported the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968; the fascist regime of Mujibur Rahman in Bangladesh; Indira Gandhi's emergency laws and the bloody Soviet-Cuban colonial war in Angola. Today the Vietnamese leaders support the fascist Mengistu regime in Ethiopia including its repression of Ethiopian revolutionaries and the Eritrean liberation movement.

The irony of Viet Nam's support for Soviet foreign policy is that it denies the historical lessons of the Vietnamese revolution. When Vietnamese premier Pham Van Dong was in Thailand in 1978, he declared that Viet Nam did not support the struggle of the Thai communists, who are waging a people's war in that country.

Chinese vice-premier Deng Xiaoping was asked about his country's attitude towards the Thai communists when he visited Thailand in 1978. The local newspaperman who posed the question noted Pham Van Dong's response to the same question.

"I knew many wanted me to answer this question," Deng replied. "I hope you will not ask me to be like Pham Van Dong. If China acts like Pham Van Dong, that will first bring disaster to the Asian-Pacific region."

Vice-premier Deng continued: "In our relations with the south-eastern Asian countries, not only with Thailand, there is the issue of the relations with the Communist Party. Since the problem arose in history, it cannot be solved overnight. We first of all reached mutual understanding with Asian countries that such a problem should not hinder the establishment and development of

our mutual relations, and on this basis we realized normalization of relations and developed them.

"To China, this problem, not only concerns her relations with Thailand. It is an international problem for her. We always hold that the relationship between parties should be separated from that between states so that it does not hinder the development of our friendly relations with other countries."

Deng Xiaoping declared: "China does not hide her views. We hold that when countries and peoples make friends, they should express their true views. There should be mutual understanding. Only thus can they develop mutual cooperation. By telling lies, by hypocrisy and even by selling out soul, one cannot win friendship. Therefore, I would not learn from Pham Van Dong."

A HISTORY OF CHINESE AID

On July 3, 1978, China announced its decision to terminate all technical and economic aid to Viet Nam. The official announcement said that the anti-Chinese actions of the Vietnamese authorities had "destroyed the minimum conditions required for the continued stay of Chinese experts in Viet Nam to carry on the aid projects."

For nearly 30 years China provided the Vietnamese people with sincere assistance in its fight against imperialist aggression and for national liberation. In 1974 Pham Van Dong said: "The Chinese Party and Government have, in all circumstances, given disinterested support and help to the Vietnamese people in their revolutionary struggle and reconstruction of the homeland." In 1975, Le Duan, First Secretary of the Viet Nam Workers' Party, also spoke of China's "enormous and valuable support and assistance" to Viet Nam. He said that "obviously, without China which has succeeded in her revolution, there could not have been the Viet Nam of today. Such is the logic of history."

The Chinese people made self-sacrifices and went short themselves to provide aid to Viet Nam. In total, this aid amounted to over 10 billion U.S. dollars, the bulk of which were gratis grants and the rest interest-free loans.

China supplied Viet Nam with millions of rifles, tens of thousands of artillery pieces, over a billion rounds of bullets, tens of millions of rounds of shells, in addition to other military ware and equipment. China also sent to Viet Nam millions of tons of gear for complete plants and supplies including several million tons of grain, several hundred million metres of cloth, a hundred locomotives, thousands of railway wagons, over 700 ships and tens of thousands of motor vehicles. Certain commodities or materials of which China was short itself were given priority to be supplied to Viet Nam first.

For equipment which was not available at home, China used its foreign exchange to buy the most up-to-date models and send them to Viet Nam. Certain factories had to suspend their normal production in order to turn out some special products for Viet Nam. Certain weapons which had not been manufactured in sufficient quantities were diverted from Chinese units to meet Viet Nam's urgent need. Many Chinese foreign-aid personnel shed their blood and some laid down their lives in the course of their work in Viet Nam. In the absence of brotherly love towards the Vietnamese people and the spirit of proletarian internationalism such sacrifices would have been impossible.

Today the Vietnamese authorities call this aid "philistine bargaining" in quest of "10,000-fold profit". The Vietnamese media, press and radio viciously distort a great chapter of history — China's selfless aid to the Vietnamese people and the strong ties forged in the struggle of the peoples of the two countries.

In providing this assistance the Chinese people fulfilled their internationalist duty to Viet Nam. They never expected "gratitude" in return. China stood by Viet Nam year after year, through thick and thin.

In recent years, China continued this aid despite Vietnamese provocations and a generally anti-China policy. In doing so China followed the "Eight Principles of Economic Aid" established by the People's Republic of China in 1964. The second of these principles

states, "In providing aid to other countries, the Chinese Government strictly respects the sovereignty of the recipient countries, and never attaches any conditions or asks for any privileges." China *does* strictly follow these principles, as countries around the world well know. Its principled position stands in stark contrast to the tied "aid" policies of capitalist countries, such as the Soviet Union.

Chinese aid was withdrawn in 1978 for three reasons. First, the money earmarked for Vietnamese aid was diverted to the resettlement of the 200,000 victimized Chinese expelled from Viet Nam.

Second, the Vietnamese whipped up such an anti-China and anti-Chinese atmosphere inside Viet Nam that China's experts were not able to carry out regular work tasks.

Third, Vietnamese provocations and anti-China policies meant that not even an elementary basis for the aid remained.

An article in the July 28, 1978 *Beijing Review* assessed the withdrawal of Chinese aid to Viet Nam. It said: "China is not to blame for Sino-Vietnamese relations having come to such a pass. A socialist country led by the Party with Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought as its sole guide, China supports and aids the oppressed nations and people by real and practical actions called for by its dedication to proletarian internationalism, not by such sweet words as 'deep sentiments' and 'conscience.' In providing aid to the Vietnamese people, the Chinese people are sincere and free from any compunction. Even today, when we are compelled to stop our aid to Viet Nam, our hearts go out to the heroic Vietnamese people who fought shoulder to shoulder with us. We will always remember the sweat and blood shed for the common cause and the heavy sacrifices we made together. A long journey proves the stamina of a horse and the passage of time tells the true from the false. We believe that by resorting to lies, deceit and pressure the Vietnamese authorities may succeed for a time in weakening the bond of friendship between the Chinese and Vietnamese peoples forged in life-and-death struggle, but they will fail in the end. Neither the Chinese people nor the Vietnamese people will allow anyone to try to break this bond of friendship cemented in blood. It remains our hope that the Vietnamese authorities will halt before the abyss and give the matter some second thoughts."

ANTI-CHINA AND ANTI-CHINESE ACTIONS

The Vietnamese authorities have whipped up baseless propaganda attacks against China for over a decade. As Soviet influence

in Viet Nam grew in the second half of the 1960s, there appeared articles about ancient events to insinuate aggression and threat to Viet Nam coming from the north, namely China.

At the same time as the war of national reunification in Viet Nam was approaching victory, Viet Nam sent troops to occupy China's Nansha Islands. This aggressive act was accompanied by similar aggressions against Kampuchea.

The Chinese islands were first occupied by the south Viet Nam puppet government. China's protests against this aggression were publicly supported by Vietnamese leader Pham Van Dong. When confronted by the Chinese in 1977 to explain the inconsistency between his public statement during the war and Viet Nam's actions since then, Pham Van Dong could only offer the excuse that this previous statement was made under wartime conditions. Such a man of principle!

The most important of all the Vietnamese provocations has been the anti-Chinese racist attacks in Viet Nam. Starting in 1977, Viet Nam expelled 200,000 members of the Chinese national minority in the country. These people were driven overland to the Chinese border by the Vietnamese authorities and were not compensated for their loss of property and possessions.

For historical reasons there is a large Chinese national minority of about one million people in Viet Nam. In 1977 a vile campaign of persecution was launched against the ethnic Chinese by the Vietnamese authorities. Chinese people began to be called insulting names, and their children were threatened in schools. This campaign started in rural areas along the Chinese border and included economic pressures. Chinese people were fired from their jobs or "transferred" to impossible places. Resident non-citizens had their rations cut to one-half.

In 1978 the campaign spread and intensified. Vietnamese police or militia would go to Chinese homes, confiscate possessions, and order the residents to assemble on such and such a day to leave Viet Nam.

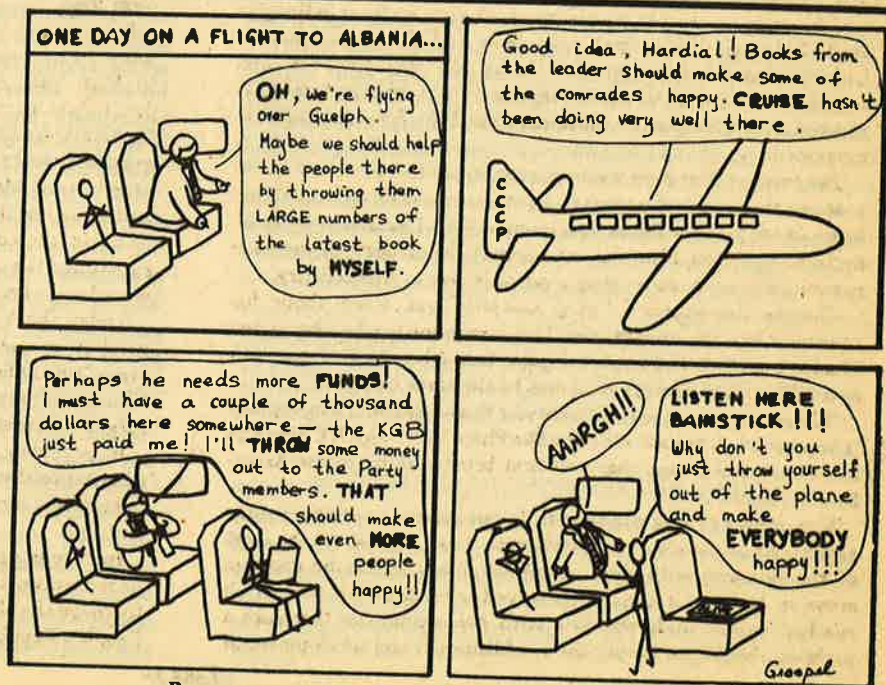
As rural Chinese people began to stream into Hanoi on their way to the Chinese embassy to get visas, people in Hanoi also began to leave in large numbers. Until then the persecution of city dwellers in the north had been less intense. A panicky "exodus" of Chinese became a reality — a panic based on their experiences of relentless persecution from the Vietnamese authorities.

In the south of Viet Nam, Chinese people owned a significant percentage of the small businesses. Under the guise of "economic transformation", in 1978 the Vietnamese authorities began

Solidarity With Kampuchean Struggle

GNS. March 17: There is solidarity between the revolutionary movement in Africa and the struggle of the Kampuchean people, in the fight against imperialism and Soviet social-imperialism. This is *Ikwezi's* main theme in its March 1979 issue. *Ikwezi* is a revolutionary Azanian journal which bases itself on Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought. It is devoted to study of the political situation in South Africa in particular and southern Africa in general.

Ikwezi's front cover states, "This issue is dedicated to the heroic people of Kampuchea now fighting the Soviet inspired Vietnamese colonization of their country! Kampuchea will be free again." In addition to an article specifically on Kampuchea, the issue contains several articles on Soviet social-imperialism and its attacks on genuine revolutionary struggles in Africa and in the world movement.





Chinese frontier troops distribute rice to Vietnamese inhabitants in Cao Bang area. The rice was given by China as aid to Viet Nam.

persecuting the Chinese of the south, business owners and non-owners alike. Mass raids and truckload roundups of Chinese took place.

These actions on the part of the Vietnamese authorities broke all existing agreements between the two countries on the question of the large Chinese national minority. In 1955 the Chinese Communist Party and the Vietnam Workers' Party reached an agreement regarding the nationality and the rights and duties of the Chinese residing in Viet Nam. The two sides acknowledged that the Chinese residents in north Viet Nam, on condition of their enjoying equal rights as the Vietnamese and after being given sustained and patient persuasion and ideological education, may gradually become citizens of Viet Nam on a voluntary basis. This agreement was consistent with China's policy opposing the practice of forcing Chinese nationals living abroad to change their nationality.

Prior to Viet Nam's nationwide liberation, both sides of this agreement conscientiously worked to implement it. The Vietnamese Party stressed in its documents that "the adoption of Vietnamese nationality by Chinese should be a purely voluntary decision, and there should be no coercion whatsoever."

In south Viet Nam the reactionary Ngo Dinh Diem regime compelled Chinese residents to renounce their citizenship in 1956. This action was denounced by both China and north Viet Nam. In 1976, however, Chinese residents in south Viet Nam were again forced to renounce their nationality in a nationwide registration after liberation. Those who elected to retain their Chinese nationality were ostracized and persecuted. The same sort of persecution took place in the north. Even ethnic Chinese who had joined the Workers' Party of Viet Nam and enlisted in the army in the early years of the revolution were discriminated against and expelled from the Party under false charges.

When the campaign against the Chinese national minority was launched, China painstakingly attempted to resolve the problem through negotiations and discussion. Talks with a top Vietnamese leader took place in 1977. Numerous embassy and consulate-level discussions took place.

Yet the Vietnamese authorities, intent upon pursuing the social-imperialist orders from the Kremlin, refused to listen. In April, 1978 China publicly stated its deep concern over the matter as thousands of Chinese residents of Viet Nam were driven out of the country.

A MEASURED RESPONSE TO AGGRESSION

In the face of Viet Nam's highly provocative actions, China strived to avert a large scale military encounter by issuing reasonable warnings to the Vietnamese authorities. On December 25, 1978, an article in *People's Daily* stated: "We wish to warn the Vietnamese authorities that if they count on Moscow's support to seek a foot after gaining an inch and continue to act in an unbridled

fashion, they will decidedly meet with the punishment they deserve. We are telling you this now. Don't complain later that we've not given you a clear warning in advance."

Many other similar warnings were issued in the months preceding China's counterattack. On February 11 vice-premier Li Xiannian warned the Vietnamese authorities not to turn a deaf ear to what China had said.

Viet Nam, however, stepped up its military attacks against China. Between January 1 and February 13, 1979, mines planted by Vietnamese intruders killed 22 Chinese inhabitants and frontier guards and wounded 20 others. On February 15 Vietnamese troops continuously shelled a Chinese village with artillery fire for more than 3 hours.

On five occasions between 17:45 and 19:50 hours on February 16, Vietnamese aggressor troops bombarded the Shanyao railway station, schools and the nearby rubber plantation in the town of Hekou, firing more than 1,200 shells. Beginning at 03:15 hours on February 17, Vietnamese aggressors continually strafed the Hekou and Jinping areas in Yunnan province.

The military leadership of the Chinese border troops ordered the counterattack on the morning of February 17 in response to these Vietnamese atrocities. They had been given this authority some days earlier by the Military Commission of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China.

VIET NAM: A CONSCIOUS PROVOCATEUR!

The evidence indicating that Viet Nam has acted so as to undermine its relations with China is overwhelming. It is also clear that China has acted with principle and that the Vietnamese actions are entirely unjustified. A key question remains: Why did Viet Nam embark on the course which led to such a complete breakdown in the unity between the two countries? What does Viet Nam hope to gain?

The leaders of the Viet Nam revolution have long held, in theory, a national chauvinist line towards the other countries in Indochina. As early as the 1940s the dream of an "Indochina federation" was part of their policy. It remained an obsession with them over the ensuing years, although in practice the objective conditions in southeast Asia compelled them to respect the independence of the Kampuchean and Laotian nations. After the French colonialists were kicked out of southeast Asia, Kampuchea and Laos became independent countries. The war against U.S. imperialism broke out soon afterwards and the national chauvinist plan for an "Indochina federation" was shelved.

The 1975 victory of the Vietnamese people in the war against U.S. aggression was an historic occasion for the anti-imperialist world revolutionary movement. The Vietnamese authorities, however, allowed this victory to fuel their incorrect national chauvinistic line and swell their heads. They began to work desperately to control Laos and Kampuchea as the leader of an "Indochina federation".

The Vietnamese authorities found much support from the Kremlin for their incorrect line. Brezhnev and his cohorts are also big national chauvinists. Sharing the same contemptuous line towards the independence of other countries, the Soviet Union and Viet Nam quickly became allies and a joint threat towards the peace and security of southeast Asia. Viet Nam's campaign of provocation against China is a move to win the favour of Moscow by doing its bidding.

Soviet social-imperialism is the greatest threat for world war, and the People's Republic of China has correctly been identifying this fact as it leads the building of a worldwide united front against the two superpowers, the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. The Soviet Union's revisionist leaders have a deep hatred for China's principled leadership of the oppressed people of the world. Their hope was to paint a black mark on China for "invading" Viet Nam in the recent border conflict. Much to Brezhnev's dismay, however, China's courageous counterattack has been praised throughout the world and China has gained new prestige.